



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## Electronic Senate

E-Senate will commence on Tuesday 15 September 2020 and close at noon on Wednesday 23 September 2020

### AGENDA

- 1. Minute** **e-S 20/21 1 A**  
To approve the minute of the meeting held on 27 May 2020

### SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

- 2. Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Reflective Analysis** **e-S 20/21 1 B**  
To approve
- 3. Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2019/20** **e-S 20/21 1 C**  
To note and comment
- 4. Senate Exception Committee call for volunteers** **e-S 20/21 1 D**  
To note
- 5. Draft Resolutions: Chairs** **e-S 20/21 1 E**  
To comment
- 6. Draft Resolution: Removal of Members of the University Court** **e-S 20/21 1 F**  
To comment
- 7. Rector Election Date** **e-S 20/21 1 G**  
To comment

### ITEMS FOR NOTING OR FORMAL APPROVAL

- 8. Conferment of the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita** **e-S 20/21 1 H**  
To approve **e-S 20/21 1 I**
- 9. Proposed revisions to the Senate Standing Orders** **e-S 20/21 1 J**  
To note
- 10. Communications from the University Court** **e-S 20/21 1 K**  
To note
- 11. Report from Knowledge Strategy Committee** **e-S 20/21 1 L**  
To note and to approve the updated Terms of Reference

**Electronic Senate**

**15 – 23 September 2020**

**Minutes of Senate meeting held on 27 May 2020**

**Description of paper**

1. The paper provides the minutes of the Senate meeting held on 27 May 2020.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. For approval.
3. A comment need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed approved. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting “comment on e-S 20/21 1 A”. These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

**Resource implications**

4. None.

**Risk management**

5. Not applicable.

**Equality & diversity**

6. Not applicable.

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

7. Key decisions were communicated in the Senate Committees’ Newsletter to stakeholders on the distribution list:

[www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/newsletter](http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/newsletter)

**Author**

Senate Secretariat  
September 2020

**Freedom of Information**

Open paper

## SENATUS ACADEMICUS

### UNCONFIRMED MINUTES OF AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SENATUS

**ACADEMICUS** held online

Wednesday 27 May 2020

Present: The Principal, Professors C Abbott, M Aliotta, R Andrew, M Anjos, D Argyle, E Bomberg, H Branigan, M Brennan, S Brown, T Bruce, J Cairns, J Calvert, C Carr, K Chapman, S Clark, S Cooper, H Critchley, J Crook, J Cruz, S Cunningham-Burley, J Danbolt, D Davidson, P Davies, E Delaney, J Dorin, P Du Plessis, J Dunlop, T Fawcett, D Fergusson, R Fisher, K Forbes, F Fowle, Chris French, M Gallagher, S Goldwater, J Goodrich, I Gordon, D Gray, J Hardy, C Harmon, T Harrison, S Haszeldine, D Hay, C Heycock, A Holloway, P Hoskins, W Hou, C Iannelli, G Jomaas, S Kelley, R King, S Lewis, C Lyall, F Mackay, H MacQueen, H McQueen, N Mabbott, L March, K Matthews, A Meiksin, C Moran, R Nicol, P Nienow, D Paton, G Pentland, P Phemister, J Ravenscroft, R Ribchester, E Riley, J Robbins, M Roberts, A Rowe, H Sang, M Seery, M Shipston, H Sinclair, J Silvertown, A Sorace, J Thomas, D Tollervey, A Tudhope, A Turk, N Turner, G Warwick, S Wild, A Ziolkowski; J Ainslie, W Aird, D Aitken, P Allmer, T Bak, S Benjamin, J Bradfield, C Caquineau, D Cavanagh, A Convery, J Crang, D Evensen, G Gray, D Grumett, E Haycock-Stuart, M Highton, J Hoy, S Ivory, L Kendall, L Kirstein, F Kristmundsdottir, W Kwon, S Lamont-Black, A Maciocia, S MacPherson, A McCormick, J Menzies, S Morley, F Narumi-Munro, P Navarro, M Novenson, O Ogunbayo, N Pak-Shiraz, C Phillips, S Riley, S Rolle, T Schwarz, P Smith, S Smith, P Taylor, S Trill, U Tufail-Hanif, J Turner, N Tuzi, J Upton, P Walsh, S Warrington, S Warwick, S Woodman

Associate Members: A Wilson, S Vallency, S Anand

In Attendance: F Abou Jawad, A Adeo Mezeul, R Akhtar, F Alderson, C Alexakis, A Alexander, H Alexander, M Anaya, I Majewsky Anderson, J Anderson, L Anderson, P Andreadis, M Anusas, N Appleton, J Archer, C Aspinwall, P Bailey, J Ball, S Ballentyne, D Banda, D Bannerman, C Bannister, K Bantounos, M Barany, A Barbalace, E Barlow, C Barnes, J Barnhart, M Barria Matus, R Bartlett, M Bastian, G Baxter, R Baxter, K Abry-Diaw De Baye, E Bayne, M Beagan, J Beagles, L Beattie, L Behrens, M Bell, T Bell, M Saborido Beltran, F Bergeret, A Bielawska, E Birtles, C Black, J Blackmore, P Blue, M Boddie, F Bosche, B Bovenzi, Sharon Boyd, C Brady, J Brannigan, S Brocklebank, K Brogan, K Brook, M Brook, A Brooks, E Brooks, F Brown, M Brown, L Bruce, K Bryant, V Buchanan, A Buchoux, L Buckley, A Bunni, M Caddick, D Cains, N Cairncross, E Caldwell, K Cameron, A Campbell, C Campbell, G Campbell, N Caron, K Castle, D Garcia Cava, A Cavill, M Cetinkaya-Rundel, L Chalmers, J Chambers, E Charlesworth, K Charvala, T Chaurin, J Chavaro, R Chisholm, M Cholbi, N Chue Hong, R Claase, V Clark, F Coates, G Cole, R Cole, S Colegrove, T Colles, R Collie, A Collier, E Connick, A Connor, C Cooper, L Cooper, K Copeland, E Corboz, I Cotugno, K Cowan, M Cox, M Craft, D Craske, I Orfao Crespo, A Cross, A Crossland, M Crowley, W Cui, I Darmon, N Davidson, A Davison, A Desler, P Dickson, S Dimartino, K Ding, H Dingwall, L Dinwoodie, C Discolo, S Dishon, C Dixon, A Domagala, S Donneadieu, R Donnelly, E Dora, K Douglas, M Douglas, E Dove, M Dowdeswell, L Dritsas, V Duckworth, L Dunbar, K Dunn, L Dunn, S Dunn, A Duthie, F Dutton, E Dzieciol, O Eadie, C Edminson, J Edwards, R Edwards, K Egan, S Eglone, J Eighteen, M Elis, L Elliot, A English, B English, V Erastova, B Esk, M Evans, L Everett, M Ewen, L Ewing, O Fakunle, V Farrar, S Fawkner, A Fegan, R Feist, A Fenemore, J Ferguson, F Ferry, M Findlay, A Fitch, I Foidl, S Forbes, S Ford-Hutchinson, C Fox, B Franke, E Fraser, S Fraser, T French, D Friedrich, J Furness, F Fuisseis, R Galloway, E Gieben-Gamal, J Gardiner, J Geber, J Gifford, G Giganti, Cs Giles, D Gill, C Gleghorn, N

Goldie, S Gormley, S Graham, R Green, S Green, S Green, S Gregory, A Greig, E Gribbin, W Groome-Vine, P Hadoke, O Hale, A Haley, G Halliday, L Halliday, A Hamilton, R Hamilton, K Hanley, L Hann, A Hanna, S Hansen-Just, R Harley, F Harris, K Harris, M Harris, S Harvey, T Harvey, O Hayes, B Headon, K Heal, M Heal, A Henderson, C Henderson, J Henderson, M Henderson, S Henderson, S Henley, D Henty, D Hills, R HOFFIE, M Holmes, R Holt, M Holubek, L Howard, R Howell, K Howie, J Huang, J Hume, A Hunter, E Hunter, S Hunter, K Hutchison, C Huthersall, M Ingleson, T Ironside, F Jack, P Jack, D Jackson, P Jackson, T Jackson, M Jancsik, A Jarvis, P Jarvis, R Jenkins, C Johnston, J Johnston, R Jones, N Junco, E Kafantaris, E Keane, A Kelly, L Kelly, J Kemp, M Kenny, L Ker, L Kershaw, M Khan, J Khatun, S Kheria, K Kim, Y Kim, G Kinnear, A Kiprakis, S Genieys-Kirk, S Kirkham, P Kirsop, B Kohlbek, A Laidlaw, W Lamb, L Laumenech, A Laurins, I Lavers, A Lawley-Powell, M Lawson, R Leask, L Lettice, S Leven, F Lima, T Lin, A Lindsay, Z Lisowski, S Liu, D Livingstone, K Lloyd, H Lokhun, C Love-Rodgers, C Lucas, M Luciano, A Lund, J MacBride, C Macdonald, J MacDonald, M Macdonald, T Macdonald, M Macdougall, S MacGregor, G Machtsiras, A-M Maciejuk, C Mackay, V Macnish Porter, A Macniven, E MacRae, J Madden, V Madden, M Magennis, S Maguire, A Majothi, L Malcolm, K Marioni-Henry, L Marshall, R Marsland, C Martin, H Mateer, C Matthews, M Mazoy Saavedra, R McAdam, K McArthur, L McBrien, G McCabe, C McCallum, A McClanahan-Simmons, A McConnell, V Mccorquodale, S McCulloch, N McGillivray, S McGinley, J McGregor, K McHugh, V McIntyre, C McLaughlin, J McMahan, S McMahan, H Mcmillan, M McMinn, L McNicol, S McNulty, J Medvecky, E Mijers, J Miller, R Miller, K Mojsiewicz, D Montgomery, S Montgomery, F Moreira, A Morgan, R Morris, E Morrison, T Morrison, E Mortimer, S Mowat, B Munro, J Murray, R Murray, C Napier, G Negro, B Neilson, G Nichol, K Nicol, A Nicolson, T Noden, M O'Donnell, S Ogle, J O'Hara, L O'Keeffe, R Oosterhoff, O Opeloyeru, C Painter, N Pak-Shiraz, R Panesar, K Pantoula, A Parkinson, S Parry, R Parsons, J Paxton, A Peltari, S Pennings, A Percy, C Perkins, I Phillips, S Phillips, K Phimister, K Picozzi, T Poeta, C Pusceddu, G Puzey, K Quinn, R Quirk, A Rae, P Reay, F Reid, T Reid, J Reynolds-Wright, R Ribeiro, G Richardson, K Richmond, S Ridder-Patrick, G Robertson, J Robertson, E Rodrigues, J Roger, J Rose, J Ross, L Ross, M Ross, N Ross, S Ross, N Rowa-Dewar, E Rowan, N Rowland, D Ruddy, M Ruffert, J Ruiz, H Ryall, C Sachpasidi, A Sadarangani, S Sadauskaite, C Sanderson, C Schaffner, C Schwinn, G Scobie, K Scott, A Seguino, S Shan, A Shanks, S Shaw, C Sheridan, F Shields, C Sinclair, L Singleton, R Siro, A Sloan, A Smith, B Smith, D Smith, K Smith, L Smith, M Smith, S Smith, W Smith, H Snaith, A Solomon, R Sowerby, L Spalding, T Spears, N Speirs, H Stagg, I Stark, L Stark, E Steele, E Stevenson, J Stewart, R Stewart, H Stocks, N Stuart, Z Sun, D Swanton, G Szel, B Szoor, H Szoor-McElhinney, J Tait, S Tait, K Tamane-Laing, D Tate, E Taylor, F Teixeira-Dias, J Terry, J Thacker, M Thaler, J Thijssen, J Thin, L Thomas, D Thompson, A Thomson, W Timmons, K Todd, A Toth, P Townsend, H Tracey, S Tricarico, R Tring, T Trodd, E Tudhope, K Urquhart, R Valente, R Valentine, F Vine, A Votsi, S Wagner, L Walford, D Walker, L Wall, A Wallace, C Wallace, M Waller, P Ward, T Ward, V Watters, N Webb, P Webster, C Wells, S Western, R White, S Widdicombe, E Wighton, P Wilkie, K Williams, S Williamson, N Wilson, K Woomble, L Wright, A Wroe, Z Wu, K Wylde, J Xu, A Yildirim, C Young, S Yule, B Zhao, Y Zhu, A Zielinska,

## **CONVENER'S COMMUNICATIONS**

Professor Peter Mathieson welcomed colleagues to the meeting, noting that this was the first online meeting of Senate, and remarking on the very large number of staff who had registered to attend.

### **Covid-19 Response**

The Convener updated the meeting on the University response so far, and plans for the next phase of the response. The Convener thanked all staff for their vital contribution to the success of the University response to date.

It was noted that Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) issues have been at the forefront of the University response, but also that the shift to working from home and the conditions created by the pandemic have had specific impacts on specific sectors of society, and this will continue to be a priority in ongoing planning by the University.

In the initial response to the pandemic, the University focused on what action was required immediately, to comply with public health and government advice, and health and safety concerns. This led to large-scale and rapid changes to the University including moving teaching largely online. This phase was largely successful, thanks to the efforts of all staff. At this stage, the University also considered short and medium-term issues such as summer schools, immediate student accommodation issues (such as releasing students from leases), and sports facilities.

The next phase of work, which is beginning now, involves looking at the longer term: this is being led by an Adaptation and Renewal Team (ART). A series of work-streams have been developed:

1. Curriculum, admissions and student support – chaired by Vice-Principal Students Professor Colm Harmon
2. Research and innovation – chaired by Senior Vice-Principal Professor Jonathan Seckl
3. Estates and infrastructure (including digital infrastructure) – chaired by Vice-Principal (Interim) Corporate Services Dr Catherine Martin and Vice-Principal and Chief Information Officer Gavin McLachlan.
4. Reshaping (the future shape of the University) – chaired by Vice-Principal Strategic Change and Governance Sarah Smith

There is also an overall coordination group chaired by Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Peter Mathieson, which includes leads on Communications and on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Decision-making will be carried out within the framework above, and the work-streams will communicate regularly with the University Executive, the University Court, and the Academic Strategy Group (comprised of Heads of School and Heads of Professional Service Groups).

The Convener noted that the requirements for social distancing created by the pandemic are likely to be in place for a considerable time, and have a major impact on the functioning of the University. Use of lecture theatres and graduation ceremonies were highlighted as examples of practises that will be impacted.

The Convener concluded by congratulating colleagues on the positive and effective response to the immediate impacts and actions required. Degrees have been conferred early on student nurses and doctors to allow them to contribute to the pandemic response, and this was achieved through the hard work of many staff and the support of students. There are many examples of University staff volunteering to support the pandemic response, particularly in relation to the local community and society, and academic experts from the University are advising the Scottish Government and World Health Organisation.

The Convener invited questions from the audience, via the online Q&A function, opening with a small number of questions submitted in advance. A summary of the questions and responses is below.

- Is the University too reliant on international student fees: it was noted that Edinburgh is an international city and University and that international students make a huge contribution to the culture of the University, and help to build global academic networks. In addition, the surplus income from international student fees allows for the cross-subsidy of research, which is underfunded centrally by government, and some

cross-subsidy of Scottish-domiciled students. The University actively advocates for increased funding for research and Scottish-domiciled students.

- The City Deal: activity is continuing, such as investment in the University Advanced Care Research Centre. Construction activities associated with the City Deal have been paused, but externally-funded construction projects such as those funded by the City Deal are expected to restart in due course.
- University-funded PhD studentships: it is strongly hoped that these will continue to be funded, but guarantees cannot be given at this stage.
- Admission of international students: modelling is taking place, but it is difficult to predict numbers at this stage.
- Reasserting bullying guidelines in relation to any rationalisation processes: it was reaffirmed that bullying would not be tolerated in any shape or form, and the importance of anti-bullying policies in the context of reshaping the University was recognised.
- Restructuring: it is likely that there may be some hybrid working in future (some from home and some on site) and this could have implications for the physical size of the University.
- EDI commitments, particularly in relation to carers: the University recognises that some staff have additional caring responsibilities that impact on their ability to work from home. Staff are encouraged to consider taking annual leave if they need rest time. It was also reinforced that the University recognises the impact on staff who have caring responsibilities, and this will reasonably impact on how they can engage with working from home. The importance of leadership from management in supporting staff was highlighted. It was also noted that all staff have rights and expectations, and the needs and workload of staff who do not have children must also be taken into consideration. Support needs of staff with disabilities were also highlighted, and the Convener noted that the input of the Disabled Staff Network would be valued.
- University Covid-19 testing programme: this is still under discussion.
- Zoom security issues: the University is procuring a version of Zoom and this has appropriate security measures built in.
- The continuing commitment of the University to widening access and participation was affirmed.
- Flexible contracts for student accommodation: arrangements for use of student accommodation are under development. It was noted that University of Edinburgh was proactive in releasing students from contracts if they needed to leave their accommodation.
- Union representation in ART: Unions are being involved in this work via the Joint Union Liaison Committee, HR are meeting regularly with trade unions and the University is liaising at a sector level with the Scottish Trades Union Council.
- How to 'build back better': it was noted that issues such as the Climate Emergency have not gone away and the University commitments to this are being taken into account in planning for the pandemic response.
- Will facemasks on campus be required and provided: no decision on this has been made and government guidance in relation to university campuses has not yet been released.
- Support for PhD students who tutor, in relation to a reduction in number of courses offered: this is actively under discussion.
- Will students be encouraged to return to campus: yes, but this will need to be done safely and in accordance with public health guidance.
- Staff safety and staff in high risk groups: it is recognised that some staff will be in high risk groups and the University will work to support these individuals. There is currently no intention to survey staff across the University to assess their needs, but managers should be gathering information about staff needs in their local teams.

- When will more specific plans for the next academic year become public: currently the University is engaged in scenario-planning, modelled around different student numbers. The actual student numbers for 2020/21 will not be known until August or September so definitive information will not be available until then. It was noted that financial impacts will not only be felt for 2020/21.
- Is there an intention to increase distance learning student numbers to compensate for reductions in on-campus numbers: distance learning is not the same as 'blended' or 'hybrid' models currently under consideration, but there may be opportunities to increase numbers of distance learning students.
- Support for staff on fixed-term contracts: the University has undertaken to honour contracts for 2020/21. There are a number of types of fixed term contracts, and the reshaping work will take into account the variety of staff contexts and contractual arrangements.
- Future updates and opportunities to ask questions: there may be future online 'Townhall' meetings, but plans are not finalised yet.

## **SENATE PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: CURRICULUM REFORM**

### **Presented by Professor Colm Harmon, Vice-Principal Students**

Professor Harmon noted that this presentation on Curriculum Reform was already scheduled to take place before the advent of the Covid-19 emergency, and that he is keen to continue the Curriculum Reform project despite the change in circumstances caused by the pandemic. Professor Harmon clarified that changes taking place to teaching and assessment currently, as part of the Covid-19 response, are not themselves 'Curriculum Reform'. Curriculum Reform as a process will take time and thought and therefore is not the same process as the current requirement for change in response to Covid-19. Because of the timescale required for the Curriculum Reform project, and the likely long-term impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, delaying Curriculum Reform is neither practical nor desirable.

The broad context of Curriculum Reform is the University's relatively poor performance in national student satisfaction ratings. This evidence cannot be disregarded, though student survey data is also not to be fetishized. Correlations between overall satisfaction and teaching, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, academic support, and student voice were highlighted as an indicator of areas where work may have a significant impact on student satisfaction. Outcomes from the Student Support and Personal Tutor Review were also noted, in particular, a renewed sense of what the 'Edinburgh student body' may want or represent, and how the University may respond to this.

Professor Harmon described the relationship between the curriculum and the student experience from application to successfully completing a degree, indicating the relevance of curriculum reform to each stage in this journey. A series of questions were raised, including the complexity of the 'offer' made to students at this university, and the relationship between depth and breadth in programmes. The diversity of degree pathways and large number of courses offered was also noted.

In relation to a revised curriculum, key issues highlighted for discussion included disciplinary depth, skills, breadth, employability, and 'grand challenges' such as sustainability, diversity, intercultural / interdisciplinary effectiveness, and students as citizens with values.

Professor Harmon provided a high-level overview of work for the next 12 months and next 24 months. This will include developing the vision, scope and aims of curriculum reform. An illustrative undergraduate degree structure was also outlined for discussion. Professor Harmon concluded by reflecting on lessons that could be learned from the Covid-19

response, highlighting the innovation and creativity that has been displayed by colleagues, and thanking colleagues for their work in a very challenging situation.

Professor Harmon invited questions from the audience, via the online Q&A function, opening with a small number of questions submitted in advance. A summary of the questions and responses is below.

- What does 'teaching too much' mean, and does reducing teaching mean reducing contact time and therefore reducing student-staff interaction and students' sense of belonging: Professor Harmon clarified that the question is about the breadth of material delivered in courses, this does not necessarily suggest reducing contact time and engagement. A 'Sense of Belonging' task force has been formed: this will produce a guide for Schools on thinking about belonging, particularly in the context of hybrid teaching. It will also facilitate Schools sharing resources on how they are addressing belonging.
- Relative 'prestige' of research versus teaching: it was noted that the appointment of a Vice-Principal Students, a role that was newly created in 2019, was a commitment to ensuring that the Senior Leadership Team included a role with oversight of the whole student experience. The importance of rewarding teaching excellence was also noted. The Convener argued that teaching and research should not be seen as in competition. It was also noted that the student experience is not restricted to their experience of teaching.
- National Student Survey: it was recognised that there are concerns about the methodology and also the viability of the survey. It is not the only indicator of student satisfaction, but it is a systematic attempt to survey student satisfaction, and provides at least a comparison with other similar institutions, and Edinburgh's comparative performance is not high. It was however noted that in some areas student satisfaction is very high and that this should be recognised.
- Skills training: the content of any cross-programme skills training a new curriculum model is still very much open for discussion.
- Union involvement: members of the ART meeting with UCU representatives regularly to update on activities. Involvement of Union representatives in School level meetings is a matter for Heads of Schools.
- PT and Student Support System review: the implementation of this review is currently on hold.
- Negative impact on the student experience of 'bureaucratisation': it was acknowledged that some current processes, for example to change programmes, are clunky and time-consuming, and Curriculum Reform, student experience and improving systems are interlinked.
- Bridging the Scottish secondary school curriculum and year 1 of University, to address BAME and WP attainment gaps: it was noted that Curriculum Reform conceptualises the student experience as beginning before the student arrives at the University. Building the confidence of students from diverse backgrounds to engage with the University will be key, particularly in the current circumstances and as hybrid teaching is rolled out. Widening Participation remains a key commitment.
- Part-time study: breaking the divide between part-time and full-time study is an opportunity that will be explored through Curriculum Reform. It was noted that developing part-time undergraduate programmes would require considerable changes to current practices and systems, but that Curriculum Reform provides an opportunity to embrace this challenge.
- Students being able to 'fail' safely: Curriculum Reform is a valuable opportunity to create space for students to take risks.
- What is the evidence base supporting the notion that we 'teach too much': it was noted that there are a high number of courses and a large volume of assessment.



	<p>Professor Harmon suggested that the course and programme information provided to students is complex and lengthy, and that current structures are difficult to articulate. What course and programme volume is appropriate for the University of Edinburgh will be open for consideration during the review.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was confirmed that the scope of Curriculum Reform would include undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research programmes.</li> <li>• Top-down or bottom-up reform: Professor Harmon stated the aspiration that while plans may be developed and coordinated centrally, implementation and driving change will take place at the level of Schools. These will involve individual School, discipline and academic decisions. Clusters of similar structures, perhaps at College level, could have value in simplifying the experience of students and improving processes such as changing programmes, and some central coordination and focus is required to enable the project to function.</li> </ul> <p>Professor Harmon thanked colleagues for their questions and engagement with the presentation.</p> <p>Professor Mathieson thanked Professor Harmon for his presentation and thanked all colleagues for their attendance and engagement with the meeting. Questions that have not been addressed during the meeting will be fed forward to the relevant projects for consideration.</p> <p>The open session of Senate was closed.</p>
	<p><b>FORMAL BUSINESS</b></p>
<p>1.</p>	<p><b>Senate members' feedback on presentation and discussion topics</b></p> <p>Senate members commended the event as a valuable opportunity for colleagues to engage in an open discussion, and to engage with Curriculum Reform at an early stage, though it was noted that there was still a great deal to think about.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p><b>Report of Electronic Business conducted 5 – 13 May 2020 (S 19/20 3 A)</b></p> <p>Senate approved the report.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Conferment of Professor Emerita / Emeritus (S 19/20 3 B)</b></p> <p>Senate approved the conferment of the title of Professor Emerita / Emeritus on these members of staff.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Draft Ordinances (S 19/20 3 C)</b></p> <p>Senate considered the draft Ordinances presented by Court and offered no observations.</p> <p>A query was raised about whether wording in the Draft Ordinance Appendix 1, particularly section 2, had been agreed with University and College Union and / or the Joint Unions Liaison Committee. It was confirmed that the wording in question (in particular 'so far as the body [University Court] considers reasonable') is derived from the relevant legislation (Section 26 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 as amended by the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016). It has been confirmed following the meeting that the specific wording in the draft Ordinance was not agreed with the UCU / JULC because the wording is derived directly from the relevant legislation but the incorporation of the revised definition of academic freedom into academic staff contracts, from which this follows, had been ratified by Combined Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee at the time.</p>

5.	<p><b>Resolutions (S 19/20 3 D)</b>  Senate considered the draft Resolutions presented by Court below, and offered no observations.</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 12/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Pure Mathematics  Draft Resolution No. 13/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Exoplanet Characterisation  Draft Resolution No. 14/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Palaeontology and Evolution  Draft Resolution No. 15/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Volcanology  Draft Resolution No. 16/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Applied Physics  Draft Resolution No. 17/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Microbial Evolution  Draft Resolution No. 18/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Industrial Mathematics  Draft Resolution No. 19/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Harmonic Analysis and Partial Differential Equations  Draft Resolution No. 20/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Membrane Separations  Draft Resolution No. 21/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Software Transformation  Draft Resolution No. 22/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Sustainable Biotechnology  Draft Resolution No. 23/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Artificial Intelligence  Draft Resolution No. 24/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Earth Dynamics  Draft Resolution No. 25/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Category Theory  Draft Resolution No. 26/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Experimental Particle Physics  Draft Resolution No. 27/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Stem Cell Biology and Early Development  Draft Resolution No. 28/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Geometry  Draft Resolution No. 29/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Hydrogeology and Coupled Process Modelling  Draft Resolution No. 30/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Digital Manufacture  Draft Resolution No. 31/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Robotics  Draft Resolution No. 32/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Global Change Mapping  Draft Resolution No. 33/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Machine Learning and Inference  Draft Resolution No. 34/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Biophysics  Draft Resolution No. 35/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Robot Learning and Autonomy  Draft Resolution No. 36/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Urban Geography  Draft Resolution No. 37/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Signalling and Proteostasis  Draft Resolution No. 38/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Fluid Dynamics  Draft Resolution No. 39/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Energy, Environment and Society  Draft Resolution No. 40/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Modern and Contemporary Art History  Draft Resolution No. 41/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Scots Private Law  Draft Resolution No. 42/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Architectural History  Draft Resolution No. 43/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Modern British History  Draft Resolution No. 44/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Social and Economic Anthropology</p>
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	<p>Draft Resolution No. 45/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Literature and the Environment</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 46/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Multilingualism</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 47/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Global Urbanism and Resilience</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 48/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of European and Global Education Governance</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 49/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Finance</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 50/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Craft History and Theory</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 51/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Cinema and Iran</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 52/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of South Asian and Comparative Politics</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 53/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of American Literature</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 54/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Germline Biology</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 55/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Population Medicine &amp; Veterinary Public Health Policy</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 56/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Small Animal Orthopaedics</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 57/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Developmental Psychology</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 58/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Cardiovascular Pharmacology</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 59/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Arterial Remodelling</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 60/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Integrative Fish Genomics</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 61/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Molecular Neural Development</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 62/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Veterinary Parasitology</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 63/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Conservation Science</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 64/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Sociology of Science and Medicine</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 65/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Experiential Student Learning</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 66/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Medical Imaging and Physics</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 67/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Translational Chemistry and Biomedical Imaging</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 68/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Neurology &amp; Clinical Epidemiology</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 69/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Clinical Pharmacology</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 70/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Clinical Cardiology</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 71/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Developmental Endocrinology</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 72/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Property Law</p> <p>Draft Resolution No. 73/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Dermatology</p>
6.	<p><b>Enhancement-led Institutional Review update (S 19/20 3 E)</b></p> <p>Senate noted the update. The Enhancement-led Institutional Review, due to take place in Semester 1 2020/21, has been postponed and is now likely to take place in Semester 2 2020/21.</p>
7.	<p><b>Report from Central Academic Promotions Committee (S 19/20 3 F)</b></p>

	<p>Senate noted the report. There was a general discussion on opportunities for promotion for academic staff whose roles focus predominantly on teaching. This raised both a sense that there have been considerable improvements in this area following the implementation of the Teaching and Academic Careers Project carried out under the University Executive, and suggestions that further work could still be done, for example in ensuring that teaching practise (rather than teaching as a research area) is recognised, encouraging implementation across all Colleges, and developing mentoring for teaching career tracks.</p>
8.	<p><b>Senate membership 2020-21 (S 19/20 3 G)</b></p> <p>Senate noted the paper. The current Senate membership were thanked for their contributions.</p> <p>Following the meeting a minor correction was made to the membership list, to add Professor Fiona Mackay as an <i>ex officio</i> member of Senate in her role as Joint Academic and Senate Assessor to Court.</p> <p>A query was raised about whether two Senate Assessors to Court whose terms of office end on 31 July 2020 will be replaced. It was clarified following the meeting that they will not be directly replaced: as a result of changes to the membership of Court and Senate required to implement the Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2016, from 1 August 2020 there will be two Senate Assessors to Court (both currently in post) and one Joint Academic and Senate Assessor (Professor Mackay). Senate will therefore continue to be represented on Court through these posts.</p>
9.	<p><b>Senate annual effectiveness review (S 19/20 3 H)</b></p> <p>Senate noted the paper. No comments were received.</p>

**Electronic Senate**

**15 – 23 September 2020**

**Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Reflective Analysis**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper presents the Reflective Analysis (RA), a key piece of evidence to support the University's ELIR.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. E-Senate is invited to approve the content of the RA, noting that on 9 September 2020 Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) recommended the content for approval by E-Senate. At its meeting on 28 September 2020, University Court will be invited to approve the RA. The decision of E-Senate will be provided to Court members by Senate Services.
3. For E-Senate, a comment need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed approved. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting "comment on e-S 20/21 1 B". These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

**Background and context**

4. ELIR is the method used by the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) to review and assess the effectiveness of higher education institutions' approaches to securing academic standards and the quality of the student experience. The University's next ELIR takes place in semester 2 2020/21.

**Discussion**

5. The RA is a self-evaluation of our strategies, policies and practices in support of academic standards, learning and teaching and the student experience.
6. The RA covers: our strategies, structure and background information; the student learning experience; how we enhance learning and teaching (including how we develop and support staff); how we manage the quality of our courses and programmes; and how we manage our collaborative provision (where we work in partnership with other organisations to deliver courses and programmes).

***Preparation of the Reflective Analysis***

7. Drafts of chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5, developed using information gathered from colleagues across the University and the Students' Association, were made available to all staff and students in November and December 2019 with accompanying Teaching Matters blog posts. Comments received on the draft chapters were used to develop a first draft of the RA.
8. The first draft was then reviewed by key internal and external stakeholders in late January/early February 2020. Comments received on the first draft were used to develop a second draft, which was made available to all staff and students in March and April 2020 with an accompanying Teaching Matters blog post.
9. At this stage, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, QAAS needed to make changes to their schedule of ELIRs, and asked that our review be postponed. In May 2020 QAAS confirmed the new ELIR visit dates (February and March 2021).

10. Given the new ELIR visit dates, it was agreed that the RA would be presented to the relevant committees in September 2020 in order to meet the deadline for submission of the RA and supporting Advanced Information Set (AIS) in early December 2020. Academic Services continued to update the RA, requesting updates from colleagues across the University and the Students' Association. The RA was then reviewed one final time by the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance.
11. Alongside updates to activities throughout the RA, the major change that has been made since the second draft is the addition of a reflection on actions taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
12. Unless otherwise stated, the RA represents the University's actions and intentions as at August 2020. The ELIR review team will be provided with updates on activities in advance of their visits as appropriate.

#### ***Further work on presentational aspects***

13. Academic Services will continue work on the glossary of acronyms, referencing within the RA (e.g. to related sections and appendices), the appendices, typos, and web links. The Principal's foreword and photographs will also be added to the RA. The RA will then undergo a graphic design process by Communications and Marketing.

#### **Resource implications**

14. There are no specific resource implications associated with the RA.

#### **Risk management**

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

#### **Equality & diversity**

16. No issues are associated with this paper.

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

17. Academic Services will ensure that the RA and accompanying AIS are submitted to QAAS by the required deadline.

#### **Author**

Professor Tina Harrison and Nichola Kett  
14 September 2020

#### **Freedom of Information**

Open

# **University of Edinburgh**

## **Enhancement-led Institutional Review Reflective Analysis**

July 2020

**Principal's Foreword – to follow**



# 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 the 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.<sup>1</sup> We have over 15,000 staff of whom around half (7,656) are categorised as academic.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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. 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 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\*)

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/gasp/factsheet/Student\\_Factsheet\\_31072020.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/gasp/factsheet/Student_Factsheet_31072020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/StaffNumbers.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/gasp/factsheet/Student\\_Factsheet\\_31072019.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/gasp/factsheet/Student_Factsheet_31072019.pdf)

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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.

- 1.1.5 In 2018/19 the University had a total income of £1,102m.<sup>4</sup> Of this, income from teaching (comprising tuition fees and educational contracts) made up 31% at £347m, and research income comprised 26% at £286m. Of the tuition fees income, £59.5m was from Scottish and European Union (EU) students, £65m from rest of UK (RUK) students, and £198.5m 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 305,324m<sup>2</sup>. Teaching is organised across a number of campuses: the Central and Moray House campuses (primarily housing the Schools in the College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences), the King's Buildings campus (housing the Schools in the College of Science and Engineering), the Little France campus comprising the Medical School and the Easter Bush campus the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (which together make up the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine).
- 1.1.7 Since the last ELIR, we have made some significant developments to the 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 over half (58%) of the total student population), 11,445 students in CSE (accounting for 26%), and 7,250 students in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) (16%). **Appendix A** shows our organisational structure.<sup>5</sup>
- 1.1.9 Colleges are organised into Schools (see **Appendix A** for complete list). 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

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/201908\\_uae\\_annual\\_accounts\\_2019\\_29\\_online.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/201908_uae_annual_accounts_2019_29_online.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/orgstruct\\_0.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/orgstruct_0.pdf)

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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.<sup>6</sup>

- 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.<sup>7</sup> EFI staff (academic and professional services) are largely seconded from other areas of the University.
- 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.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/principals-office/vice-principals-senior-leadership/senior-leadership-team>

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

## 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> This provides the physical, operational and commercial environment and professional expertise 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.<sup>10</sup> ISG comprises nine departments which, among other things, include responsibility 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 B** 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 (AS&QA), 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 1.1.40).

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/corporate-services>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/about>

1.1.22 The University's governing body is the University Court,<sup>11</sup> 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 presides at meetings of Court, elected every three years by students and staff. The Rector cannot be a student of the University or a member of staff. Court receives regular reports from Senate. **Appendix C** 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.<sup>12</sup> 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 2030<sup>13</sup> 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.

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

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/governance/university-court>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-plan>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/strategy-2030>

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 amongst others, 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 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.<sup>14</sup> 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 Covid-19 and some of which are still ongoing. Further details are provided throughout Chapter 2.
- 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 Coronavirus (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.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-plan/measuring-success>

- 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 Coronavirus (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 1.1.52 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 September 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 is 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/student-experience-action-plan>

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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.

1.1.35 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

1.1.36 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

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

### Executive committees

1.1.38 The Senior Leadership Team consists of the Principal, eight direct reports and the Director of Finance<sup>16</sup> (see **Appendix B**). 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

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/principals-office/vice-principals-senior-leadership/senior-leadership-team>



of the University is beneficial, often in “pre-decision” mode.

1.1.39 The University Executive is chaired by the Principal and is the main executive decision-making forum for the University.<sup>17</sup> 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

1.1.40 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.

1.1.41 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.<sup>18</sup> 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.

1.1.42 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.<sup>19</sup> 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, increased the proportion of elected non-professorial staff and increased the proportion of elected student members to 10% of the overall Senate membership.<sup>20</sup> The change takes effect from AY 2020/21. It is

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/governance-strategic-planning/governance/university-committees/othercommitteesandgroups/university-executive>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/senate/presentation-and-discussion>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/senate/higher-education-governance-scotland-act>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/senate/higher-education-governance-scotland-act/recommended-senate-model>

expected this will improve Senate's operation and ensure a more motivated, effective and influential academic governing body.

- 1.1.43 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 REC business, such as early career researcher matters, is now part of the remit of the Research Policy Group (RPG). APRC is convened by the Assistant Principal Academic Support; Senate Education Committee is convened by the Vice-Principal Students; SQAC is convened by Assistant Principal AS&QA.
- 1.1.44 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 webpages<sup>21</sup> and in the annual Senate committees' report to Senate.
- 1.1.45 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.<sup>22</sup>
- 1.1.46 A Senate Committee Conveners' Forum was instituted 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 and is intended to support Senate standing committees in effective planning, information sharing and reporting. 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). Support is provided by Academic Services. The Senate Committees Conveners' Forum supports the conveners in their roles and contributes to the annual planning and prioritising of committee business for Senate and the committees reporting to Senate. The Forum facilitates 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. The Forum also provides an opportunity to

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/newsletter>

identify committee business to be reported to Senate for discussion, and provides a point of coordination in responding to the emergence of key University groups and committees.

### Response to Covid-19 pandemic

- 1.1.47 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 which 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 that has been developed across the sector.
- 1.1.48 Our initial response to the pandemic with regard to teaching and learning was led by an Academic Contingency Group 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 University's 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 website<sup>23</sup> and a dedicated staff SharePoint site<sup>24</sup>.
- 1.1.49 We suspended all face-to-face teaching on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and moved to remote/digital delivery of teaching from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, allowing one week for colleagues to rapidly convert teaching materials. Teaching material was delivered remotely, 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.
- 1.1.50 We made some pragmatic changes to assessment, in order to focus efforts on students at crucial stages of their programmes. Scheduled final examinations for pre-honours stages of undergraduate programmes (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels seven and eight), were cancelled 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, scheduled examinations were replaced either with additional coursework assessment, or "take-home", open-book examinations. Open-book examinations were offered for a 48-hour period, with the exception of those in some, primarily quantitative, subject areas where a shorter period (two hours, with an additional hour for submission of work) was offered in order to mitigate the risk of students finding solutions to questions online.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/news/covid-19>

<sup>24</sup> <https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/Covid19>

1.1.51 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.

### **Adaptation and Renewal Team (ART)**

1.1.52 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.<sup>25</sup> ART was set up to enable swift but well-informed decisions to be taken in a number of time-critical areas to ensure that the University continues to deliver against its overall strategy. ART has four main strands:

- Research
- Students
- Estates and Infrastructure
- Re-shaping

It reports to the University Executive. However, the 'Students' strand (led by the Vice-Principal Students) is 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.

1.1.53 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 remotely, should they need to. While all large-group teaching is being offered remotely, teaching contact in smaller groups (tutorials, seminars etc.) is being offered in-person or remotely, depending on where students are located. The emphasis being 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 will be designed to be offered remotely.

1.1.54 In redesigning assessment for AY 2020/21 we have reflected on students' experiences of taking remote assessments. We conducted a survey of undergraduate students after the exam diet, of which 3,670 responded. Results were shared with staff in a blog by Assistant Principal AS&QA and Vice-Principal Students<sup>26</sup> that highlighted that open, remote exams were positively received, but students raised some concerns (such as academic integrity) which, among other

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

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

issues, is being considered by the Online/Remote Examination and Assessment (OREA) task group.

- 1.1.55 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 lesson from Covid-19.
- 1.1.56 To support colleagues in making the shift to hybrid teaching, we provided a range of training and development options, including a Learn course - The Edinburgh Model for Online Teaching - (which was 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,<sup>27</sup> 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. It is supported by a fortnightly digest sent to a wide range of stakeholders to highlight new and existing content.
- 1.1.57 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 Since the last ELIR, our total student population (by headcount) has increased by 34% from 33,110 to 44,510 in 2019/20. This comprised 60% (26,785) undergraduate students and 40% (17,725) postgraduate students. Since the last ELIR, the proportion of our postgraduate students has increased by 6%, against a reduction of 6% in the proportion of our undergraduate students. Within the overall proportion of postgraduate students, we have seen a noticeable increase in the proportion of postgraduate taught students, from 58% to 68% (11,975), against a reduction in the proportion of postgraduate research students, from 42% to 32% (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% and 37% respectively compared with a 16% increase in overseas postgraduate research students. Over the same period, the number of Scotland domiciled students has decreased slightly by 3% for undergraduate and almost 6%

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

for postgraduate research students, but has increased by 14% for taught postgraduates.

- 1.2.3 The number of students registered on online programmes has increased by 42% 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 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 EFl.

### **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 comparators. Following a consideration of analysis of non-continuation data at LTC in January 2018, it was agreed that a more detailed analysis should be undertaken to better understand the drivers of non-continuation. Two projects were carried out. The first, carried out 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 and plan to enhance the analysis of non-continuation patterns using this additional factor over the coming months, as well as incorporating 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 one–two, two–three, and three–four.<sup>28</sup>
- 1.2.8 Since the last ELIR, overall progression rates show a positive trend from 88.38% of all students favourably progressing in 2014/15 to 93.6% of all students favourably progressing in 2018/19. Whilst gains have been made 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% of students in year one and 86.93% of students in year two of their

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/agendapapers20181114.pdf> (Paper B)

programme progressed favourably. By comparison in 2018/19, these proportions had increased to 91.09% and 91.11% 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, BME and WP students are less likely overall to favourably progress. However, we have 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% point gap in 2014/15 to a 16% point gap in 2018/19) and undergraduate BME and white students (from a 3-4% point gap to 2.72% point difference in 2018/19). Favourable progression rates for Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD20) students stood at 83.18% in 2018/19 compared to 91.93% for non-SIMD20 students.

### **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 AS&QA is responsible for leading the University's preparation for and coordination of activities leading to Enhancement-led Institutional Review, supported by Academic Services. The 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 AS&QA, 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 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 that WP be added 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 the Senate Learning and Teaching, 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):

- Teaching and Academic Careers
  - Includes the academic development work provided by IAD and the work of the Teaching and Academic Careers Task Group.
- 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 which is part of the StEAP.
- WP
  - Includes work in support of WP, including the WP Strategy<sup>29</sup>, aimed at increasing WP student entrants and 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 will be centrally linked 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 Students Survey (NSS) results have not shown an improvement in assessment and feedback over the last three years. Turnaround times continue to be a key issue. In order to make a significant improvement, we feel that assessment and feedback needs to be considered 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 we are taking time to learn from this

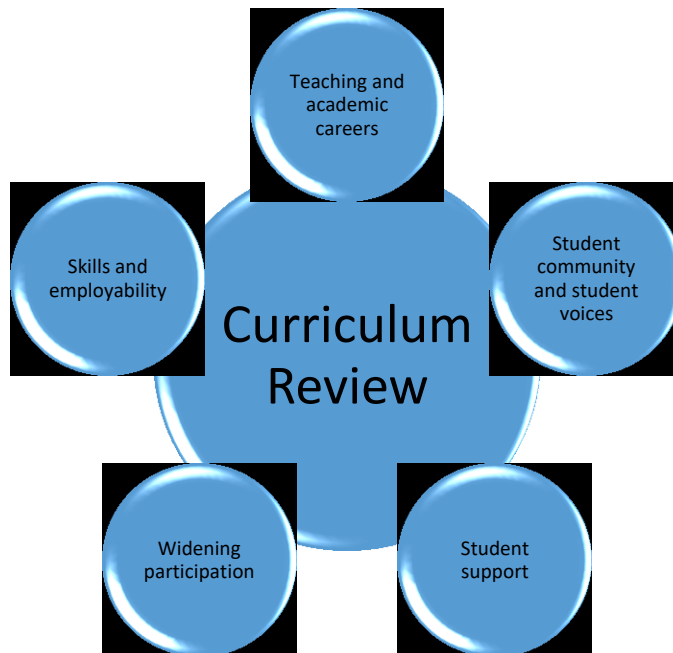
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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-recruitment/widening-participation/about/widening-participation-strategy>



experience for staff and students as we consider assessment within the broader context of curriculum review. Figure 1.1 shows the contextualised topics.

**Figure 1.1: Contextualised topics**



### Production of the RA

1.3.8 The ELIR team created draft chapters of the RA, using information gathered from colleagues across the University and 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.<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/spotlight-on-elir/>

- **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 AS&QA 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 Senate Quality Assurance and Senate Learning and Teaching Committees.
- **Senate committee newsletter entries.**<sup>31</sup> The newsletter is sent 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 editions since January 2019.

1.3.10 Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 were all made available for comment 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, 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 - July 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 A themed approach was taken to implementing actions from the previous ELIR in order to ensure broad alignment with existing learning and teaching priorities and Assistant/Vice-Principal roles and responsibilities as part of an integrated planning process. Progress reports were submitted to SQAC quarterly 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.<sup>32</sup> A report summarising the actions taken in response to the previous ELIR for each theme is available in the Advanced Information Set. Actions to key recommendations are also highlighted throughout the RA.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/newsletter>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SQAC/Senate+Quality+Assurance+Committee+Home>

## 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 have been given access to the developing, draft chapters of the RA for comment at the same time as staff. Additionally, we have 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.<sup>33</sup>

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.<sup>34</sup> The Editor, Jenny Scoles, highlights their 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 a PhD intern was appointed to support our preparations for ELIR. The post holder developed strategies to engage students with the review process. Outputs from the internship were:

- A briefing video with accompanying PowerPoint presentation;<sup>35</sup>
- An ELIR “quick facts” document;
- Teaching Matters blog posts;<sup>36,37</sup>
- Pictures selected to accompany each RA chapter and an accompanying reflection.

<sup>33</sup> [https://twitter.com/sparqs\\_scotland/status/1193848342855307264](https://twitter.com/sparqs_scotland/status/1193848342855307264)

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/top-ten-most-read-teaching-matters-blog-posts-of-2019/>

<sup>35</sup> [https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Enhancement-Led+Institutional+Review+%28ELIR%29+Student+Briefing/1\\_r9o9c3np](https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/Enhancement-Led+Institutional+Review+%28ELIR%29+Student+Briefing/1_r9o9c3np)

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/spotlight-on-elir-new-dates-confirmed/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/spotlight-on-elir-reflections-on-student-engagement/>

## 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 (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 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 sparqs.

2.1.5 The Students’ Association piloted the training in 18 Schools in 2018/19, and we saw an increase both in completion of the training (from 68.5% completing online training the previous year, to 83.5% completing in-person training) and satisfaction with the training (93% of participants in the in-person training said they would recommend it). In 2019/20, the Students’ Association recruited 1381 Programme Representatives, of which 80.5% completed training. 73.8% of representatives completed in-person training, with 23% completing online training.

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- 2.1.6 Prior to Covid-19, the Students' Associations' preferred training format was in-person sessions, with online training available for those who need it, such as online learners, and students on placement. However, we do recognise that the context in which Programmes Representatives will be operating is different for the start of AY 2020/21, and this is being addressed in revised training which will be 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 will continue 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, we are also working to enhance feedback mechanisms and ensure that issues are 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 Student-Staff Liaison Committees (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. 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 are 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 StEAP to deliver a conference primarily for Programme Representatives. The aim of the conference is 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 the 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.

- 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, that that 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.<sup>38</sup>
- 2.1.14 In light of Covid-19, a second pilot will be run 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.

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<sup>38</sup> <https://secure.projects.ed.ac.uk/project/hss030/pilot-recommendations-report>

- 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 greater consistency across SSLCs, as well as acting as a catalyst for Schools to share their own best practice with regards to SSLCs (see sections [2.1.23 – 2.1.27](#)).
- 2.1.16 Responding to the ELIR 2015 recommendation to provide more effective School level representation, we have been engaging 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 Awards<sup>39</sup> 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 judging panel. In 2018/19, over 2000 nominations were received in over 11 categories.
- 2.1.19 In 2019/20, 1511 nominations were received in over 11 categories. While this reduction in nominations, due to changes in staffing within the Students' Association, 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.

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/campaigns/teachingawards/>

- 2.1.21 The Teaching Awards also provide an insight into good practice in teaching, from the student perspective, for sharing across the University. 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.<sup>40</sup> 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 and 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 is also highlighted to staff attending key training and development events (for example, Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and tutors and demonstrators training). The report has also been shared more widely in the sector via QAA.
- 2.1.22 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.<sup>41</sup> 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 are recognised within our Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education<sup>42</sup> 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)**

- 2.1.23 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.
- 2.1.24 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.
- 2.1.25 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.<sup>43</sup> 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.

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/campaigns/teachingawards/research/>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7AwUEBAnpk>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/exemplarsofexcellenceinstudenteducation.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sslcguidance.pdf>



- 2.1.26 Colleges have also been conducting work to strengthen the effectiveness of SSLCs at the College level. CSE has introduced a College level SSLC, split into specific postgraduate research and taught (undergraduate and postgraduate) committees. Both are chaired by the Students' Association's Vice President Education. It is planned that meetings will take place once a semester and items will be referred to College Learning and Teaching Committee and College Quality Committee.
- 2.1.27 CMVM is focusing on improving SSLCs for postgraduate research students by auditing SSLCs for postgraduate research students in the Schools, Deaneries, Institutes and Centres that comprise the College 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 back on activities and developments to the College Postgraduate Societies. All three Colleges have been actively involved in establishing a Doctoral College which will coordinate and enhance postgraduate research student activities/ 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**

- 2.1.28 Our student surveys are managed by the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team, which provides a central point of contact for information on student surveying in the University, and analysis and reporting on data from student surveys. Detail on the NSS, PTES and PRES surveys is provided in the 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.
- 2.1.29 Our current system of CEQs has been in operation since the last ELIR. The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team led a review of end of course feedback collected in CEQ during AY 2018/19. A Task and Finish Group was created to address how to improve staff and student engagement with CEQs 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 AS&QA, was established to conduct a more fundamental review of the operation and purpose of CEQs throughout 2020, alongside other student voice mechanisms. 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.

2.1.30 The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team have been working to improve the analysis of student survey data and access. 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)**

2.1.31 Since the last ELIR we have added MCF to our student voice mechanisms. MCF was introduced in 2016/17 for undergraduate honours courses, reflecting good practice already in operation in a number of Schools, was extended to all undergraduate courses in 2017/18, and 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.

2.1.32 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.

2.1.33 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.

2.1.34 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 the most recent evaluation carried out during semester two, 2018/19 are that:

- Use of MCF is high – 87.5% of the 1,355 Course Organisers that responded to the survey reported using MCF in their 2018/19 courses;
- MCF is valued by staff – 78% 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.

2.1.35 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 IAD website to help staff in using it,<sup>44</sup> as well as a good practice resource for staff on closing the feedback loop.<sup>45</sup> Background information and examples for students on engaging with MCF are available on the Student Voice webpage.<sup>46</sup> We also produced a student voice graphic to explain the various student voice mechanisms to students (and staff) as both an interactive pdf version<sup>47</sup> and a print-friendly pdf version.<sup>48</sup> We have reminded colleagues of these resources and the value of MCF via Teaching Matters blogs.<sup>49, 50</sup>

2.1.36 Building on the positive experience of MCF for undergraduate courses, we encouraged the wider use of it for postgraduate taught courses throughout 2019/20, recognising that this is already happening across many courses, and embedded it within policy for 2020/21.

### **Student Partnership Agreement (SPA)**

2.1.37 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.

2.1.38 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;

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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/teaching-feedback/mid-course>

<sup>45</sup> <http://edin.ac/2wqzrew>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-voice/enhancing-courses/mid-course-feedback>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback\\_printversion.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback_printversion.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/what-is-mid-course-feedback/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/valuing-and-supporting-mid-course-feedback/>

- Alignment with the University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS) and the Students’ Association’s Strategy.

2.1.39 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 AS&QA. 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.

2.1.40 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 2.1.43). 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.

**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.

2.1.41 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.<sup>51</sup> 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 funded 10 projects and 11 projects in 2019/20.

2.1.42 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

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-voice/partnership-agreement/spa-small-projects>

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 will be 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.

2.1.43 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 student<sup>52</sup> 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 ENGAGE Network.<sup>53</sup> Other project outcomes have been shared via Teaching Matters.<sup>54</sup>

2.1.44 Our SPA is a living, working document<sup>55</sup> 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 Strategy<sup>56</sup> makes clear our guiding principles for integrating E&D in policy and practice, which is complemented by our Equality Outcomes and Actions Plan.<sup>57</sup>

2.2.3 Since ELIR 2015, we have focused on:

- Continuing to promote gender equality through the Athena 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;

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/spa-booklet.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/student-engagement>

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/student-partnership-agreement/>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studentpartnershipagreement.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/Strategy.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/equality\\_outcomes\\_2017-2021\\_action\\_plan\\_final.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/equality_outcomes_2017-2021_action_plan_final.pdf)

- 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.
- 2.2.5 Our Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) reports annually on student and staff ED&I.<sup>58</sup> The ethnic diversity of our student population is enriched by the high proportion of international students that we attract. However, UK-domiciled black and minority ethnic (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% in 2014/15 to 12.8% in 2018/19. The greatest proportion of BME students enter CMVM and the lowest proportion in CAHSS, which reflects the UK wide pattern of higher BME participation in SET subjects than non-SET subjects overall. To set this into a wider context, the 2011 UK Census reports 12.9% of the UK population to be of ethnic minority and 4.1% in Scotland. These figures rise to 20.0% in the UK and 6.2% in Scotland for the under 25s, who make up 95% 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% and 14.3% 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% to 12.7%. 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%), although we are some way off the proportion of BME entrants compared to other Russell Group institutions.

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<sup>58</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/edmarc>

- 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 SQAC and are embedded in the Race Equality and Anti-Racist Action Plan, which has a broader focus.

**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%, placing us in the top three Russell Group universities. The University is 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.

**Supporting the development of an inclusive curriculum**

- 2.2.12 Our 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, 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 which would 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 the University's staff profiles are diverse. The principles and implementation plan were planned to be taken forward during AY 2019/20, with oversight of the Senate Education Committee, but have been delayed due to Covid-19. They will now feed into the planned curriculum review 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.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup>

**Supporting students with disabilities**

- 2.2.15 Overall, 11.5% of our undergraduate students have a declared 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

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

<sup>60</sup> <https://diversityreadinglist.org/>



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.

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<sup>61</sup>, and accompanying guidance<sup>62</sup>, was approved which establishes a framework to monitor, maintain and improve accessibility across the University estate through development, refurbishment and maintenance activities, with £5m 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. On Day one: 25 students booked and seven attended; On Day two: 14 students booked and nine attended. Students could access a 30 minute briefing session by a Careers Consultant as well as exhibitors before general opening. This facility was promoted to final year students who had disclosed a disability. Given the limited take up we will promote the session to all year groups in future, particularly as we received some verbal feedback that the email was the only reason they felt comfortable to attend the fair. Attendance at the event by students reporting a disability increased by 6% 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 Policy<sup>63</sup> 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.

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EstatesBuildings/Policies/UoEAccessibilityPolicy.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EstatesBuildings/Policies/UoEAccessibilityPolicyGuidance.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible\\_and\\_inclusive\\_learning\\_policy.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible_and_inclusive_learning_policy.pdf)

- 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 microphones use, VLEs and the development and consistent delivery of a new Lecture Recording Policy.<sup>64</sup> 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 appointment of a new Vice-Principal for Students with a remit to review the curriculum gives us an exciting opportunity over the coming years to promote and further embed a universal and inclusive course design.

### **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 Campaigns 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 Buddies<sup>65</sup> 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'

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<sup>64</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/lecture\\_recording\\_policy.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/lecture_recording_policy.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/global/buddies/>

transition into a new academic and cultural environment. The Tandem Language Programme<sup>66</sup> is essentially a language exchange. It is run by a committee of University students who work to 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.<sup>67</sup>
- 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% most deprived postcodes in Scotland, and we have expanded our offer guarantee to all care experienced students.<sup>68</sup> We have developed an online contextual data checker<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup>
- 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.<sup>71</sup>
- 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

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<sup>66</sup> <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/activities/global/languages/tandem/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/admissions/policies-procedures>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/access-edinburgh/widening-access-offers>

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

<sup>70</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/equality\\_outcomes\\_and\\_mainstreaming\\_progress\\_report2019-final.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/equality_outcomes_and_mainstreaming_progress_report2019-final.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/admissions/policies-procedures>

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.<sup>72</sup>

### **Widening Participation (WP) strategy**

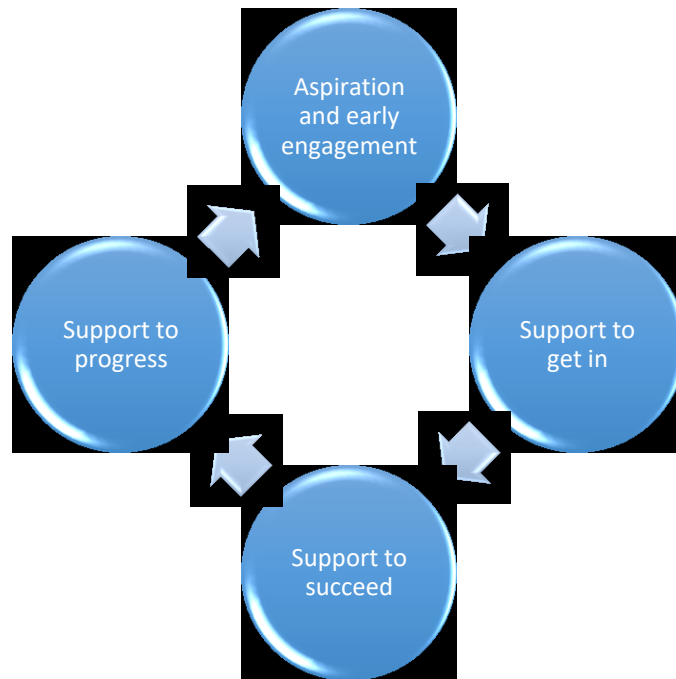
- 2.2.32 The ELIR 2015 Report confirmed: “The University has an effective approach to WP that encompasses a range of activities, including innovative outreach; contextualised admissions; bursary provision; and flexible entry and exit routes into and through the University's degree programmes” (paragraph 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.
- 2.2.34 We have also exceeded our initial Commission on Widening Access target that 10% of new full-time Scottish degree students are from 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 2018-21 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 Strategy<sup>73</sup> 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.

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<sup>72</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pg\\_admissions\\_policy.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/pg_admissions_policy.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/guidingprinciples2018-2021.pdf>

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 two 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 COL**

- 2.2.39 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 41 completed the two semesters of study (80%). This completion exceeds those of other programmes of its nature (for example, University of Glasgow 45%). 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%), all of these adult returner students have faced significant obstacles in achieving their academic goals. Over the course of their year of 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 admissions 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 which is 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-session places, a review of the provision is currently underway, looking at course structure and timetable, use of technology-enhanced learning, 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% 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;<sup>74</sup>
- 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.<sup>75</sup> We have 14 tutors across the University, including 11 in ELE; fee free local history and archaeology courses for the local community.

2.2.44 Access to appropriate teaching spaces during the summer months whilst the Fringe Festival is operating is becoming an issue that requires attention. Summer 2020 was affected by Covid-19 and the need to deliver content remotely/digitally. Also, 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. These and several other issues were highlighted in a recent Internal Programme Review of COL with a view to creating closer alignment and embedding of COL with the wider University.

### 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 Grant<sup>76</sup> (see Box 2.4).

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<sup>74</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching/ele-courses/graduate-writing-centre>

<sup>75</sup> <https://www.cara.ngo/who-we-are/partners-and-supporters/cara-scholars-at-risk-uk-universities-network/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://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.

This year (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 1st year, 67 in 2nd year, 79 in 3rd year, 59 in 4th year and 12 in 5th year.
- 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 how we are 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 has, however, had an adverse impact on study and work away



opportunities. International study and work away opportunities have been suspended for the short-term. 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'<sup>77</sup> 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% point increase in considering applying for internships, work experience and other volunteering opportunities, and a 43% 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.<sup>78</sup>
- 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.<sup>79</sup>
- 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 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)<sup>80</sup> 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.

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<sup>77</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/employers/advertise-your-job/employ-edinternshipsprogramme/insights-programme>

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/careers/insights/case-studies>

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.nice-eu.org>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/employability/slicc/about>

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 webpage<sup>81</sup> for all new students.** This includes online learners, providing key information. A particularly successful section of this webpage is the ‘top six tasks’<sup>82</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup> In response to the recent Thematic Reviews of Mature Students, Student Parents and Carers (2018) and BME Students (2019), we are in the

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students>

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/getting-started-resources/top-6-tasks>

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/new-student-life/student-voices>

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.**<sup>84</sup> 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.**<sup>85</sup> Our Making Transitions Personal (MTP) Pre-arrival Reviews build 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

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<sup>84</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/new-students/getting-started-resources/getting-started-guides>

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/employability/staff-information/making-transitions-personal>

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.**<sup>86</sup> 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.**<sup>87</sup> 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 therefore; 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 are providing a longer induction and orientation period commencing two weeks before semester begins to four weeks after semester has begun. This is to ensure 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 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 will be arriving on campus when they are able or feel comfortable to do so. Students will be 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 will be a new experience. This year we have also used

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<sup>86</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/access-edinburgh/settling-in-at-university/moving-on>

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

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.

- 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 are in planning 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 are also offering 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.<sup>88</sup>
- 2.3.8 The Gearing Up events<sup>89</sup> 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% 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 2% from 2016). As a result of attending a previous year's Gearing Up event, 85% of the 2017 attendees who completed the feedback survey said they had implemented enhancements aimed at student transitions (up 7% 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.

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<sup>88</sup> <https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/new-students/SitePages/Resources-for-colleagues.aspx>

<sup>89</sup> <https://www.edweb.ed.ac.uk/unpublished/students/new-students/induction-resources-for-university-colleagues/gearing-up>

## 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% in 2017 to 61% in 2019. In response, we initiated a fundamental review of student support<sup>90</sup> 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<sup>91</sup> including: 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, SRA, Student Systems and Administration, University Health Centre, and the Students’ Association-run Advice Place.<sup>92</sup>
- 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% to 1,445 students in 2018/19; while the numbers coming forward for support from the SCS have increased by almost 300% 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%. The new building was due to open in March 2020, coinciding with the Covid-19 lockdown, and has been delayed.

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<sup>90</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/supporting-students/personal-tutor-and-student-support-review>

<sup>91</sup> Student Services: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/students/student-services>

<sup>92</sup> The Advice Place: <http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/>

- 2.3.16 The new Health and Wellbeing Centre is also 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.

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

**Additional posts in the Student Counselling Service** – As outlined above, it is proposed that funding is identified for 8.4 fte additional posts (3 fte wellbeing practitioners at UE06 and 5.4 fte counsellor posts, all at UE07) are introduced into the Student Counselling Service (phased over three years). In order to manage the increased number of staff within the service, funding for a 1.0 wte assistant director post at UE08 is needed. This post will also be required to facilitate a robust professional support structure for the Student Wellbeing Function within Schools following the Review of Student Support and Personal Tutor Systems. These measures will ensure that projected demand can be met (further 12% increases are projected during the next three years).

Update as of August 2020: There is a review being undertaken on how available funding is 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, it is proposed that SDS recruit to an additional three x 1.0 fte UE07 posts, which will consist of two disability advisers (DAs) and a specialist autistic spectrum adviser. As well as undertaking assessments with high numbers of students who have mental health conditions, the DAs will also carry caseloads of students with complex mental health conditions.

Update as of August 2020: One Disability Adviser post has been recruited to. For the other two posts that were due to be recruited, a review is being undertaken on how we utilise available funding, given changes to levels of funding and the financial situation.

**Mindfulness Provision** – The Edinburgh Mindfulness Initiative will be scaled up through the recruitment of 0.8 fte UE07 Mindfulness Practitioner- this will enable the initiative to deliver mindfulness programmes more comprehensively across the University. Some of these costs are already covered within the Chaplaincy budget, and £27k per annum is being requested from the Student Experience Action Plan. 233 staff and students attended Mindfulness courses in 2017/18, and this rose to 352 in 2018/19. Plans are in place to scale this up to 500 staff and students for 2019/20.

Update as of August 2020 - The Mindfulness Practitioner post was recruited to in Dec 2019 and has proved extremely beneficial so far. As of August 2020, 136 students participated in Mindfulness courses; 115 on day retreats, 63 1:1 sessions were delivered to 37 individuals; 505 attended drop-ins.

**Listening Service** – The Head of Listening Service post was recruited to in Dec 2019. In order to ensure that the Chaplaincy Listening Service has more focused and strategic approach to service planning, growth, delivery, performance management and service improvement, and to ensure that capacity is maximised and the service works as effectively as possible, a listening head of service post was recruited to in December 2019. Listening Service activity has grown from 47 referrals in 2016/17 to 225 in 2018/19, and with the new post, the target would be to increase the number of referrals to 300 in 2019/20.

Update as of August 2020 - The Listening service gives same or next day response to students and staff. Referrals overall more than doubled from April to June 2020 and are expected to continue rising. Staff referrals increased from 16% to 33% of total referrals. International student referrals increased from 16% to 33% of total referrals. Specifically there has also been a marked increase in high achieving BAME female students from both UK and abroad

**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.

Update as of August 2020: Given changes to levels of funding and the financial situation, this post will not be recruited to. Work continues on refreshing and diversifying training for staff on student mental health.

**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. Students who are within generation Z engage with digital technologies in different and changing ways, and so it is proposed that the University allocates £10k for further innovation and development within this area (for example, exploring ways of providing 24 hour digital, clinical support for students.).

Update as of August 2020- We continue to use SilverCloud and Big White Wall, and uptake of both platforms continues to increase.

**Student-Led Mental Health and Wellbeing Activities** - A pilot wellbeing peer-support project started in October 2018/19, to be evaluated at the end of AY 2019/20. Initial feedback from the first nine months of operation is positive: seven student-led schemes have participated, and there were 902 student contacts. This project provides training and supervision for student 'wellbeing leaders' within peer-learning and support schemes. It is proposed that this is scaled up to 18 student-led groups in 2019/20 and to 30 groups in 2020/21, with a goal that within three years all 47 peer learning and support schemes will have a wellbeing leader embedded within their group (which will give over 8500 students access to support from this role). A counsellor from the SCS will continue to work in partnership with the Students' Association to deliver training and supervision for this project.

Update as of August 2020: 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. It is proposed that funding is agreed for a research project to focus on this. This will enable the University to understand better where resources can be targeted most effectively and efficiently in order to improve the student experience. The aims of this project, which will commence in academic year 2019/2020, will be (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. This will require funding of 0.6 fte UE06 for a three year fixed term period.

Update as of August 2020: Funding was utilised in 2019/20 for a user research project. 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 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 and are not included in this plan. Funding would in any case not be needed until at least 2020/21.

Update as of August 2020: 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 AS&QA 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 6% 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% of respondents said, as a result of taking part in the festive events, they felt more part of the University community, 64% felt the University cared more about them, and 95% 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% reported satisfaction with the event, 91% satisfaction with the achievement and challenge and 99% voted yes to the University subsidising more University-wide participation in events like this.
  - Due to Covid-19, we were 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.<sup>93</sup>

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.<sup>94</sup>

### 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 SA&S as part of a wider 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). 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 study and work away team (SWAY) 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 sections 2.3.56 -2.3.59).

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<sup>93</sup> <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/learningexchange/wp-content/uploads/sites/1606/2020/06/A-Guide-for-Schools-on-Belonging.pdf>

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

## 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).

2.3.24 The Students' Association continues to run successful peer learning and peer support schemes across the University<sup>95</sup> 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 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;

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<sup>95</sup> <http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/peersupport>

- 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 1st year undergraduate students to make the most of their University experience. About 40 undergraduate students from years two, three and four 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 1st year 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.

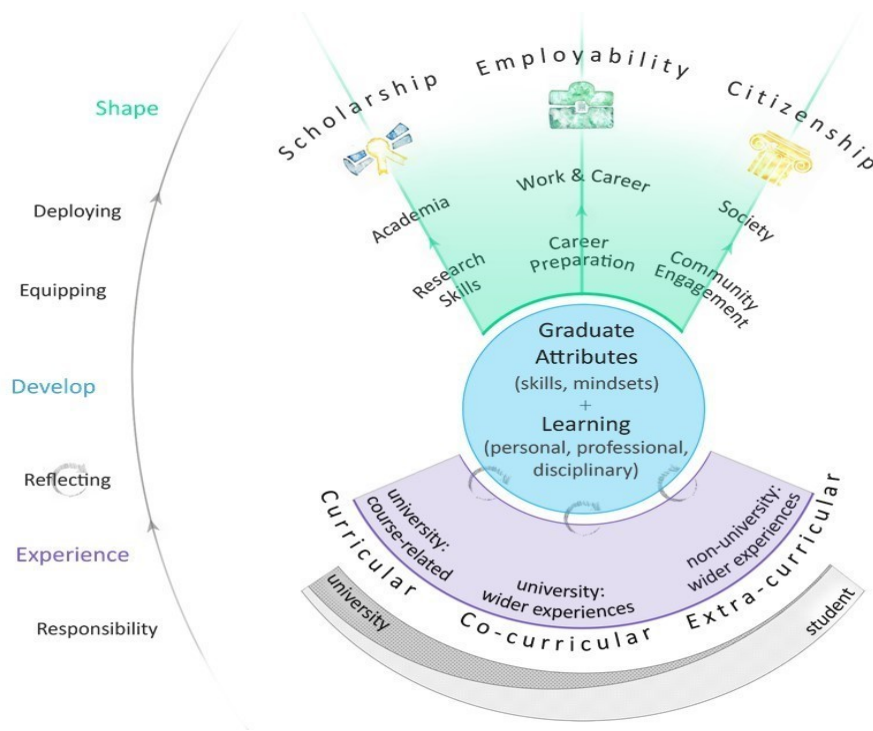
The more socially oriented BizBuddies focuses on welcoming new students, helping to identify relevant services and societies, and offering support and encouragement at this critical time of transition. BizBuddies are encouraged to adopt a 'familial' approach to supporting new students coming into University, 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 be recognised 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 2.1 illustrates our philosophy for developing graduate attributes and employability.

Figure 2.1 Graduate Attributes and Employability Philosophy



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 LTC task group in 2017/18. This focus is set to continue under our new Strategy 2030.

### Curricular activity

2.3.31 At the curricular level, graduate attributes are included in course approval, monitoring and periodic review. Additionally, some 40 professional bodies accredit our programmes, bringing an additional dimension to student skills, attributes and competencies for professional practice (see section 4.2.44). 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, ECA and 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.<sup>96</sup> 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

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20190522combinedagendapapers.pdf> (Paper C)

leaders and the development of a toolkit for embedding and surfacing student development, employability and graduate attributes in the curriculum.<sup>97</sup> These complement our existing curricular enhancement activities, such as a special employability funding stream within our PTAS<sup>98</sup> (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 SLICCs<sup>99</sup>. There are multiple School-owned courses alongside a centrally-run summer elective for Year one and two 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 Toolkit<sup>100</sup> was developed in response to the pivotal role of reflection in supporting student development and employability across all parts of the student experience. Our MTP Pre-arrival Reviews<sup>101</sup> 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 Agents<sup>102</sup> 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 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, 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.

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<sup>97</sup> [www.ed.ac.uk/employability/curriculum-toolkit](http://www.ed.ac.uk/employability/curriculum-toolkit)

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/funding/funding>

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/employability/slicc>

<sup>100</sup> [www.ed.ac.uk/reflection](http://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection)

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

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/changeprogramme>

**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,<sup>103</sup> 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.

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 Service<sup>104</sup> 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

<sup>103</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/clinical-sciences/our-health>

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/edinburgh-innovations/for-students>

greater engagement with student community 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.<sup>105</sup>

- 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 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.<sup>106</sup> 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 schemes<sup>107</sup> 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% gained an insight into work, 81% a network of contacts and 86% new skills. Consistent with the in-person insights, students reported a 31% point increase in confidence. We intend to make a virtual insights programme part of our ongoing offer to further widen access to these opportunities.

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<sup>105</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/edinburgh-innovations/for-students/student-enterprise-hub>

<sup>106</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/looking-for-work/internships/employed/insights-programme>

<sup>107</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/looking-for-work/internships/employed>



- 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. 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 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 complete 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 Award<sup>108</sup> “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 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 MyDevelopmentHub<sup>109</sup> 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.<sup>110</sup> 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

<sup>108</sup> [www.ed.ac.uk/edinburgh-award](http://www.ed.ac.uk/edinburgh-award)

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/my-development-hub>

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20191205-web.pdf> (Paper F)

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), LTC approved a proposal in November 2016 that made the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group a formal task group of the Committee.<sup>111</sup> 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 LTC and advise the Committee on improvements for enhancing assessment and feedback practice.

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’<sup>112</sup> 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.<sup>113</sup> 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;

<sup>111</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/16\\_november\\_2016\\_-\\_agenda\\_and\\_papers\\_final.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/16_november_2016_-_agenda_and_papers_final.pdf) (Paper I)

<sup>112</sup>

[http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/iad/Learning\\_teaching/Academic\\_teaching/Resources/Student\\_Engagement/UE\\_IADEngage\\_FeedbackAssess\\_A5\\_V4\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/iad/Learning_teaching/Academic_teaching/Resources/Student_Engagement/UE_IADEngage_FeedbackAssess_A5_V4_WEB.pdf)

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20200311combinedagendapaperscompressed.pdf> (Paper H)

- 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), LTC agreed that it would be essential to measure both feedback turnaround times and quality of feedback. Proposals were submitted to CSPC and then to 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.<sup>114</sup> 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, 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.<sup>115</sup> 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 not 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).<sup>116</sup>
- 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

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<sup>114</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf>

<sup>115</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/agendapapers20160127.pdf>

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/learning-technology/learning-design/elder>

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).

**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%) 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% said they would recommend ELDeR to other colleagues. Indeed, the team observed 9 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%) said they used the documentation created during the workshop to prepare for the course/programme approval via Board of Studies. Indeed, only 7% 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.”*

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.<sup>117</sup> 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 Regulations<sup>118</sup> that states: “All students will be given at least one formative feedback or feed-forward event for every course they undertake.”

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20171115agendapapers.pdf> (Paper B)

<sup>118</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/2020\\_taught.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/2020_taught.pdf)

- 2.3.52 In May 2019, LTC approved a proposal to amend the name and remit of the Assessment and Feedback Enhancement Group.<sup>119</sup> 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 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 resource<sup>120</sup> 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.
- 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**

- 2.3.56 As part of the SEP, we have launched the new SWAY Service<sup>121</sup> 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;

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<sup>119</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20190522combinedagendapapers.pdf> Paper K

<sup>120</sup>

[http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/iad/Learning\\_teaching/Academic\\_teaching/Resources/Assessment/LEAF/Leading\\_Enhancement\\_Assessment\\_Feedback\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/iad/Learning_teaching/Academic_teaching/Resources/Assessment/LEAF/Leading_Enhancement_Assessment_Feedback_Guide.pdf)

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

- 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 will be introduced from Spring 2020 onwards. In addition, there will be individual 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 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% 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).<sup>122</sup> 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 CAHSS<sup>123</sup> 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

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/postgrad>

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/postgrad/taught-pg/events>

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.<sup>124</sup> 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 Award (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.

### **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.

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<sup>124</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/philosophy/research/seminars-and-reading-groups/postgraduate-professional-development-and-research>



- 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, EngD, and 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 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, LTC and REC approved a new Policy for the Recruitment, Support and Development of Tutors and Demonstrators<sup>125</sup> that came into effect fully at the start of AY 2018/19.
- 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.

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<sup>125</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tutorsdemonstrators\\_policy.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/tutorsdemonstrators_policy.pdf)

- 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 1 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 HEA as part of AdvanceHE. 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%<sup>126</sup> 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. 60% 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%, 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 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 also support postgraduate researchers to gain accreditation through Level one of the

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<sup>126</sup> This is calculated on application data going back 5 iterations of the course as the data for the 4 courses that ran before this is not easily accessible.

Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA). This is a supported, mentored pathway for development in learning and teaching blogging based programme 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 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).

**Box 2.10: Support for postgraduate tutors in PPLS<sup>127</sup>**

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.

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<sup>127</sup> See Advanced Information Set

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.

### Postgraduate research student support

2.4.23 In addition to the PhD supervisors/supervisory team and Local Graduate Schools that offer 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 4-week online course, Prepare for Doctoral Success<sup>128</sup> 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 brochure<sup>129</sup> 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.<sup>130</sup>

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

<sup>128</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/doctoral/courses/prepare-doctoral-success>

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

<sup>130</sup> Report not on the website, but available on request

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 SolidariTEA<sup>131</sup> initiative established in Biological Sciences with funding from the 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,<sup>132</sup> 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.<sup>133</sup> 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.

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<sup>131</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/mini-series-encouraging-solidaritea-amongst-phd-students/>

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

<sup>133</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/excellence-in-doctoral-education>

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;

- 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.

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**

2.4.33 We have 5,750 postgraduate research students, roughly evenly divided across our three Colleges. The nature of the students varies widely between the Colleges and disciplines with around 60% being funded on full studentships either by the School, College or University, or by an external body (40%). There is a move towards longer programmes with funding often covering four years and the training including considerable taught provision. We are also moving to embed training in a number of auxiliary areas such as entrepreneurship, research integrity and equality and diversity into our research degrees.

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 learning and teaching and the student experience is supported by 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 Rainy Hall);
  - Expansion and development of student accommodation;
  - Development of a new Health and Wellbeing Centre in the central campus, due to open in 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 IPRs and annual monitoring process over the last couple of years. As a result, we have taken the decision not to grow 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. 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, the Estates Vision 2017/27 has been developed which sets out our ambition to 'create world class estate for a world-class University.' With a commitment of £1.5bn 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 which 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 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 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;
- 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 £60m 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 in the development of the University's ambition of being carbon neutral by 2040.

2.5.10 Coupled with the capital programme, the Space Strategy Group, a sub-committee of Estates Committee, is charged with developing strategy in relation to 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 Strategy<sup>134</sup> 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.

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<sup>134</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/lt\\_spaces\\_strategy\\_2019.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/lt_spaces_strategy_2019.pdf)

## Lecture recording

2.5.12 In response to student demand, we introduced a campus-wide lecture recording system,<sup>135</sup> 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.

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% of courses with lectures took place in rooms where recording is enabled. Of those, 89% 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%. Use of the service has risen rapidly, reflecting the expansion each year to cover more rooms. In 2018/19 the service had 470,000 video views, in 2019/20 it was 1.14 million.

### 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 to view 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 was undertaken in the Medical School and among the benefits discussed, the most common 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 done in 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.

<sup>135</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/online\\_learning\\_brochure\\_july\\_2019.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/online_learning_brochure_july_2019.pdf)

- 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 The value of the investment in lecture recording has been seen within the University 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. As of August 2020, we are only 10,000 views away from one million views in this academic year.
- 2.5.18 It is anticipated that many colleagues will 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, 1200 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 is up 356% from last year. For colleagues who are not able to make recordings from home we have provisioned a number of supported 'Pop-up' media studios on campus which 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 We have identified many areas where lecture recording may benefit the wider University community, such as providing new opportunities for research, supporting pedagogical innovation, reducing the risk of lecturing as a 'high-stakes' activity, and better supporting students through stressful transitions. It was important to the University that we learn as much as possible from this 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.<sup>136</sup> Edinburgh is leading an Enhancement Theme collaborative cluster on widening participation with lecture recording.<sup>137</sup> 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 brought to the practice of learning and teaching meant that a new and robust Lecture

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<sup>136</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/delivering\\_and\\_evaluating\\_lecture\\_recording.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/delivering_and_evaluating_lecture_recording.pdf)

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

Recording Policy had to be developed, which we implemented in January 2019 after extensive discussion and consultation with staff and the union.<sup>138</sup> This means that lecture recording now happens automatically for everything marked in the timetabling system as a lecture 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 will be delivered digitally, Senate Education Committee approved an amendment to the existing Lecture Recording Policy to extend the key principles on the uses of recordings and participant rights to teaching delivered in virtual classes.

2.5.22 Also, with regard to accessibility of learning materials for hybrid models, the University has considered at length the need for captioning and transcripts on audio and video content and automated support for this is provided for high priority content.

### **Virtual learning environment**

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.

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 that we believe will benefit our students and make it easier for staff to use Learn effectively. Our shared vision, as agreed by the project board, is that three years from now we hope 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

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<sup>138</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/lecture\\_recording\\_policy.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/lecture_recording_policy.pdf)

response, the Learn Foundations project has been accelerated 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 in to the Learn VLE for each course using the Resource Lists service, and the Course Collections programme which supports it. This helps to improve the student experience through improving discoverability of, and access to, essential 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 has an initial target of providing Resource Lists for 60% 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 UK<sup>139</sup> 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.

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<sup>139</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/online\\_learning\\_brochure\\_july\\_2019.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/online_learning_brochure_july_2019.pdf)

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)

**Box 2.12: Approach to Engaging students online and building community**

The Edinburgh Network: Growing Approaches to Genuine Engagement (ENGAGE)<sup>140</sup> 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 AdvanceHE 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.

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 a new 'How to teach in the Edinburgh Online Model' staff development course to assist colleagues in planning and developing online courses and programmes, which can be coupled 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.

<sup>140</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/connect/engage>

- 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 Office365 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.
- 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.
- 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 elements of these have been delivered, a number have been paused due to Covid-19 and the impact on the University’s financial position.



- 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.

## 3. Strategy and practice for enhancing learning and teaching

### 3.1 Strategic approach to enhancement

#### Overview

- 3.1.1 The 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 (discussed in Chapter 1), 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 and the Student Experience Action Plan (StEAP) before they were paused (see Chapter 1).
- 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 our strategic approach to enhancement and the LTS, further details of which are provided in Chapter 4.

#### Learning and teaching strategy (LTS)

- 3.1.5 Our LTS<sup>141</sup> 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 was launched, we have made considerable progress against our LTS, as shown in Table 3.1. Many of these achievements are reported separately throughout this 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

<sup>141</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning\\_teaching\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning_teaching_strategy.pdf)

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 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.

### Near future teaching

3.1.7 The Near Future Teaching project<sup>142</sup> 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.

**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:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We introduced a new student representative structure.</li> <li>• We developed our first SPA, now in its third year of running.</li> </ul>
We will develop and enhance our curriculum:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• We ran a task group on research-led learning and teaching providing a definition, external benchmarking and identification of internal best practice.</li> <li>• We undertook a task group on the inclusive curriculum, developing principles in inclusive course design.</li> <li>• We ran a task group on joint honours degrees to improve the student experience for joint honours students.</li> </ul>
We will use the flexibility of the standard undergraduate degree structure to build a rounded learning experience including:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• We extended the range and offering of 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.</li> <li>• We increased the range of international learning experiences available to students, making this more accessible to a wider range of students.</li> </ul>

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

## UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH – REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

We will offer our postgraduate taught students the opportunity to develop cutting edge and advanced skills and knowledge in their chosen field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the EFI, we have been developing a suite of innovative, interdisciplinary postgraduate offerings as full masters programmes and MicroMasters.</li> <li>• We are piloting a Distance Learning at Scale project, building on the success of MOOCs and online masters, and developed our first MicroMasters course in Predictive Analytics for Business Applications.</li> </ul>
We will nurture a learning community that supports students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• We rolled out lecture recording across the entire University and developed a policy on its use.</li> <li>• We extended the reach and impact of peer support and peer learning schemes.</li> <li>• We made considerable investment in the Estate to extend the quantity and improve the quality of learning and teaching spaces.</li> <li>• We developed a project to explore the role and use of learning analytics in supporting students.</li> <li>• We developed and implemented a new WP Strategy.</li> </ul>
We will recruit and nurture excellent teaching staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• We have developed and extended our opportunities and expectations for staff development in support of teaching excellence.</li> </ul>
We will optimise academic and professional support staff time devoted to core learning and teaching activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

### 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 have 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 current 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<sup>143</sup>, Assessment and Feedback, Graduate Skills, and Technology Enhanced Learning<sup>144</sup> 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 AS&QA 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 support 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), facilitate communication across the University, and promote the use of data for enhancing the student experience.
- 3.2.4 We are using the current 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 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 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.

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

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

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 website<sup>145</sup> and is summarised in a presentation on the website.<sup>146</sup> 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.

**Box 3.1: Impact of the Student Transitions Theme on enhancement**

Examples of work the University undertook include<sup>147</sup>:

- 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.

3.2.8 The Adapting Well<sup>148</sup> 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

<sup>145</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/enhancement-themes-overview/student-transitions/institutional-work>

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

<sup>147</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/enhancement-themes-overview/student-transitions/institutional-work>

<sup>148</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/adapting-well>

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 Toolkit<sup>149</sup> 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 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 leaflet<sup>150</sup> sits alongside the Academic Transitions Toolkit as a short leaflet summarising for staff the key ingredients of successful student transitions. This has been 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 examples of good practice across the University, can be seen on our transitions website<sup>151</sup> and all the case studies are available on the Student Transitions wiki.<sup>152</sup>

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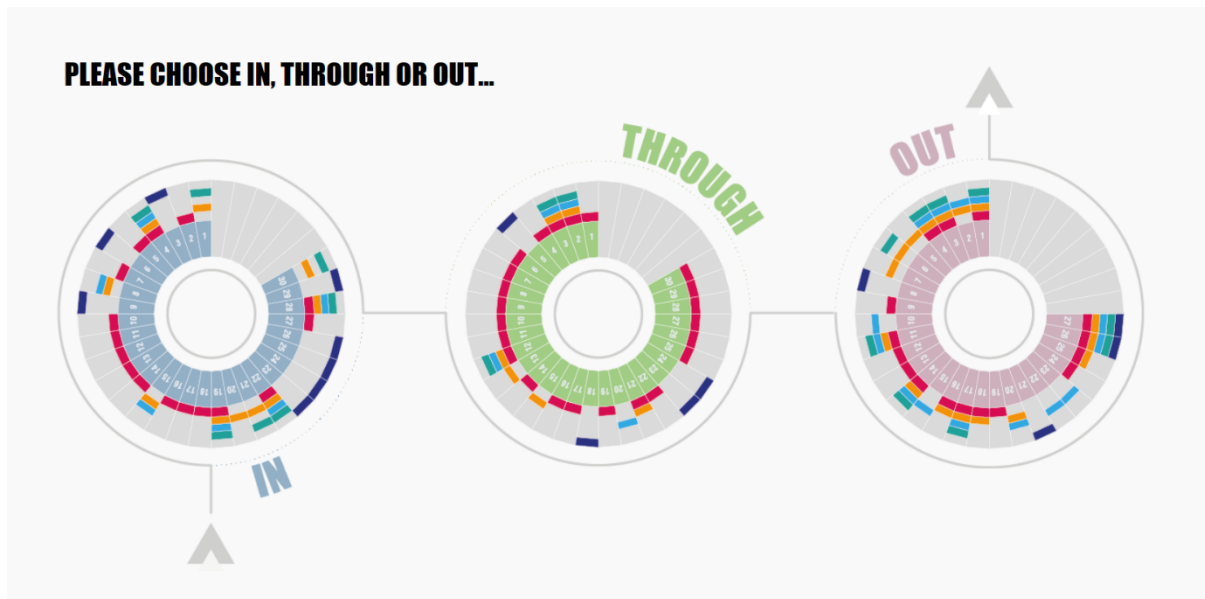
<sup>149</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/levels/academic-transitions-toolkit>

<sup>150</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/levels/student-transitions-guide>

<sup>151</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/enhancement-themes-overview/transitions-map>

<sup>152</sup> <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/ETST/Enhancement+Theme+-+Student+Transitions+Home>

Figure 3.1: Student Transitions Map



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.<sup>153</sup>

#### 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.

3.2.15 The Head of the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team has 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

<sup>153</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/welcome-to-junes-issue-of-teaching-matters-student-transitions/>



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 and 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 NSS and PTES surveys, accompanied by training on how to understand and utilise the data to achieve change. Going forward 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, SQAC approved proposals to roll the pilot out across the University for AY 2019/20.<sup>154</sup>
- 2.1.45 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 effectively engage 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.
- 2.1.46 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

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<sup>154</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers\\_20190523.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers_20190523.pdf) (Paper G)

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.

- 3.2.18 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.<sup>155</sup> We have promoted these resources as part of our communications about Mid-Course Feedback.
- 3.2.19 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 isn't 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.
- 3.2.20 In AY 2018/19, 65.7% of programme representatives completed the newly introduced handover document (up from 53% 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 Reps "hit the ground running" when they start in their role.
- 3.2.21 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 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 upon developed into 'Giving feedback: a student guide' and online<sup>156</sup> and hard copy<sup>157</sup> versions shared across the University. The guide was shared at a workshop at Strathclyde University and is mentioned in a blog.<sup>158</sup> We intended to ask Schools

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<sup>155</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/closing-feedback-loop>

<sup>156</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback.pdf>

<sup>157</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback\\_printversion.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback_printversion.pdf)

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

how the guide has been used to inform an evaluation, but this work has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 3.2.22 We have carried out a detail work to investigate specific non-continuation challenges. The most recently published HESA Performance Indicator for non-continuation of young UK domiciled 2017/18 entrants, shows that our % no longer in Higher Education the session following entry is 2.6%; lower i.e. more favourable than for any other recent cohort. Our statistic is now below, i.e. more favourable than, our HESA calculated benchmark of 2.8% (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%) and the Scottish sector (6.1%).
- 3.2.23 We know that non-continuation rates vary between our Schools and between some student groups. In depth analysis investigated these patterns across 4 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 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.
- 3.2.24 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 1 and 2, years 2 and 3, etc. 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).

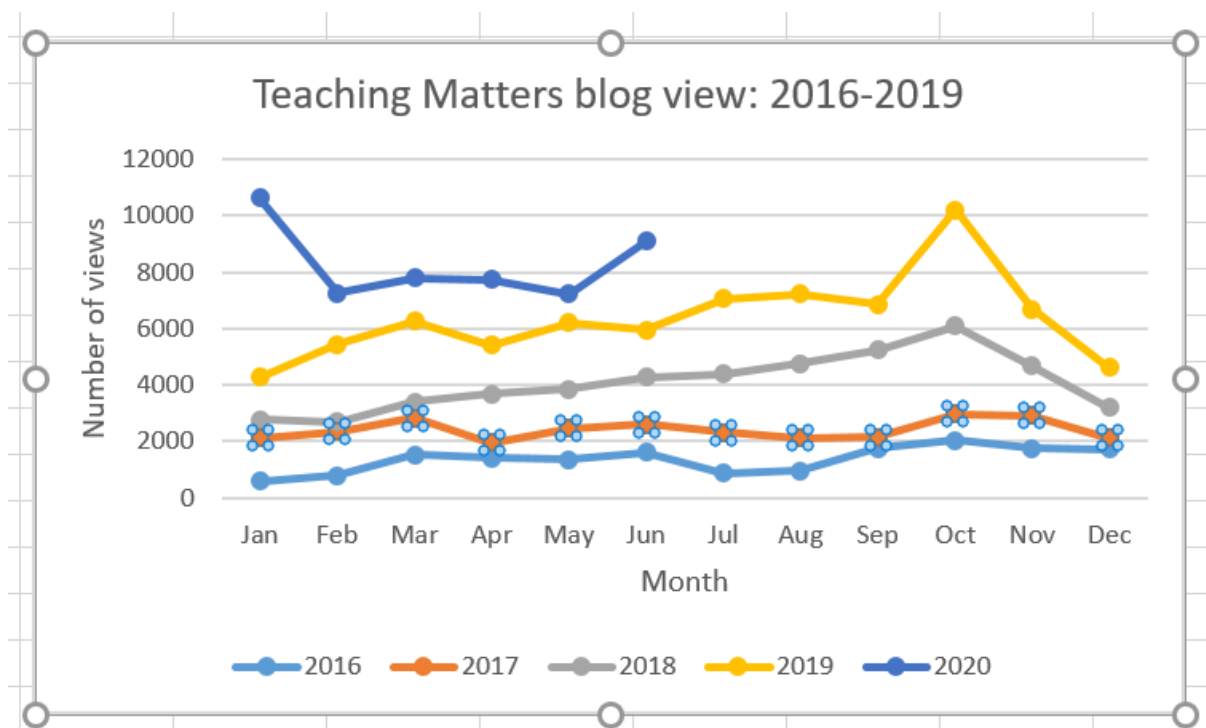
- 3.3.2 We have continued to develop and strengthen our approach to identifying and sharing good practice. Some of the key ways in which we share good practice include:
- Our Teaching Matters website, blog and podcast, and the recently developed Edinburgh Hybrid Teaching Exchange;
  - Our annual Learning 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 Institute for Academic Practice (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 sharing 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.
- 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: 2016-2019.**



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,<sup>159</sup> Inclusivity in the Curriculum,<sup>160</sup> and Academic blogging.<sup>161</sup> 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 – ten blog posts and two podcast episodes on their mini-series.

<sup>159</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/mini-series-mental-health-and-wellbeing/>

<sup>160</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/mini-series-inclusivity-in-curriculum/>

<sup>161</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/mini-series-academic-blogging/>

- 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,<sup>162</sup> examples of quality enhancement from IPR,<sup>163</sup> examples of the curriculum toolkit in practice (employability)<sup>164</sup>, outputs from the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) funded projects, and findings from the Principal’s Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) funded projects.<sup>165</sup>
- 3.3.11 The ‘Spotlight on...’ series<sup>166</sup> 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.<sup>167</sup>
- 3.3.12 Teaching Matters is working with Schools to add a ‘Teaching’ section on School homepages (for example, School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures<sup>168</sup>) through which Teaching Matters posts that have been authored by staff or students in that School can be automatically displayed. This instils ownership and pride for the good teaching practices specific to each School.
- 3.3.13 Although statistics show high engagement with the Teaching Matters blogs, only 10% 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 Podcast<sup>169</sup> 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 AnchorFM<sup>170</sup> (a free, online podcast hosting site) and streamed to Spotify, iTunes etc. As of June 2020, there have been 1,697 plays across the current 15 episodes, with the majority of the 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,<sup>171</sup> and generate impact on practice and professional

<sup>162</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/go-abroad-staff/>

<sup>163</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/quality-enhancement-report-examples/>

<sup>164</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/curriculum-toolkit-explicit-recognition-of-employability/>

<sup>165</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/ptas-findings/>

<sup>166</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/?s=spotlight>

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/spotlight-on-elir/>

<sup>168</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/teaching-excellence>

<sup>169</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/podcast/>

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

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

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.

### 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 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)

#### Box 3.2 Learning and Teaching Conference: Feedback

“Hugely inspiring keynotes. Definitely came away with a sense that there is a drive behind L&T 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!”

3.3.17 An archive of the keynote videos and presentation slides from the 2018 conference is available on the IAD website.<sup>172</sup> Professor Amy Tsui also wrote a Teaching Matters blog which has received 153 reads.<sup>173</sup> Another Teaching Matters blog, by Veterinary

<sup>172</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/practice/ltconf2018>

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

Medicine student Vikky Park, giving a student’s perspective on the conference, has had 81 reads.<sup>174</sup>

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.

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

**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.”

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



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.<sup>175</sup> Professor Peter Felton also contributed a Teaching Matters blog post.<sup>176</sup>
- 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.<sup>177</sup> 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 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<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/practice/ltconf2019>

<sup>176</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/creating-a-relentless-welcome/>

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

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

### 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 Since their launch in 2008/09 as the first student-led Teaching Awards scheme in the UK, the Students' Association's Teaching Awards<sup>179</sup> have been a phenomenal success, and they represent an extremely positive partnership between the University and the Students' Association. The Teaching Awards scheme allows students to nominate teaching staff, support staff, and courses for awards which are assessed by a student judging panel. The Teaching Awards scheme gives students an opportunity to express their appreciation to staff and recognise their contribution to their student experience. In 2018/19, over 2000 nominations were received in 11 categories. In 2019/20, 1511 nominations were received in over 11 categories.
- 3.3.27 The Students' Association holds a high-profile annual awards ceremony at the end of each academic year to recognise the award winners and runners-up. Both staff and student nominators attend the evening of the Awards ceremony. The Teaching Awards also acts as a way to recognise best practice in teaching and disseminate it across the University. Following the awards ceremony, Teaching Awards winners and runners' up are invited to write a blog for Teaching Matters and a feature on the 2018 Awards was published on Teaching Matters.<sup>180</sup>
- 3.3.28 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 PTAS to conduct an analysis of the data, comprising almost 3000 Teaching Award nominations, in order to systematically understand what students value in our teaching.<sup>181</sup> These insights were shared at the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee<sup>182</sup> and highlighted at an event 'What does good teaching look like to students' that took place December 2016. Throughout 2019/20, the Students' Association have 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.
- 3.3.29 The Students' Association continues to place an emphasis on the quality of nominations, as opposed to quantity, and has worked to demonstrate the impact of nominations on staff as a recent video shows.<sup>183</sup> We are proud that the University continues to recognise Teaching Award nominations as an indicator of teaching

<sup>179</sup> <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/campaigns/teachingawards/>

<sup>180</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/eusa-teaching-awards/>

<sup>181</sup> <https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/campaigns/teachingawards/research/>

<sup>182</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/16\\_november\\_2016\\_-\\_agenda\\_and\\_papers\\_final.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/16_november_2016_-_agenda_and_papers_final.pdf) (Paper E)

<sup>183</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7AwUEBAnpk>

excellence, including Teaching Award nominations as evidence in the Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education for academic staff at grades nine and ten.<sup>184</sup>

### Outcomes from quality processes

- 3.3.30 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.<sup>185</sup> Examples of Teaching Matters blog posts that have been identified through quality assurance and enhancement processes are tagged.<sup>186</sup>
- 3.3.31 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 and resources and events linked to outcomes from our quality assurance and enhancement processes.<sup>187</sup>

### Networks and communities of practice

- 3.3.32 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 the 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)*

- 3.3.33 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 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.

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<sup>184</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/exemplarsofexcellenceinstudenteducation.pdf>

<sup>185</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/welcome-to-the-april-issue-of-teaching-matters-building-academic-communities/>

<sup>186</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/quality-enhancement-report-examples/>

<sup>187</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice>

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

#### *Directors of Quality Network*

3.3.35 The School Directors of Quality Network was set up in 2012 under the leadership of the Assistant Principal AS&QA 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 and the UK Quality Code, use of data (Power BI), quality processes for Schools and programmes and quality for postgraduate research provision, and Course Evaluation Questionnaires (CEQs). There has also been a joint event with the Directors of Teaching Network. Our good practice website provides further details and resources from the events.<sup>188</sup> The forum is valued by both existing Directors of Quality and those new to the role.

#### *Directors of Teaching Network*

3.3.36 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.<sup>189</sup> 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*

3.3.37 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 Edinburgh Network: Growing Approaches to Genuine Engagement (ENGAGE)<sup>190</sup> for students and staff.

3.3.38 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

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<sup>188</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice/events>

<sup>189</sup> <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/spaces/viewspace.action?key=DTN>

<sup>190</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/connect>

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 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*

- 3.3.39 In addition to institution-wide networks, the Colleges and Schools organise a variety of networks, fora and events to share practice. For example, 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 institution. 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.
- 3.3.40 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.
- 3.3.41 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.
- 3.3.42 Within CAHSS, Moray House School of Education and Sport has its 'Practice Worth Sharing' series.<sup>191</sup> 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

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<sup>191</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/education/about-us/gae>

from the 'Practice Worth Sharing' series, giving colleagues across the University the opportunity to benefit from the insights as well.<sup>192</sup>

### *Leaders' Forum*

3.3.43 The Leaders' Forum<sup>193</sup> is the most recent network developed. 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: The Principal, 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.

## **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.

<sup>192</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/spotlight-on-practice-worth-sharing/>

<sup>193</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/leadership-programmes/leaders-forum>

## 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 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 Group<sup>194</sup> 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 seven to Grade eight). 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 seven 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 seven to eight has been limited in practice.
- 3.4.6 Recommendations to further 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 is supporting 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.

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<sup>194</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/teaching-and-academic-careers>

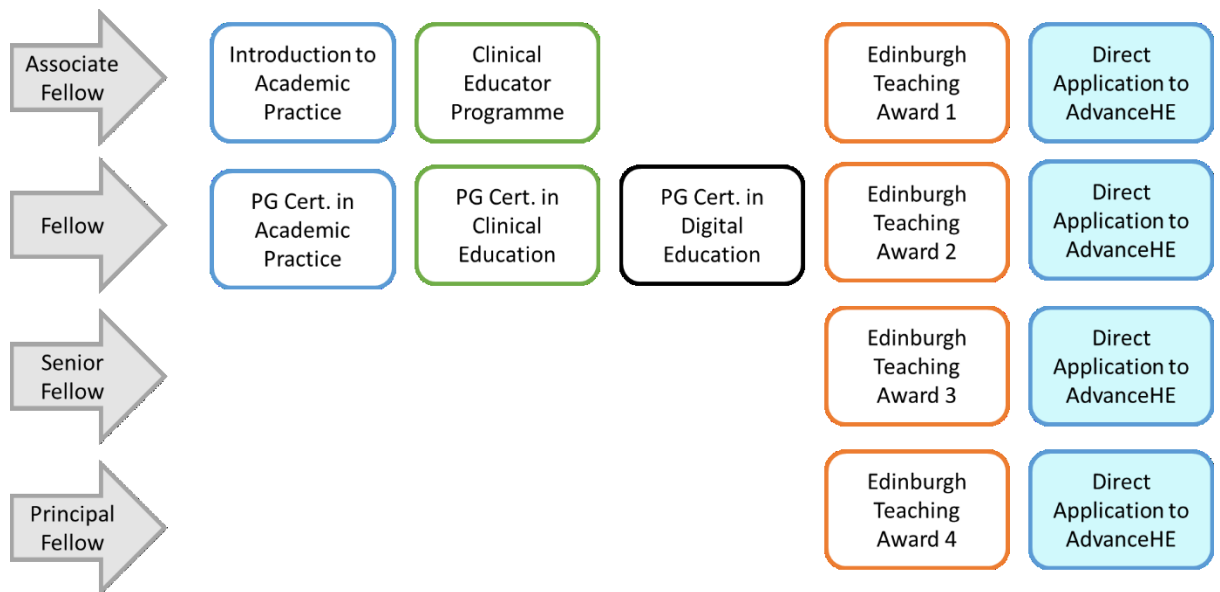
**CPD framework**

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.<sup>195</sup> This Framework continues to provide structured and flexible routes to the different categories of fellowship set out within the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). The 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).

**Figure 3.3: CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching**



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

3.4.11 Our newly re-designed PgCAP<sup>196</sup> 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

<sup>195</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/cpd/cpd>.

<sup>196</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/cpd/postgraduate-certificate>



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 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 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 the Covid-19 lockdown. We will build on this experience and continue to develop the online and hybrid character of the PgCAP during 2020/21.
- 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 (HE) 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 AdvanceHE 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 EdTA<sup>197</sup> 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.<sup>198</sup>

3.4.18 We carried out an internal evaluation of the EdTA in 2019.<sup>199</sup> 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.<sup>200</sup> 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

<sup>197</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/cpd/postgraduate-certificate>

<sup>198</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/evaluating-the-edinburgh-teaching-award/>

<sup>199</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/evaluating-the-edinburgh-teaching-award/>

<sup>200</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/time-well-spent-reflections-on-undertaking-the-edta/>

for them.<sup>201</sup> 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 AdvanceHE (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.

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 AFHEA 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.

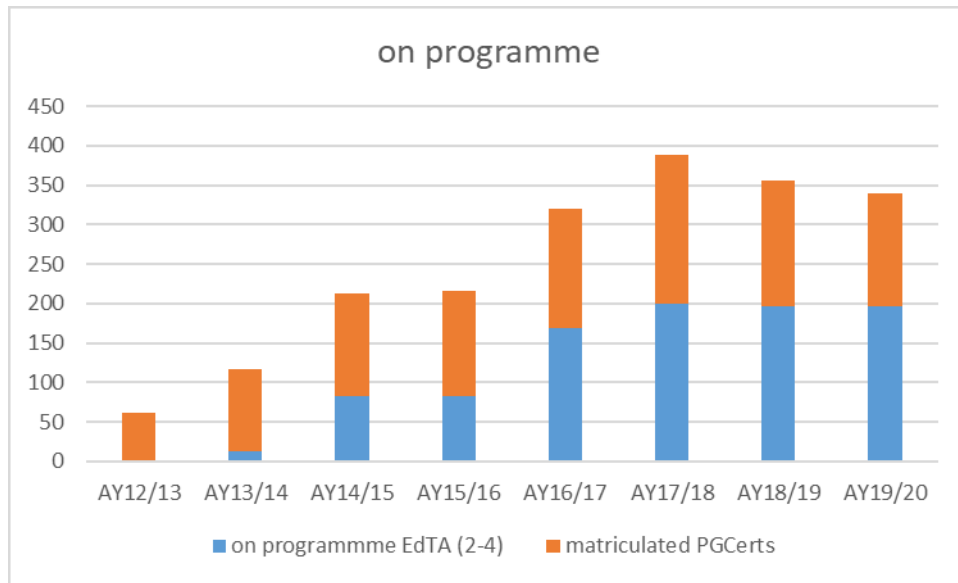
3.4.22 Participation in the PgCAP (see Figure 3.4) has remained generally stable in recent years, despite the introduction of the EdTA as an alternative possibility for staff. This suggests an increase in willingness of staff to participate in accredited provision. There is potential for growth on the 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.

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<sup>201</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/a-research-teaching-nexus-gaining-higher-education-academy-hea-accreditation-based-on-supervisory-activities/>

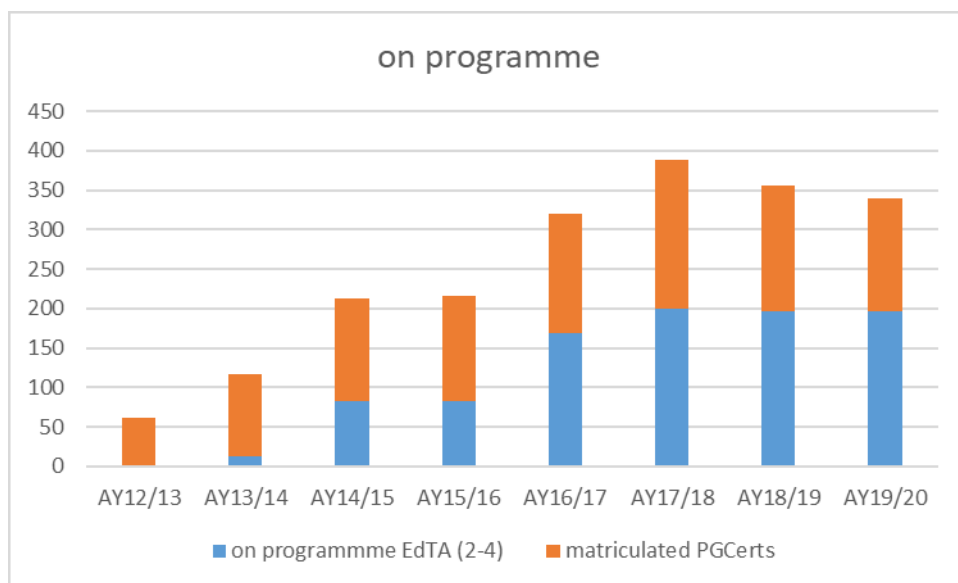
**Figure 3.4: Participation in the EdTA (levels 2-4) and PgCAP (AY12/13 to AY19/20)**



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.

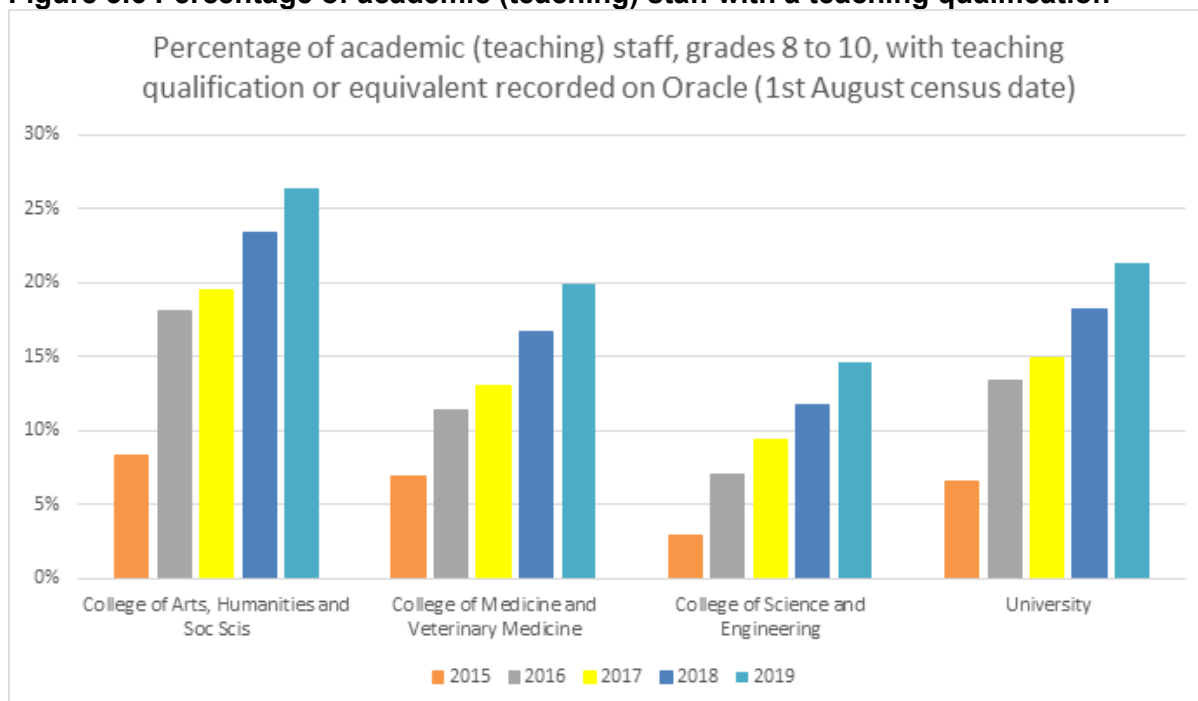
3.4.25 The number of colleagues completing the full PgCAP is beginning to improve with the new version of the programme (see Figure 3.5) but it will take 2-3 years to be sure this trend is established. Completions of the EdTA have grown steadily. Participants who do not complete the PgCAP or the EdTA 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 AdvanceHE Fellowship already in place. It also includes other qualifications recognised by HESA, such as holders of PgCE qualifications in secondary or further education.

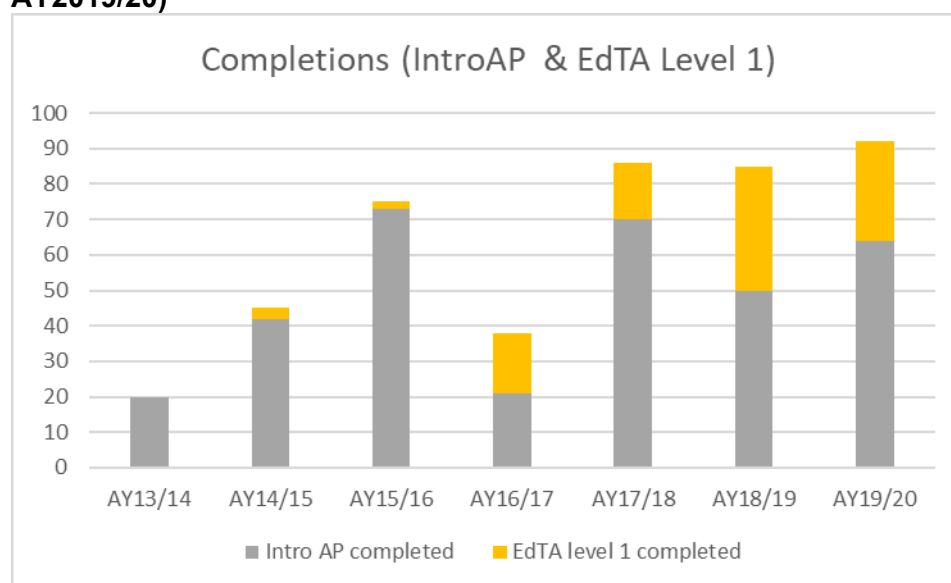
**Figure 3.6 Percentage of academic (teaching) staff with a teaching qualification**



3.4.27 Completion data for the IntroAP are provided in Figure 3.7 along with completion data for the EdTA category 1. The excellent completion rates for the IntroAP of around 90-

95% 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 1 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 Figure 3.8. 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) AdvanceHE Fellowship as part of their participation. Only a subset of these Fellowship completers will be employed by the University.

**Figure 3.8: 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, 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/Advanced HE in these sessions. A blog was written to promote and encourage engagement in teaching accreditation for technicians.<sup>202</sup>

## 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% 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.<sup>203</sup> 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.<sup>204</sup>
- 3.4.39 The University is currently preparing to introduce a new ERP (enterprise resource planning) system which will enable Annual Reviews to be recorded and submitted digitally with direct links to professional development opportunities, further supporting career progression.

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<sup>202</sup> <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/technicians/2019/08/19/recognise-me-teaching-and-being-a-technician-are-not-mutually-exclusive/>

<sup>203</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/annual-review>

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/annual-review/forms>



**Staff survey outcomes and actions**

3.4.40 In autumn 2019, we conducted our first pan-University staff survey, with a 46% response rate and 67% positive employee engagement score. The key strengths and challenges highlighted from the survey are summarised in Table 3.4. Staff clearly feel they have good 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 is 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 3.4: 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%

- 3.1.1 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 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**

3.4.42 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% of mentees reporting an increase in morale and motivation, 86% an increase in confidence and self-esteem and 92% of mentors reporting a personal sense of achievement and satisfaction from their mentoring relationship.

3.4.43 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%). 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%.

3.4.44 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% of mentors and 89% 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 our 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, and 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 they are valued by staff who are both new to and established in those 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 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.

## 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 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 and governance. However, 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)<sup>205</sup> 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

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<sup>205</sup> Previously CSPC

same, but we have enhanced 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. 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' website<sup>206</sup> 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.<sup>207</sup> 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 Policy (PCAM) Policy. APRC approved a concession to allow Heads of School to appoint multiple temporary Boards of Studies Deputy Convenors 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.<sup>208</sup> Online supporting guidance is available on the Academic Services' website.<sup>209</sup> 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 convenors 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

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<sup>206</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum>

<sup>207</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog\\_course\\_approval.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog_course_approval.pdf)

<sup>208</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boardofstudies.pdf>

<sup>209</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum>

learn and share good practice”, the benefits in “getting together to mutually consider issues, establishing common ground across College boundaries”, for “new administrators/convenors 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 2018, to provide a forum for discussion and sharing practice.<sup>210</sup> 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 (ART).
- 4.1.12 The main source of information for applicants about programmes and courses is the Degree Finder,<sup>211</sup> which links to the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS).<sup>212</sup> We also have listings on 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 MOOCs. The process is outlined on the Academic Services’ website<sup>213</sup> 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.<sup>214</sup> 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:

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<sup>210</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/connect/board-of-studies-network>

<sup>211</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/degrees> and <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/postgraduate/degrees>

<sup>212</sup> <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>

<sup>213</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting>

<sup>214</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac\\_agendapapers\\_20160526website.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac_agendapapers_20160526website.pdf) (Papers C, D and E)

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- 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;
- 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,<sup>215</sup> 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. CAHSS, for example, has developed an electronic version of the University-wide annual monitoring template which is used by all Schools in the College and has been adopted by some Schools in CSE. The School and Programme Quality System (SPQS) is an open access system that supports programme, School and College-level reporting.<sup>216</sup> 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 AS&QA, 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

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<sup>215</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/annualmonrevreppolicy.pdf>

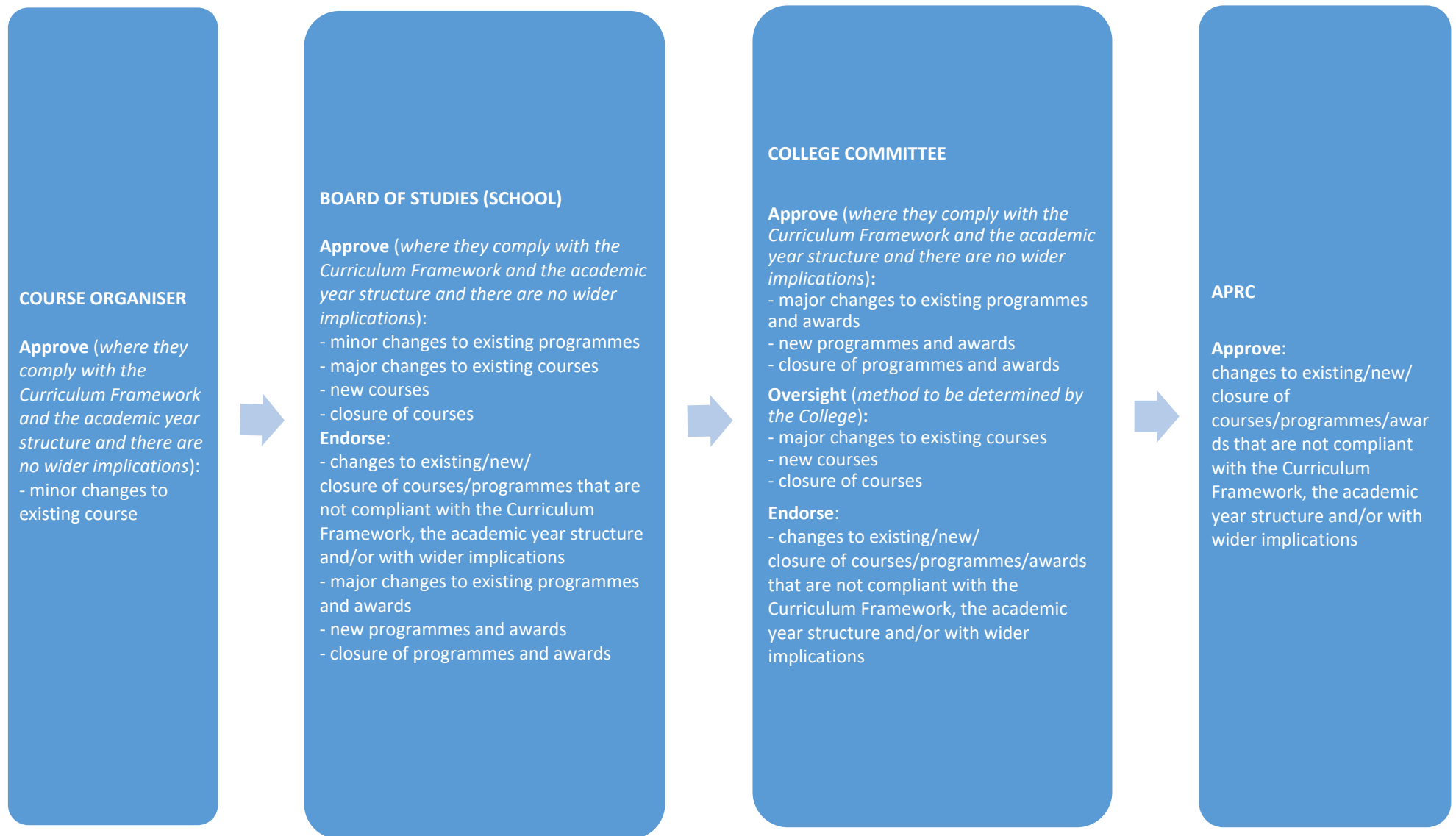
<sup>216</sup> <https://spqs.euclid.ed.ac.uk/>

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years include: personal tutoring, patterns of degree classification outcomes, and the impact of industrial action on the student experience.



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



- 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,<sup>217</sup> and showcase the good practice at events and 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 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 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

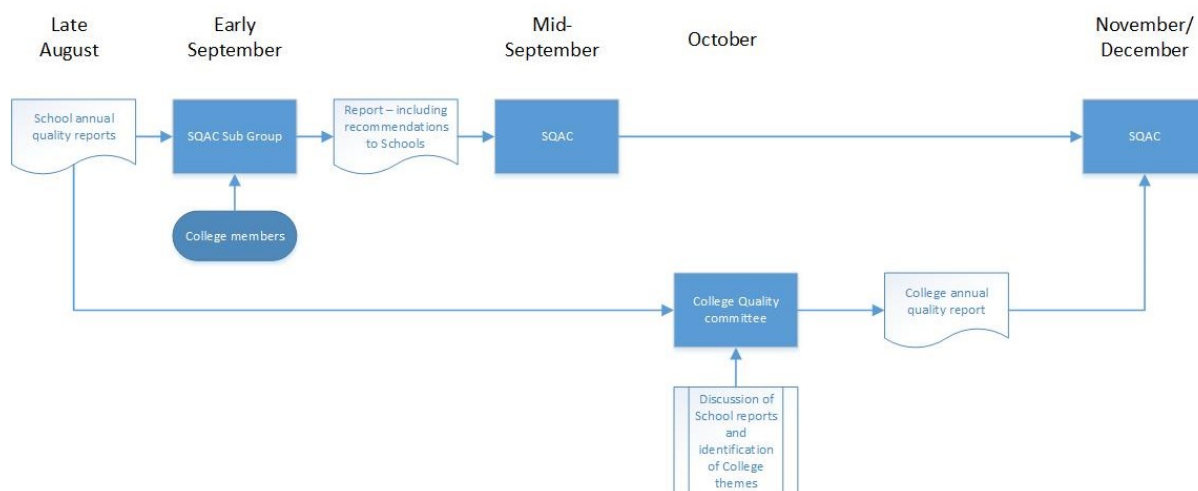
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<sup>217</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice>

SQAC in February 2020. Additionally, the requirement for Colleges to provide benchmarked data was removed and how the PT system should be reflected upon was amended to reflect on ‘student support’ within each School.<sup>218</sup>

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 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 the 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 (SSAR) and Thematic review

4.1.25 Our process for 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 AS&QA, including colleagues in key leadership roles, an external member of 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.

<sup>218</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20200227-web.pdf> (Paper D)

- 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.<sup>219</sup> 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.<sup>220</sup> 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 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 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:

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<sup>219</sup> <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SSSAR/Student+Support+Services+Annual+Review+Home>  
(restricted access)

<sup>220</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/supporting-academic-community-at-the-university-of-edinburgh/>

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*“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.<sup>221</sup>

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

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<sup>221</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/student-support-thematic>

presented in a paper to a meeting of SQAC in February 2020.<sup>222</sup> 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 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.

#### **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).

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<sup>222</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20200227-web.pdf> (Paper F).

- 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, 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.

**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.”<sup>223</sup>

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:<sup>224</sup>

- 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

<sup>223</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers\\_20160908.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers_20160908.pdf) (Paper L)

<sup>224</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendas-papers-20170525.pdf> (Paper F)

- 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 attendees
- Review team encouraged to suggest two questions for each meeting rather than a list of comments/thoughts. This should enable review team administrator 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:<sup>225</sup>

- 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.

4.1.46 Detailed guidance is available on the quality webpages for review team members and Schools/subject areas under review.<sup>226</sup> 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.

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.

<sup>225</sup> [file:///ed.ac.uk/dst/shared/SASG/AAPS/H-Governance&Management/02-Committees\(University-wide\)/28-QualityAssuranceCommittee/02-Meetings/2017-18/20171130/PaperK-RemitReflectiveReport.pdf](file:///ed.ac.uk/dst/shared/SASG/AAPS/H-Governance&Management/02-Committees(University-wide)/28-QualityAssuranceCommittee/02-Meetings/2017-18/20171130/PaperK-RemitReflectiveReport.pdf)

<sup>226</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review>



- 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.<sup>227</sup>
- 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.<sup>228</sup>
- 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.<sup>229</sup> 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 (the self-evaluation document prepared in advance of the review) writing and a preparation meeting for the internal review team members to discuss the key questions emerging from the documentation, to agree the chair for each meeting and to discuss any final arrangements for the review.

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<sup>227</sup> <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=294618340> (restricted access)

<sup>228</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review/process>

<sup>229</sup> <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/InternalReview/Review+Team+Administrators+information> (restricted access)

- 4.1.55 SQAC approves IRP reports. We continue to publish all IRP 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 are asked to communicate the areas and the outcome of the discussion to relevant College committees. A progress report on actions is considered by SQAC at an appropriate point later in the academic year. We share the good practice examples with the Institute for IAD for wider communication via Teaching Matters blogs, through the Academic Services' good practice webpages,<sup>230</sup> 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 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.<sup>231</sup> 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 to. 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 sought and were granted approval from QAA and SFC to postpone three reviews that had been scheduled to

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<sup>230</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice>

<sup>231</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20190918.pdf> (Paper N)

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)<sup>232</sup>
- Degree classification procedures<sup>233</sup>
- Operation of Boards of Examiners (including Special Circumstances Policy<sup>234</sup> and External Examining<sup>235</sup>)
- Academic misconduct procedures<sup>236</sup>

4.1.62 Assessment practice is underpinned and supported by: a set of assessment principles,<sup>237</sup> a small number of Edinburgh Common Marking Schemes,<sup>238</sup> and guidance on moderation of marking.<sup>239</sup>

4.1.63 Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (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.<sup>240</sup> 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

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<sup>232</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations>

<sup>233</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/assessment/degree-classification>

<sup>234</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners>

<sup>235</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/external-examining>

<sup>236</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct>

<sup>237</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf> (Regulation 11)

<sup>238</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/timetabling-examinations/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme>

<sup>239</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/taughtassessmentregulations.pdf> (Regulation 31)

<sup>240</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/assessment/assessment-regulations>

- 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.<sup>241</sup> This incorporated and streamlined the content of six previous policy documents, providing a single, 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 Policy<sup>242</sup> 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 Covid19, 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.

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<sup>241</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe\\_handbook.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/boe_handbook.pdf)

<sup>242</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special\\_circumstances.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/special_circumstances.pdf)

## 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 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 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,<sup>243</sup> 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.<sup>244</sup> 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.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf>

<sup>244</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/external-examining>

<sup>245</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/eersguidance-covid-19.pdf>

## Assessment practice

- 4.1.1 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).
- 4.1.2 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 Committee (LTC). Outcomes were varied; however, it was clear that there was appetite for reviewing the common marking schemes across Colleges and at LTC.
- 4.1.3 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.
- 4.1.4 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

- 4.1.5 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.
- 4.1.6 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 1%. 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.

- 4.1.7 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.<sup>246</sup> 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:Cite<sup>247</sup> - 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.
- 4.1.8 The Assistant Principal AS&QA convenes three meetings per year with the three CAMOs and their teams to continually share experience arising from academic 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 students<sup>248</sup> and staff.<sup>249</sup> We are developing guidance about the use of proof-readers for the start of AY 2020/21.
- 4.1.9 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

- 4.1.74 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 SCQF;
  - SFC guidance to higher education institutions on quality;
  - The UK Professional Standards Framework;
  - Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs);
  - External Examiners;
  - The Enhancement Themes; and
  - Benchmarking across UK institutions, such as the Russell Group.
- 4.1.75 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

<sup>246</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/study-hub/learning-resources/standards>

<sup>247</sup> [https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support\\_and\\_advice/the\\_advice\\_place/academic/citeright/](https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place/academic/citeright/)

<sup>248</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/students/conduct/academic-misconduct>

<sup>249</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/discipline/academic-misconduct>

- International benchmarking.

### **UK Quality Code, including subject benchmark statements**

- 4.2.1 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 Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) in May 2019.<sup>250</sup>
- 4.2.2 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 Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) approved mappings to 11 of the 12 advice and guidance themes. The final mapping will be presented to SQAC in September 2020.
- 4.2.3 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.
- 4.2.4 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.<sup>251</sup> 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.
- 4.2.5 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.

### **SCQF**

- 4.2.6 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.

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<sup>250</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20190522combinedagendapapers.pdf> (Paper E)

<sup>251</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/quality-code>



- 4.2.7 The SCQF is covered in the Boards of Studies training for convenors 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'.
- 4.2.8 IPR processes provide an ongoing basis through which we ensure ongoing alignment with SCQF and updates to Subject Benchmark Statements.

### **SFC expectations**

- 4.1.76 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.
- 4.1.77 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 Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) (for example, the General Teaching Council, the Law Society and the Scottish Social Services Council) to foster greater alignment between academic and professional standards.

### **UK Professional Standards Framework**

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

### **PSRBs**

- 4.2.10 Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are a key external reference point for us. 56 PSRBs accredit 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**

- 4.2.11 In addition to maintaining standards, our pool of approx. 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**

- 4.2.12 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**

- 4.2.13 The University is an active participant in the LERU, U21, and the Russell Group. Within the Scottish sector, the University participates actively in the Universities Scotland LTC, SHEEC, and the Enhancement Themes TLG. These groups provide opportunities for sharing practice and benchmarking.
- 4.2.14 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.
- 4.2.15 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. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (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 Advanced Information Set. Actions to key recommendations are also highlighted throughout the 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 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 Student Support Services Annual Reporting (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.

#### **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 (NSS, PTES and 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 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 consolidated the majority of data required for quality processes in one location, displaying it visually and enabled 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 was 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 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
<b>Academic appeals</b>	166	189	187	237
<b>Complaints</b>	294	342	437	531
<b>Breaches of the Code of Student Conduct</b>	536	621	630	562

- 4.4.14 Reflection on academic appeals data informs the ongoing development of the University's Assessment Regulations, and feeds in to 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 review<sup>252</sup> was considered by Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (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 SPSO's 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 1%). 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

<sup>252</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20200528agendaandpapers.pdf> (Paper F)

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.<sup>253</sup> 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.

## 4.1 Effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic standards.

4.1.78 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.

4.1.79 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

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<sup>253</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/learning-and-assessment/learning-analytics>

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.

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

- 4.2.1 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.



## 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 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<sup>254</sup>, and placed 20<sup>th</sup> in the 2020 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);
- 2+2 and 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).

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<sup>254</sup> Times Higher Education World Rankings

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- Collaboration with EdX for the delivery of 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.

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. 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 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 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. “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 of these nature tend to be through 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, 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.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/dualawards.pdf>

- 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 Assistant Principal AS&QA, took place as part of the 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.<sup>256</sup>

### **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.<sup>257</sup> 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**

- 5.1.21 We have had a long-standing collaboration with Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) through the College of Science and Engineering and we currently accredit a BSc degree programme delivered by SRUC and we jointly deliver taught and research

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<sup>256</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review/reports/2017-18>

<sup>257</sup> <https://www.una-europa.eu/>

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.
- 5.1.23 The CMVM PhD cohort-based studentships include a number of different models of study, with variations in duration (3yr, 1+ 3year, 3.5 year or 4 year), inclusion of taught courses (integrated PhDs), courses designed for Medical Students (MBPhD). 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 (e.g. 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 UKRI Research Councils, with the majority funded by the 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 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 SFC, and draws on the expertise of sixteen 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 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 policy<sup>258</sup> for Third Party Credit Rating ensures we provide third parties with a credit rating service that meets 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 AS&QA chairing the third party credit rating panel and the School reporting the activity to SQAC.

### **Work-based learning**

- 5.1.34 The Work-based and Placement Learning Policy<sup>259</sup> 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.<sup>260</sup>
- 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 0.5FTE from the Careers Service to SDS as a Subject Matter Expert on Graduate Attributes in HE. 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

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<sup>258</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/scqfthirdpartycreditrating.pdf>

<sup>259</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/work-based\\_placement\\_learning.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/work-based_placement_learning.pdf)

<sup>260</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20200423-web.pdf> (Papers F and G)



University of Edinburgh. We are developing a range of MicroMasters programmes, but currently offer only one programme: Predictive Analytics Using Python.<sup>261</sup>

### 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 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.<sup>262</sup>
- 5.1.42 As of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020, we have 23 AIs, the full list is provided in the Advance Information Set.

## 5.2 Effectiveness of our 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 that “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

<sup>261</sup> <https://www.edx.org/micromasters/edinburghx-predictive-analytics-using-python>

<sup>262</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/associatedinstitutionpolicy.pdf>

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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 GaSP, Academic Services, 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;

## UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH – REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS

- 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 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 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).

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- 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 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.
- 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 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 Scotland's Rural College (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 MoA 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

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GeoSciences was a panel member on the internal periodic review of SRUCs environmental degrees, including the degree that we accredit.

**Appendices**

**Electronic Senate**

**15 – 23 September 2020**

**Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on  
Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2019/20**

**Description of paper**

1. The paper is the University's annual report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on institution-led review and enhancement activity 2019/20. The report was submitted to Senate Quality Assurance Committee on 9 September 2020, where the contents were approved. The report is transmitted simultaneously to University Court for consideration and approval at its meeting on 28 September 2020.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. To note formally and transmit any comments to University Court.
3. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, Senate is asked to note:
  - This year's annual report does not include the outcomes of the annual monitoring, review and reporting process as the timescale for reporting has been extended.
  - SFC have specifically requested that annual reports include information on the impact on the internal periodic review schedule.
4. For E-Senate, comments need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed approved. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting "comment on e-S 20/21 1 C". These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

**Background and context**

5. This paper is relevant as Senate has primary overall responsibility for teaching quality assurance and enhancement and exercises ultimate control of quality assurance.

**Discussion**

6. Senate is invited to note and transmit any comments on the report, which is attached as an appendix, to University Court.

**Resource implications**

7. There are no specific resource implications associated with the report.

**Risk management**

8. The provision of a high quality student experience is a high level risk on the University's Strategic Risk Register, and is overseen by the Risk Management Committee reporting to Audit & Risk Committee and Court. Additionally, failure in effectiveness of the quality assurance framework, including aligning review activity with external expectations and taking action on findings, constitutes an institutional risk.

**Equality & diversity**

9. Quality assurance policies and processes are subject to Equality Impact Assessment.

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

10. Senate Quality Assurance Committee has oversight of the implementation and communication of actions relating to quality assurance and enhancement activity.

11. Senate Support will transmit any comments received to the University Court.



**Author**

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14 September 2019

**Freedom of Information**

Open.



## The University of Edinburgh

# Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2019/20

**Summary of the institutional-led review outcomes from the preceding academic year (AY) including main themes, recommendations and/or commendations**

The University carries out regular reviews of its subject areas and Schools as one of the main ways in which it assures itself of the quality of its academic provision and the student experience. The reviews are carried out on a six-yearly cycle and take the form of internal periodic reviews (IPRs).

### IPRs – 2019/20<sup>1</sup>

- Business and Accounting (undergraduate taught)
- Centre for Open Learning (undergraduate taught)
- Chemistry (postgraduate and undergraduate taught)
- Divinity (undergraduate taught)
- Geography (undergraduate taught)
- Informatics (postgraduate research)
- Literatures, Languages and Cultures (postgraduate taught and research)
- Politics and International Relations (undergraduate taught)
- Social and Political Science (postgraduate research)
- Social Policy (undergraduate taught)

As agreed with the SFC, the IPR of Literatures, Languages and Cultures (postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision) was postponed from March to October 2019. As an interim measure, a meeting with current postgraduate taught students was held in March 2019 and the review team progressed with some desk-based aspects.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the following IPRs, which were due to take place in semester 2, were postponed and will now take place in 2020/21:

- Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (postgraduate taught and research)
- Education (postgraduate taught and research)
- Social and Political Science (postgraduate taught)

As detailed in Appendix 1, SFC have granted approval for alterations to the IPR schedule to accommodate the postponed reviews and manage the volume of activity alongside the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) which is taking place in February and March 2021. Changes to the schedule for 2021/22 are also being considered and approval will be sought.

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<sup>1</sup> Reports available at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review/reports>

For IPRs rescheduled by one year, all provision will continue to be reviewed through annual monitoring, with School annual reports being considered by Colleges to inform their annual reports and a Sub Group which provides a report to Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SAQC). These existing processes will continue with any issues requiring attention being acted upon in the meantime.

It is planned that IPRs will take place digitally in 2020/21 and supporting guidance<sup>2</sup>, informed by benchmarking with other Scottish higher education institutions, has been developed.

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<sup>3</sup>. A progress report on actions is then considered by SQAC at an appropriate point. The areas of good practice and for further development from 2019/20 reviews are:

#### *Areas of good practice*

- **The dedicated support provided to students by both academic and professional staff, including as part of the Personal Tutor system and during students' transitions.** Examples include:
  - A questionnaire on expectation at induction which is completed by both supervisors and students, results are then exchanged so both groups can see the differences. The School has found this very useful in establishing clear expectations between students and supervisors [Informatics]
  - The outstanding work of the current Director of Undergraduate Teaching for leadership in enhancing the learning and teaching culture across undergraduate provision, the Teaching Manager for effective leadership of the Professional Services team and for establishing a student centred and mutually supportive team ethos. As well as all aspects of the Professional Services team's work – their support of each other, their academic colleagues, and the wider student community. [Divinity]
  - The Personal Tutors and Student Support Team work well together to provide robust student support. The Student Support Office and Student Support Coordinator dedication and commitment to supporting students. [Geography]
  
- **Commitment to teaching and curriculum development.** Examples include:
  - The sharing of good practice and engaged discussion on teaching through a monthly reading group "Talking about teaching" and the inclusion of "sharing practice" as a standing item at the Geography Degree Programme meetings. [Geography]
  - The Subject Area's commitment to diversifying the curriculum [Social Policy]
  - The commitment to research led teaching. [Politics and International Relations]
  - The collaborative approach taken to enhancing the learning experience of both staff and students, by developing a close working relationship between Learning Technologists and other staff in curriculum development and staff upskilling. [Centre for Open Learning]
  
- **Developing employability and graduate attributes through involvement of the Careers Service.** Examples include:
  - The work of the Careers Service and Chemistry's Careers Consultant [Chemistry]
  - The tutorials on graduate attributes and career preparations provided by the Subject Area and the Careers Service [Politics and International Relations]

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/ipr-digitalmeetings.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Example from last year <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20190918.pdf> (Paper E)

- **Supporting and developing staff, including support for tutors and demonstrators, continuing professional development, and roles to support tutors and demonstrators.** Examples include:
  - The vision of the School in appointing the role of PG Tutor coordinator as well as the work and initiative of the PG Tutor Coordinator for fulsomely achieving that vision through the recruitment, training, support and evaluation of the PG Tutoring community. [Divinity]
  - Recent investment in leadership training for Academic and Professional Services staff. Current engagement amongst Academic Staff with the Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA) and the International Accreditation Association for Higher Education (AHE) [Business]
  - The dedication to the continuing professional development of staff and initiatives including the planned addition of recognised time for CPD activity (5%) and citizenship (10%) in roles and the workload allocation model [Centre for Open Learning]
  
- **Community building through initiatives including peer support, societies and social activities.** Examples include:
  - The excellent integration across staff groups, and students feel well connected within their cohorts, across year groups and with academic staff. The ‘Social Space’, which provides a high quality communal area and is used by all groups within the School, ‘Chemunity’, which fosters mental health awareness, Academic Families, which connect students across years and ‘ChemSoc’ all add to the sense of community. [Chemistry]
  - The Social Policy Student Society and its commitment to fostering community [Social Policy]
  - A School Choir established to break down barriers between Subject Areas [School of Social and Political Sciences]
  
- **Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation**
  - The School’s overall awareness of and approach to issues of equality and diversity and the low differentials seen in the School’s degree results when these are broken down by gender and ethnic origin. [Chemistry]
  - The Schools commitment to Widening Participation (WP) by dedicating staff time to having a WP Coordinator in place [Geography]

*Areas for further development (identified in multiple reviews)*

- **Tutors and demonstrators.** Recommendations covered training (including continuing professional development), allocation of work and remuneration, the creation of roles to provide support, and recruitment processes.
- **Space.** Recommendations related to the impact that pressures on and challenges with the estate are having on the student and staff experience, including on the ability to build community. The lack of space for tutors and demonstrators to carry out marking and meet with students was also noted.
- **Community building.** Recommendations focused on developing and implementing approaches to improve community building. The impact of pressures on and challenges with the estate on efforts to build community was also noted.
- **Curriculum.** Recommendations relating to curriculum development and course provision, and embedding and assessing skills and employability within the core curriculum.
- **Student support.** Recommendations related to the importance of clearly communicating support available to students and also encouraged the preservation of good practice within the current Personal Tutor system in future models of support.

No significant changes were made to the IPR process in 2019/20. Enhancements continue to be made to the data dashboards which support IPR and annual monitoring.

## **Annual monitoring, review and reporting – 2019/20**

In response to feedback, during 2019/20 the College annual reporting cycle was brought forward from January to November and a revised reporting template used. The reports were considered at the December 2019 SQAC meeting where their quality was commended<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, it was noted that the changes had encouraged collaboration across a broader range of staff resulting in a greater awareness of and engagement with the reports.

Normally, each September, the Sub Group that reviews School annual quality reports submits a report to SQAC on the outcomes of annual monitoring, review and reporting processes, identifying areas of good practice and for further development and remitting actions as necessary<sup>5</sup>. Responses to the additional School-, College- and University-level actions arising from the review of School annual quality reports are then made available to SQAC.

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, a light-touch, interim process was approved with the aim of complementing ongoing academic contingency work. Streamlined reports will focus on the impact of and learning from the pandemic, but will also allow optional 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)<sup>6</sup>. Reporting deadlines for School annual quality reports were extended from August to November. Due to the change of timescales, the themes of positive practice for sharing and areas for further development at University-level will not be available until December 2020 and will therefore be included in next year's annual report to SFC.

## **Sharing Good Practice from Institution-led Review and Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting**

The reports identifying themes of positive practice for sharing and areas for further development at University level and a paper outlining examples of good practice from annual monitoring, review and reporting processes are passed to the Institute for Academic Development to identify content for Teaching Matters<sup>7</sup>. Examples of Teaching Matters blog posts that have been identified through quality processes are tagged<sup>8</sup>. A University-level event to share good practice relating to student community and student voices and student skills and employability was held in February 2020. Good practice is also shared at College-level. Additionally, an area of the University's quality website has been developed to share good practice and resources<sup>9</sup>.

## **Ways in which support services were reviewed**

### **Student Support Services Annual Review (SSSAR) – reporting on 2018/19**

Student-facing support services are reviewed annually by a sub-committee of SQAC. The sub-committee submits a report on the outcomes of the review process to SQAC annually in late November/early December<sup>10</sup>. A peer review element, where each participating Head of Service reviews another service's report, was added to the process for reporting on 2018/19. Feedback from peer reviewers found that this reflective and self-critical process was useful in considering how Heads of Services would write their future reports.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20191205-web.pdf> (Paper E)

<sup>5</sup> Example from last year <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20190918.pdf> (Paper C)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/teaching-matters>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/quality-enhancement-report-examples/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20191205-web.pdf> (Paper J)

Each service receives individual feedback on their report, including commendations and areas for further consideration and reflection in next year's report. The following good practice examples were shared at the full sub-committee meeting in November 2019:

- Using key performance indicators and evaluation: Institute for Academic Development and Information Services Group
- Using LEAN for service enhancement: Student Systems and Administration
- Operating a values-led approach to service delivery: Chaplaincy

The common themes that arose from service reports and discussed at the full sub-committee meeting were:

- Affordability – the financial challenges students face and resulting barriers to participation
- Going local – opportunities and challenges for dispersed service delivery

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<sup>11</sup>. SSSAR reporting for 2019/2020 will be streamlined to focus on impacts of industrial action and the Covid-19 pandemic. 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.

### **Student Support Thematic Review**

Thematic reviews focus on the quality of the student experience in relation to a particular theme or aspect of student support which can span both student support services and academic areas. Topics for thematic reviews are influenced by the outcomes of SSSAR and discussion with the Students' Association.

The report of the 2018/19 thematic review of black and minority ethnic (BME) students' experiences of support at the University was received by SQAC in September 2019<sup>12</sup> and an update on actions will be provided in September 2020.

No thematic review was carried during 2019/20 and none is planned for 2020/21, partly due to the demands of our Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR). Instead, in 2019/20, a holistic overview of the outcomes of the thematic reviews to date was carried out to understand the impact and wider value of such reviews. The outcome of this review was presented to SQAC in February 2020.<sup>13</sup> The main messages are: student engagement is essential and has been very positive; thematic review provides the opportunity and space to explore issues; and it has adopted an agile methodology but it is resource intensive to operate. SQAC agreed that thematic reviews would continue to be undertaken, but would be reserved for significant issues requiring in-depth exploration that often cannot be achieved via IPRs or SSSAR.

### **Role and nature of student engagement in institution-led review**

The Students' Association and the University work in partnership to ensure that students are central to academic governance, decision-making and quality assurance and enhancement.

IPR and thematic reviews both include student members on review teams. The student member of a review team will typically convene one or more meetings during the review. Membership of a review

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/sssar19-20>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20190918.pdf> (Paper F)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20200227-web.pdf> (Paper F).

team is included in the student's Higher Education Achievement Record. In addition to having student members on review teams, engagement of students from review areas as a part of IPRs is regarded as essential. Briefing material aimed at students outlines ways in which they can engage with reviews and actions taken in response. Parallel briefings guide Schools on how to engage their students with reviews. The remits for all IPRs include items proposed by students in the review area.

### **Contextual information and key messages from analysis of data**

The University is in the process of reviewing and reflecting on the results of the 2020 National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). The results for 2019/20 reflect a period disrupted by industrial action and Covid-19. Despite this, our NSS results are broadly in line with the previous year in both absolute terms and in relation to the Russell Group, but with modest gains in learning resources and academic community. Assessment and feedback and the Students' Association continue to be our lower performing areas. Due to changes in the institutional PTES questions, results are not entirely comparable across all questions. Additionally, the survey was run for a far shorter period of time. In the majority of areas there is little change on the previous year, with the exception of overall satisfaction and employability which are lower performing aspects. Assessment and feedback scores for PTES are very good and broadly show a rising trend since 2018. The survey results will be considered by University Court and the Senate Education Committee in autumn 2020.

SQAC considers data annually on the degree classification outcomes of the University's undergraduate students, in the context of recent trends and Higher Education Statistics Agenda (HESA) data on Russell Group institutions. Most subject areas across the University are broadly in line with Russell Group comparators for their discipline and/or with the University average, however, there are a small number of outliers which diverge substantially. 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. To date, no University-wide action has been required. In 2020/21 (reporting on 2019/20), given the changes to the annual monitoring, review and reporting processes and additional workload faced by Schools, SQAC agreed that their oversight of this process should be light touch. Therefore it will be at the discretion of each College to determine the appropriate oversight 'conversation' with each outlier School. The outcome of these oversight conversations will be reported back to the SQAC.

Analysis of progression data showed that the University markedly outperformed the Scottish sector average and the UK sector averages for the relevant HESA Performance Indicators (non-continuation and projected outcomes), and also outperformed the HESA benchmarks for non-continuation and for the percentage projected to exit without an award or transfer. Despite these favourable rates of retention the University is not complacent; research into retention trends and associated factors is being carried out.

An analysis of 2018/19 undergraduate<sup>14</sup> and taught postgraduate<sup>15</sup> external examiners' reports shows that there continues to be a high number of commendations and a low number of issues across the University. The main theme commended in undergraduate reports across all three Colleges was the assessment process, with the sub-theme of good practice and innovation (in the programme development theme) most commented on. The main sub-theme commended in taught postgraduate reports was good practice and innovation. Many commendations were course or programme specific, however the most often occurring type of commendation related to the range,

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20191205-web.pdf> (Paper F)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sqac-agendapapers-20200227-web.pdf> (Paper G)

quality and diversity of teaching, learning and assessment. A small number of issues raised by external examiners related to the (often timely) provision of information to examiners. No University-level action was required.

We have met the Commission for Widening Access targets of 10% of our intake to come from the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland three years ahead of schedule. Our students from SIMD20 areas represent 11.4% of this year's undergraduate intake (2019/20 cycle). In the current 2020 recruitment cycle we have been pleased to see a marginal growth and maintenance of those students who have applied and accepted offers from disadvantaged backgrounds (those who have been flagged within our contextual admissions process<sup>16</sup>).

## Summary

The previous year's IPRs have identified good practice examples and it is important that these, and areas identified through the annual monitoring, review and reporting processes which conclude in December, are shared across the University. IPRs also identified areas for further development, and these, along with those identified from annual monitoring, review and reporting processes, will be considered and acted upon accordingly. The University's approach to improving the learning, teaching and student experience can be summarised in the ongoing and planned work outlined below, the pace and scale of which is likely to be adversely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic in the short to medium-term.

## Actions Undertaken and Planned

### *Strategy and Strategic Projects*

#### Strategy 2030

In September 2019, the University launched its Strategy 2030 for the next 10 years and beyond. Strategy 2030 sets out the vision for the 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.

#### Vice-Principal Students

The University appointed its first Vice Principal Students who began in post in October 2019. This new post has strategic responsibility for the improvement of the student experience and the culture change that underpins this.

#### Learning and Teaching Strategy

The University published its Learning and Teaching Strategy in January 2017<sup>17</sup>. The Senate Education Committee reviewed progress against the agreed implementation plan at its meeting in October 2019<sup>18</sup>. With the development of Strategy 2030<sup>19</sup>, marking a values-led approach to what we do, and the arrival of a new Vice Principal Students, it was decided that 2019/20 would mark the final year of the Learning and Teaching Strategy as the University moves towards a new phase of learning and teaching and a curriculum review led by the Vice Principal Students.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/access-edinburgh/widening-access-offers>

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning\\_teaching\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/learning_teaching_strategy.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/20191009agendapapers.pdf> (Paper E)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/about/strategy-2030>



### Curriculum Review

Plans for a curriculum review to be led by the Vice Principal Students have been delayed due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, lessons learned from pivot to online and then hybrid delivery will be used to inform this review.

### Service Excellence Programme (Student Administration and Support)

The Student Administration and Support (SA&S) programme is part of the Service Excellence Programme (SEP), which is tasked with transforming the University's core professional services and aims to achieve a balance between effectiveness and efficiency, underpinned by core systems and digital transformation.

During 2019/20, the programme delivered a number of enhancements including in the areas of study and work away, special circumstances and extensions, and EdHelp (a single point of help and information). Additionally, work continued on the review of student support and on programme and course information and management.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic those elements of the SA&S programme which will support students and the staff who work with them in the short to medium term will be prioritised, while some work will be 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 which goes live in September 2020.

### Student Experience Action Plan (StEAP)

The StEAP set out a holistic programme of work to improve the student experience at Edinburgh. A key output in 2019/20 was a guide for schools on fostering a sense of belonging<sup>20</sup>. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, a reduced package of work will be taken forward in 2020/21.

### Adaptation and Renewal Team (ART)

Following the successful short-term response to the Covid-19 pandemic in semester 2, an ART, led by the Principal, was established to oversee the work needed to respond to the short, medium and longer-term challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. ART will enable swift but well-informed decisions to be taken in a number of time-critical areas to ensure that the University continues to deliver against its overall strategy. There are four main strands:

- Research
- Students
- Estates and Infrastructure
- Re-shaping

### ***Equality and Diversity***

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to creating an equal, diverse and inclusive environment for all students and staff, two reviews were conducted in 2018/19 in partnership with the Students' Association, to form a clearer picture of student experiences and to seek ways of promoting equality, diversity, and inclusivity within the University.

The then Senate Learning and Teaching Committee established a task group to explore using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity<sup>21</sup>. The task group consulted with students and staff from across the University and noted a consensus on the importance of finding ways to

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/belongingguide.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/projects/promoting-inclusion-equality-diversity-curriculum>

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.

A key finding of the thematic review of BME students' experiences of support at the University was that a gap exists between the awareness and racial literacy of University staff and the lived experiences of both UK-domiciled and international BME students.

The final reports of both reviews were published in October 2019 and in response the University has established a Race Equality and Anti-Racist Sub-Group under a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, to drive forward the recommendations. This will include developing an institution-wide conversation on race and an application for the Advance HE Race Equality Charter Mark (RECM).

### ***Student Voice***

In September 2019, the University and the Students' Association agreed the themes priority themes of community, student voice, and social justice for the Student Partnership Agreement for 2019/20<sup>22</sup>. In 2019/20 11 student-staff projects linked to the priority themes were funded. 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 with social distancing requirements. In addition, it was agreed to postpone projects for 2020/21, due to social distancing requirements and to enable Schools to focus on the move to the new hybrid teaching model. An evaluation of previous projects will be undertaken to review impact and identify where practice can be shared across the institution.

The programme representative system introduced in 2018/19, replacing the previous class representation system, continues to embed. Initial feedback indicates that this system is more efficient and effective, in terms of the number of students who are acting as representatives and the escalation of issues. Additionally, the reduction in student representatives enabled the Students' Association to return to in-person training, providing more effective training and preparation for the role, resulting in an increase in training completion rates. The Students' Association implemented a handover document for all Programme Representatives to complete at the end of their tenure which has led to an increase in completion rates when compared with the impact questionnaire completed previously. For 2020/21, revised training will be delivered digitally through both asynchronous, interactive modules completed in students' own time, and live digital sessions to consolidate knowledge and skills. The Students' Association is also developing additional guidance regarding the use of digital platforms to gather feedback and to help build community.

In 2019/20, following a successful pilot, all School Representatives were given access to the full suite of student survey reports. An evaluation found that engagement with the reports was limited. 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.

The University have worked in partnership with the Students' Association to develop a more robust set of guidance for Schools in the running of Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLCs)<sup>23</sup>. Principles for

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studentpartnershipagreement.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sslcguidance.pdf>

SSLC meetings have been added to the Student Voice Policy for 2020/21<sup>24</sup>. Work began in 2019/20 on the management of escalated issues and will continue in 2020/21.

Building on the positive experience of mid-course feedback (MCF) for undergraduate courses, its use was encouraged for postgraduate taught courses throughout 2019/20, recognising that it is already happening across many courses, and it has been embedded within policy for 2020/21 for all taught courses which run for 10 weeks or more. Supporting guidance was also developed.<sup>25</sup>

As part of Enhancement Themes work, a student guide on giving feedback was developed to explain the various student voice mechanisms to students and staff<sup>26</sup>.

### ***Teaching and Academic Careers***

During 2019/20 and 2020/21 all Schools will be supported to develop a professional development of teaching strategy and plan. These plans will be integrated with quality assurance processes and subject to periodic review. They will include a focus on informal staff development and teaching culture, alongside task and role specific continuing professional development, and externally accredited provision, with School and institutional indicative and aspirational targets for teaching qualifications.

### ***Careers and Employability***

Careers and employability remains an important strategic priority for the University, as evidenced by the involvement of Careers Service colleagues in networks, the committee structure and IPRs.

In recognition of the changing recruitment landscape and to prepare students for the Future of Work<sup>27</sup> the University has invested in challenge-based experiential learning through the Students as Change Agents programme<sup>28</sup>. Students work in multi-disciplinary groups with external partners to address real world problems. Following a swift and successful pivot to online delivery this summer, 150 students across 20 schools, worked on live projects with host organisations, on sustainable tourism for Edinburgh and ending youth homelessness. This external activity and engagement informs curricular development, ensuring Edinburgh degrees retain the hallmark of quality and relevance.

A growing focus for the Careers Service has been support for marginalised students and the early success of the Insights programme<sup>29</sup> provides a strong foundation for future initiatives.

### ***Enhancement-led Institutional Review***

The University is preparing for its next ELIR which will now take place in February and March 2021. The agreed areas of focus for this review, arising from contextualisation, are: teaching and academic careers; student community and student voices; student support; widening participation; and student skills and employability.

## **Indication of institution-led reviews for the forthcoming cycle**

Please see Appendix 1. Please note that specific timings may be subject to change to reflect

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/studentvoicepolicy.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/mcfguidance.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/academic-life/student-voice>

<sup>27</sup> [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/careers\\_service\\_briefing\\_-\\_future\\_of\\_work.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/careers_service_briefing_-_future_of_work.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/changeprogramme>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/careers/insights/at-a-glance>

schedules in Schools.

### **List of subject areas/programmes reviewed by other bodies**

In 2019/20 9 professional bodies carried out reviews resulting in all programmes being successfully accredited/reaccredited (Appendix 2). Reviews for 83 programmes by 9 professional bodies were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, where reviews have been postponed, delayed and/or extensions applied.

**2 September 2020**

## Appendix 1 - Internal Periodic Review forward schedule

<b>2020/21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision) <b>rescheduled from 2019/20</b></li> <li>• School of Social and Political Science (Postgraduate Taught provision) <b>rescheduled from 2019/20</b></li> <li>• Moray House School of Education and Sport (Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision) <b>rescheduled from 2019/20</b></li> <li>• Clinical Education (Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Health in Social Science (including Nursing Undergraduate provision, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Law (Undergraduate provision, Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Mathematics (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Oral Health Sciences (Undergraduate provision)</li> </ul>
<b>2021/22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biological Sciences (Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision) <b>rescheduled from 2020/21</b></li> <li>• Biological Sciences (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Data Science, Technology and Innovation (Postgraduate Taught Provision)</li> <li>• Divinity (Postgraduate Taught &amp; Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Edinburgh College of Art (all undergraduate provision) <sup>30</sup></li> <li>• GeoSciences (Postgraduate Taught Provision)</li> <li>• History, Classics and Archaeology (all undergraduate provision) <b>rescheduled from 2020/21</b></li> <li>• Informatics (Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision) <b>rescheduled from 2020/21</b></li> <li>• Mathematics (Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (all undergraduate provision)<sup>31</sup></li> <li>• The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (Postgraduate Taught Provision)</li> <li>• The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (Undergraduate provision)</li> </ul>
<b>2022/23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business (Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Ecological and Environmental Sciences (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Economics (Undergraduate provision, Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• History, Classics and Archaeology (Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Literatures, Languages and Cultures (all undergraduate provision) <sup>32</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>30</sup> To include Architecture, Music, Art, Design, History of Art

<sup>31</sup> To include Psychology, Linguistics and English Language, Philosophy

<sup>32</sup> To include Asian Studies, Celtic & Scottish Studies, English Literature, European Languages and Cultures, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moray House School of Education and Sport (all undergraduate provision) <sup>33</sup></li> <li>• Physics and Astronomy (Postgraduate Research provision)</li> </ul>
<b>2023/24</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biomedical Sciences (Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision, inc Zhejiang)</li> <li>• Chemistry (Postgraduate Research provision)</li> <li>• Clinical Sciences (Postgraduate Taught Provision)</li> <li>• Engineering (Postgraduate Research provision)</li> <li>• Medicine (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences (Postgraduate Taught Provision)</li> <li>• Physics and Astronomy (Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Social and Political Science (all undergraduate provision) <sup>34</sup></li> </ul>
<b>2024/25</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth Sciences (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Edinburgh College of Art (Postgraduate Taught &amp; Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Engineering (Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• GeoSciences (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (Postgraduate Research provision)</li> </ul>
<b>2025/26</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business School (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Centre for Open Learning (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Chemistry (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Divinity (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Geography (Undergraduate provision)</li> <li>• Informatics (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Literatures, Languages and Cultures (Postgraduate Taught &amp; Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Social and Political Science (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> </ul>
<b>2026/27</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical Education (Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Health in Social Science (including Nursing Undergraduate provision, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> <li>• Law (Undergraduate provision, Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision)</li> <li>• Mathematics (Postgraduate Research Provision)</li> </ul>

<sup>33</sup> To include Applied Sports Science, Childhood Practice, Community Education, Physical Education, Primary Education with Gaelic, Sport and Recreation Management.

<sup>34</sup> To include Politics & International Relations, Social Anthropology, Sociology & Sustainable Development, Social Policy, Social Work (which will include the Master of Social Work programme)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Moray House School of Education and Sport (Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision) * rescheduled from 2019/20</li><li>• Oral Health Sciences (Undergraduate provision)</li><li>• School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (Postgraduate Research &amp; Postgraduate Taught provision) * rescheduled from 2019/20</li><li>• School of Social and Political Science (Postgraduate Taught provision) * rescheduled from 2019/20</li></ul> |
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## Appendix 2 – Degree Programmes Accredited in 2019/20

Degree Programme Title	Name of Accrediting Body
LLB (Hons) Law and Accountancy	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
MA (Hons) Accounting and Business	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
MA (Hons) Accounting and Finance	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
MA (Hons) Economics and Accounting	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
English for Academic Purposes Summer Pre-sessional Programme	The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP)
BSc (Hons) Chemical Physics	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
BSc (Hons) Chemistry	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
BSc (Hons) Chemistry with Environmental and Sustainable Chemistry	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
BSc (Hons) Chemistry with Materials Chemistry	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
BSc (Hons) Medicinal and Biological Chemistry	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Chemistry	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Chemistry with a Year Abroad	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Chemistry with Environmental and Sustainable Chemistry	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Chemistry with Environmental and Sustainable Chemistry and a Year Abroad	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Chemistry with Environmental and Sustainable Chemistry and Industrial Experience	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Chemistry with Industrial Experience	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Chemistry with Materials Chemistry	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Chemistry with Materials Chemistry and Industrial Experience	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Chemistry with Materials Chemistry with a Year Abroad	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Medicinal and Biological Chemistry	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Medicinal and Biological Chemistry with a Year Abroad	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChem (Hons) Medicinal and Biological Chemistry with Industrial Experience	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChemPhys (Hons) Chemical Physics	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChemPhys (Hons) Chemical Physics with a Year Abroad	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
MChemPhys (Hons) Chemical Physics with Industrial Experience	Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
BSc (Hons) Oral Health Sciences	General Dental Council (GDC)
MSc Clinical Education (Online Learning) - 3 Years	The Royal Australasian College Surgeons
PgCert Clinical Education (Online Learning) - 1 Year	The Royal Australasian College Surgeons
PgDip Clinical Education (Online Learning) - 2 Years	The Royal Australasian College Surgeons
HCP-Med (5 years)	General Medical Council (GMC)
MBChB Medicine	General Medical Council (GMC)



MA (Hons) Learning in Communities	Standards Council for Scotland
BEng (Hons) Computer Science and Electronics	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
BEng (Hons) Electrical and Mechanical Engineering	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
BEng (Hons) Electrical Engineering with Renewable Energy	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
BEng (Hons) Electronics	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
BEng (Hons) Electronics and Electrical Engineering	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
BEng (Hons) Electronics and Electrical Engineering with Management	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
BEng (Hons) Electronics and Software Engineering	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
BEng (Hons) Engineering for Sustainable Energy	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
MEng (Hons) Electrical And Mechanical Engineering	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
MEng (Hons) Electrical Engineering with Renewable Energy	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
MEng (Hons) Electronics	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
MEng (Hons) Electronics and Computer Science	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
MEng (Hons) Electronics and Electrical Engineering	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
MEng (Hons) Electronics and Electrical Engineering with Management	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
MEng (Hons) Engineering for Sustainable Energy	Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET)
BN Nursing (Adult)	Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)
BN (Hons) Nursing (Adult)	Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)
Masters in Nursing with Pre-Registration (Adult)	Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

## **Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council on Institution-led Review and Enhancement Activity 2019/20**

### Statement of assurance

On behalf of the governing body of the University of Edinburgh, I confirm that we have considered the institution's arrangements for the management of academic standards and the quality of the learning experience for AY 2019/20, including the scope and impact of these. I further confirm that we are satisfied that the institution has effective arrangements to maintain standards and to assure and enhance the quality of its provision. We can therefore provide assurance to the Council that the academic standards and the quality of the learning provision at this institution continue to meet the requirements set by the Council.

.....  
Janet Legrand QC (Hon)  
Senior Lay Member of the University Court

.....  
Date

## **Electronic Senate**

**15 – 23 September 2020**

### **Senate Exception Committee: call for volunteers**

#### **Description of paper**

1. Senate members are asked to nominate themselves for membership of the Senate Exception Committee.

#### **Action requested**

2. There are two vacancies on the Exception Committee for Senate members, who are not ex-officio members of the Exception Committee. Senate members are invited to put themselves forward for membership of the Senatus Exception Committee by contacting [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) and indicating their interest in being a member of the Committee. **Expressions of interest must be submitted by the end of Monday 28 September 2020.**
3. If more than two Senate members volunteer for this role, two names will be randomly selected.

#### **Background**

4. The current Senate Exception Committee Terms of Reference and membership can be found on the Senate website at <https://edin.ac/3k8zphM>

#### **Resource implications**

5. None.

#### **Risk management**

6. Effective academic governance assists the University in managing risk associated with its academic activities.

#### **Equality & diversity**

7. All eligible members of Senate are invited to put themselves forward.

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

8. The membership of the committee will be reported to Senate at their next meeting, and the information on the Senate website will be updated.

#### **Author**

Kathryn Nicol  
Academic Policy Officer

#### **Freedom of Information**

Open

## Electronic Senate

15 - 23 September 2020

### Resolutions

#### Description of paper

1. This report is presented to Senate for consultation in accordance with the procedures for the creation of Resolutions as set out in the Universities (Scotland) act 1966.

#### Action requested / recommendation

2. Senate is invited to make observations on the attached draft Resolutions

#### Establishment and Renaming of Chairs

Draft Resolution No. 75/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair Industrial Chair of Organic Synthesis

Draft Resolution No. 76/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair Industrial Chair of Data-Driven Manufacturing

Draft Resolution No. 77/2020: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Chemical Reaction/Catalysis Engineering

3. For E-Senate, a comment need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed approved. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting "comment on e-S 20/21 1 E". These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

#### Resource implications

4. There are no resource implications. Part of the approval process involved confirmation of the funding in place to support new Chairs.

#### Risk management

5. The paper does not include a risk analysis. There are reputational considerations in establishing and renaming Chairs and updating regulations which are considered as part of the University's approval processes.

#### Equality and diversity

6. There are no specific equality and diversity issues associated with this paper. However equality and diversity best practice and agreed procedures are adopted in appointing individuals to chairs.

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

7. Via Senate's report to University Court.

#### Author

Kirstie Graham  
Deputy Head of Court Services  
September 2020

#### Freedom of Information

Open Paper

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

**Draft Resolution of the University Court No. 75/2020**

**Foundation of a Personal Chair of Organic Synthesis**

At Edinburgh, the Thirtieth day of November, Two thousand and twenty.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to found a Personal Chair of Organic Synthesis:

THEREFORE the University Court, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1966, with special reference to paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby resolves:

1. There shall be a Personal Chair of Organic Synthesis in the University of Edinburgh.
2. The patronage of the Chair shall be vested in and exercised by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh.
3. Notwithstanding the personal nature of this Chair, the terms and conditions of appointment and tenure which by Statute, Ordinance and otherwise apply to other Chairs in the University shall be deemed to apply in like manner to the Personal Chair of Organic Synthesis together with all other rights, privileges and duties attaching to the office of Professor.
4. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 August Two thousand and twenty.

For and on behalf of the University Court

SARAH SMITH

University Secretary

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

**Draft Resolution of the University Court No. 76/2020**

**Foundation of a Personal Industrial Chair of Data-Driven Manufacturing**

At Edinburgh, the Thirtieth day of November, Two thousand and twenty.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to found a Personal Industrial Chair of Data-Driven Manufacturing:

THEREFORE the University Court, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1966, with special reference to paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby resolves:

1. There shall be a Personal Industrial Chair of Data-Driven Manufacturing in the University of Edinburgh.
2. The patronage of the Chair shall be vested in and exercised by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh.
3. Notwithstanding the personal nature of this Chair, the terms and conditions of appointment and tenure which by Statute, Ordinance and otherwise apply to other Chairs in the University shall be deemed to apply in like manner to the Personal Industrial Chair of Data-Driven Manufacturing together with all other rights, privileges and duties attaching to the office of Professor.
4. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 September Two thousand and twenty.

For and on behalf of the University Court

SARAH SMITH

University Secretary

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

**Draft Resolution of the University Court No. 77/2020**

**Alteration of the title of the Chair of Chemical Reaction/Catalysis Engineering**

At Edinburgh, the Thirtieth day of November, Two thousand and twenty.

WHEREAS the University Court deems it expedient to alter the title of the Chair of Chemical Reaction/Catalysis Engineering founded by Resolution No. 10/2015;

AND WHEREAS paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, provides that the University Court may, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and with the consent of the incumbent and patrons, if any, alter the title of existing professorships;

AND WHEREAS the Chair dealt with in this Resolution is in the patronage of the University Court itself:

THEREFORE the University Court, after consultation with the Senatus Academicus and in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1966, with special reference to paragraph 5 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, hereby resolves:

1. The Chair of Chemical Reaction/Catalysis Engineering shall hereafter be designated the Chair of Thermodynamics of Materials and Processes.
2. This Resolution shall come into force with effect from 1 December Two thousand and twenty.

For and on behalf of the University Court

SARAH SMITH

University Secretary

## **Electronic Senate**

**15-23 September 2020**

### **Draft Resolution: Removal of Members of the University Court**

#### **Description of paper**

1. The paper provides for comment a draft Resolution to update the procedure for the removal of members of the University Court to treat all categories of Court member in the same manner.

#### **Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to make observations on the draft Resolution. This is attached as an Appendix in both 'marked up' (showing proposed changes to the existing Resolution) and 'clean' versions.
3. For E-Senate, a comment need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed approved. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting "comment on e-S 20/21 1 F". These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

#### **Background and context**

4. In accordance with the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, the University Court has a range of powers exercisable by Resolution. The Act also stipulates that Senate, the General Council and any other body or person having an interest is required to be consulted on draft Resolutions for a period of a month with the months of August and September not taken into account when calculating the consultation period. Given this, the draft Resolution will remain open for comment until the end of October. The draft Resolution was considered by Court at its meeting on 15 June and agreed to circulate for observations by Senate and the General Council and other interested parties.

#### **Discussion**

5. The Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act 2016 (hereafter 'the Governance Act') empowers Court to make rules regarding the procedure for the removal of any Court member should it wish to do so. An existing Ordinance and accompanying Resolution set out a procedure for the removal of co-opted members (i.e. those appointed by Court itself) only. Court agreed in September 2017 that the Ordinance and Resolution should be extended to encompass all categories of Court member given the new legislation. This will enable equal treatment of all Court members.
6. An Ordinance to this effect was approved by Court on 15 June following earlier consultation with Senate, the General Council and other interested parties. The Ordinance states that Court has the authority to remove any Court member from office as long as one of the following criteria is met: inability to exercise the Senior Lay Member's functions or (as the case may be) the functions of



membership generally (a replication of text from the Governance Act); misconduct (whether or not in the capacity as member) (also a replication of text from the Governance Act), to include gross or persistent breach of the Code of Conduct for Court Members (text from the current Ordinance and allowed by the Governance Act) or such other behaviour as the Court may deem inimical to the good standing of the Court (text from the current Ordinance and allowed by the Governance Act).

7. The procedure for how to remove a Court member should they meet the criteria in the Ordinance is to be set out in a underlying Resolution. The current Resolution with proposed updates marked up is included in Appendix 1 alongside the draft new Resolution for consultation.
8. In line with the Court agreed approach of extending the current rules to all members, the draft new Resolution makes minimal changes to the current procedure aside from those specified in the Governance Act. These are:
  - extending the procedure to apply to all members;
  - specifying the member under consideration cannot vote on their own removal; and,
  - specifying that, if a vote is passed, the member can seek a review of the decision in order to have it reconsidered or quashed.
9. There is no description in the Governance Act of how any review should be carried out or who it should be carried out by. It is proposed that this is not specified in the Resolution in order to give flexibility depending on the circumstances. Likely options would be a senior member of the legal profession who is not a Court member or someone who is a Court member at another university with relevant experience (e.g. legal or human resources). The other Scottish 'ancients' have also not specified who would carry out such a review but the University of Dundee have specified that:

'such a review shall be conducted by a person not employed by the University, nor having been employed by the University within the previous four years, holding, or having held, judicial office or being an advocate or solicitor of at least ten years' standing.'<sup>1</sup>

## **Resource implications**

10. None anticipated.

## **Risk management**

11. The draft Resolution intends to address the risk of a Court member being unable to exercise their duties or behaving in an unacceptable or improper way and/or damaging the reputation of the Court while being unwilling (or unable) to resign their membership.

## **Equality & diversity**

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<sup>1</sup> University of Dundee Statute 9(2)(l), see: [https://www.dundee.ac.uk/media/dundeewebsite/pgla/documents/policies/statutes\\_created\\_February%202020.pdf](https://www.dundee.ac.uk/media/dundeewebsite/pgla/documents/policies/statutes_created_February%202020.pdf)

12. By extending the existing procedure to all members of the Court, the draft Resolution treats all Court members on an equal basis. A right of review has been introduced to help protect against any bias in decision-making, in addition to setting a high bar for removal with a two-thirds majority in a formal vote required.

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

13. The consultation remains open until the end of October. A final draft Resolution along with a summary of consultation responses will then be submitted to Court for final approval in November.

**Author**

Dr Lewis Allan  
Head of Court Services  
11 September 2020

**Freedom of Information**

Open paper

## Appendix 1 – Existing Resolution with proposed changes marked

### UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

#### Resolution of the University Court No 28/200074/2020

#### Procedure for Removal of ~~Co-Opted~~ Members of the University Court

At Edinburgh, the XXX day of MONTH, YEAR.

WHEREAS University of Edinburgh Ordinance No. 20016 empowers the University Court to determine by Resolution the procedure to be used in exercising the power of removal of ~~co-opted~~ members of the Court:

THEREFORE the University Court, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, with special reference to paragraph 8 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, HEREBY RESOLVES:

1. The Nominations Committee of the Court shall, at the request of any member of Court or the Secretary to the University, and only at such request, consider every instance in which, under the provisions of Ordinance No. 20016, the possibility arises of the removal of a ~~co-opted~~ member of the Court; determine *prima facie* whether a case for consideration of removal by the Court has been established; and advise the Court.

2. The Nominations Committee shall found its consideration only on the provisions of Ordinance No. 20016 and shall take all known factors into account.

3. In an instance where the Nominations Committee decides that *prima facie* a case for consideration of removal by the Court has been established, the member concerned shall within seven days receive written notification of the complaint against him or her. The matter shall then be considered by the University Court at its first scheduled meeting thereafter, provided that this will be at least fourteen days after the meeting of the Nominations Committee. The member concerned shall have the opportunity to submit a written statement to, and the right to be heard at, the Court meeting. Such written statement shall cover only the specific matter of the complaint against the member.

4. Removal of a ~~co-opted~~ member of the Court shall require a formal motion, duly proposed and seconded in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Court and supported by at least two-thirds of those members present. The member who is the subject of the motion is not eligible to vote on the motion. If the motion is passed, the member who is the subject of the motion may seek a review in order to have the resolution reconsidered or quashed.

5. The Court shall determine other aspects of the procedure to be adopted in considering the removal of a ~~co-opted~~ member.

6. This Resolution shall supersede those parts of all previous Resolutions dealing with procedures for removal of Members of the University Court and specifically revokes Resolution No.28/2000.

67. This Resolution shall come into effect on the date of the approval of Ordinance No. 216 or on the date of the ~~its~~ approval of this Resolution by the University Court, whichever is the latter.

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH**

**Draft Resolution of the University Court No. 74/2020**

**Procedure for Removal of Members of the University Court**

At Edinburgh, the Thirtieth day of November, Two thousand and twenty.

WHEREAS University of Edinburgh Ordinance No. 216 empowers the University Court to determine by Resolution the procedure to be used in exercising the power of removal of members of the Court:

THEREFORE the University Court, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by section 3 of the Universities (Scotland) Act 1966, with special reference to paragraph 8 of Part II of Schedule 2 to that Act, HEREBY RESOLVES:

1. The Nominations Committee of the Court shall, at the request of any member of Court or the Secretary to the University, and only at such request, consider every instance in which, under the provisions of Ordinance No. 216, the possibility arises of the removal of a member of the Court; determine *prima facie* whether a case for consideration of removal by the Court has been established; and advise the Court.
2. The Nominations Committee shall found its consideration only on the provisions of Ordinance No. 216 and shall take all known factors into account.
3. In an instance where the Nominations Committee decides that *prima facie* a case for consideration of removal by the Court has been established, the member concerned shall within seven days receive written notification of the complaint against him or her. The matter shall then be considered by the University Court at its first scheduled meeting thereafter, provided that this will be at least fourteen days after the meeting of the Nominations Committee. The member concerned shall have the opportunity to submit a written statement to, and the right to be heard at, the Court meeting. Such written statement shall cover only the specific matter of the complaint against the member.
4. Removal of a member of the Court shall require a formal motion, duly proposed and seconded in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Court and supported by at least two-thirds of those members present. The member who is the subject of the motion is not eligible to vote on the motion. If the motion is passed, the member who is the subject of the motion may seek a review in order to have the resolution reconsidered or quashed.
5. The Court shall determine other aspects of the procedure to be adopted in considering the removal of a member.
6. This Resolution shall supersede those parts of all previous Resolutions dealing with procedures for removal of Members of the University Court and specifically revokes Resolution No.28/2000.

7. This Resolution shall come into effect on the date of the approval of Ordinance No. 216 or on the date of the approval of this Resolution by the University Court, whichever is the latter.

For and on behalf of the University Court

SARAH SMITH

University Secretary

Electronic Senate

15-23 September 2020

**Rector Election 2021 Date**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper consults Senate on the date of the Rector Election 2021, in accordance with Ordinance 197.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to comment on the potential election dates.
3. For E-Senate, a comment need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed approved. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting "comment on e-S 20/21 1 G". These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

**Background and context**

4. The Rector is elected by all staff and students every three years. The overarching framework setting out when and how the election can be run is contained within in Ordinance 197: Rectorial Election. This states: 'The election shall take place on such day in the month of February or March as may be fixed by the University Court after consultation with the Senatus Academicus, provided that such date shall not be later than the second Saturday in March in any year.' The most recent election took place from 26 to 27 February 2018.

**Discussion**

5. Ordinance No. 197 provides a six week window for the election. Within that window we propose to avoid an overlap for the voting period with:
  - Flexible Learning Week, week commencing 15 February; and,
  - the Students' Association election campaigning period from Wednesday 3 March and voting period from Monday 8 to Thursday 11 March.
6. This leaves possible dates of:
  - Option 1: Week commencing 25 January for campaigning and the week commencing 1 February for voting; or,
  - Option 2: Week commencing 1 February for campaigning and the week commencing 8 February for voting (or campaigning in the latter half of w/c 1 February and into the beginning of w/c 8 February with voting in the latter half of the w/c 8 February); or,
  - Option 3: Week commencing 15 February for campaigning and week commencing 22 February for voting (and to minimise the overlap between the campaigning period and Flexible Learning Week, the campaigning period could run from Wednesday 17 February to Tuesday 23 February with voting from Wednesday 24 February to Friday 26 February).

7. Given the desire to hold the call for nominations period (which precedes the campaigning and election periods) over as much of the regular teaching weeks as possible to help with engagement this suggests that Option 3 may be preferable, particularly the later dates within this Option.
8. To note that the Rector Election Regulations are currently subject to an independent review by Civica Election Services, which includes exploring whether the previously used voting period of two days should be extended. The options above assume that voting will take place over three or four days.

### **Resource implications**

9. The cost of the Rector election is met from existing resources.

### **Risk management**

10. The main risks are communications (e.g. encouraging nominations and voter engagement) and IT, as the election will be undertaken online. These risks will be managed through regular review and oversight by the Deputy Returning Officer with assistance from colleagues in the Communications & Marketing Department and Information Services Group.

### **Equality & diversity**

11. The election will be carried out with close regard to equality and diversity with candidates welcomed from all backgrounds.

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

12. Subject to any comments from Senate, a proposed date will be submitted to the 28 September 2020 meeting of Court for approval.

### **Authors**

Kirstie Graham and Lewis Allan  
Court Services Office

### **Freedom of Information**

Open Paper.



**Electronic Senate**

**15 – 23 September 2020**

**Conferment of the Title of Emeritus / Emerita Professor**

**Description of paper**

1. The Senate is invited to confer the title of Professor Emerita / Emeritus upon those professors who retired recently or whose retirement is imminent.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. For approval.
3. For E-Senate, a comment need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed approved. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting "comment on e-S 20/21 1 H". These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

**Discussion**

4. This Senate is invited to confer the title of Professor Emerita / Emeritus upon those professors who retired recently or whose retirement is imminent. The Special Minutes are attached as an appendix.

**Resource implications**

5. None.

**Risk management**

6. Not applicable.

**Equality & diversity**

7. Not applicable.

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

8. Those Professors who have been conferred with the title of Professor Emeritus / Emerita will be contacted in due course.

**Author**

Senate Secretariat  
September 2019

**Freedom of Information**

Open paper.

**Special Minute**  
**Professor Rowena Arshad CBE, MSc, EdD, FEIS**  
**Professor Emerita of Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education**

Professor Arshad started her professional life in the private sector in business and banking.

She came to Edinburgh in 1985 and started work with Scottish Education and Action for Development (SEAD) as an Education and Campaigns Organiser. She worked with community groups and organisations looking at issues linking Scotland and the developing world.

In 1988, she became Director of the Multicultural Education Centre in Edinburgh and from there moved into Moray House. Her Doctorate in Education was an interpretive study of teacher activism in equity and anti-discrimination in Scotland. Her thesis explored the factors that contribute to developing Scottish teachers' interest in issues of equity and anti-discrimination by examining relevant literature on professionalism and activism and through empirical investigation, using a life history approach. She has taught on a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

She became the Head of the Institute of Education, Community and Society in 2010 and from there moved into becoming Head of School in 2013. She stepped down from that role in September 2019. She was also Associate Dean for Student Academic Misconduct for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences from 2008 - 2013. Currently, she convenes the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee for the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

She co-directs the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES). She was awarded an OBE in 2001 for services to race equality in Scotland and a CBE for services to equality and education in 2019. She was honoured to be conferred a special Fellowship from the Educational Institute of Scotland in 2019 and she received the first GTCS Convenor's Award in 2017. She also received an honorary doctorate from Edinburgh Napier University in 2010 for services to gender equality.

She has held several public appointments. She was Equal Opportunities Commissioner for Scotland from 2001-2008. She sat on the Scottish Further and Higher Education Funding Council from 1999 -2009. She has also sat on other Boards including Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education, Scottish Committee of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Scottish Government Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion. She is currently convening a Committee looking at diversifying the teaching profession in Scotland (2018-2020) for the Scottish Government. She also sits on the Educational Broadcasting Commission Scotland Advisory Committee and on the board of Place2Be (Scotland).

**Special Minute**  
**Professor Alistair G L Borthwick, CEng, FICE, FEng, FRSE**  
**Emeritus Professor of Applied Hydrodynamics**

Alistair Borthwick is a world authority in environmental fluid mechanics, with more than 40 years' experience in civil and environmental engineering. He was Professor of Applied Hydrodynamics at The University of Edinburgh from 2013 to 2019, and is currently a Professorial Fellow. He was previously Director of Mechanical Engineering (2014-16) and Head of the Institute for Infrastructure and Environment (2017-19) in the School of Engineering. Alistair was previously a Professor and Deputy Head of Engineering Science at the University of Oxford, where he worked for 21 years from 1990. In 2011, he joined University College Cork as Head of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Alistair was the Founding Director of the €30M SFI Centre for Marine and Renewable Energy Ireland (MaREI), and has chaired its International Scientific Advisory Committee since 2014.

Alistair's research interests include water and sediment science, flood risk management, coastal and ocean processes, water and wastewater treatment, and marine renewable energy. For more than 30 years, he has collaborated with colleagues in China on environmental engineering, in particular all-material fluxes in large rivers, and advanced methods for treating polluted wastewater. His most notable scientific contributions include: formulations of the shallow water equations that enable prediction of floods over very complicated terrain; use of focused wave groups to assess inundation of coastal defences; assessment of land-atmosphere CO<sub>2</sub> fluxes at the scale of China; studies of human and climate effects on the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers; biological filtering of oil field wastewater using immobilized organisms; and methodologies for assessing tidal stream power. His methods for modelling free surface flows have been applied worldwide to floods, water quality, wave-induced currents, lake mixing, fish passes, sea defences, and offshore structures on the continental shelf.

Alistair Borthwick was awarded an honorary degree by Budapest University of Technology and Economics in 2016, followed by the Gold Medal from the Institution of Civil Engineers in 2019 for lifetime contributions to Civil Engineering. He is a Fellow of the UK Royal Academy of Engineering, and of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Alistair has co-supervised 59 doctoral students to completion, has co-authored more than 220 publications in peer-reviewed journals and has a Google-Scholar h-index of 46 with 7010 citations to date.

Alistair continues to support colleagues in the School of Engineering in preparing research grant proposals and co-authored journal articles. He helps to provide mentorship to many research students, early career researchers and senior colleagues. He also maintains important, strategic collaborations with leading Chinese universities, in particular Peking and Shanghai Jiao Tong Universities, where he holds Visiting Professorships. The award of Emeritus Professorship to Prof. Borthwick would provide recognition of his important ongoing contributions to the School of Engineering and the wider University.

Alistair has settled with his wife Gill in their native Devon, where they enjoy long walks on nearby Dartmoor. He is keen to maintain his links with China, and is planning annual trips there. Alistair is a keen football fan and a season ticket holder for his beloved Plymouth Argyle, while keeping an eye on the fortunes of his adopted team in Edinburgh, Hibernian FC. We would like to convey our best wishes to Alistair and his family for a long and happy retirement.

**Electronic Senate**

**15 – 23 September 2020**

**Conferment of the Title of Emeritus Professor**

**Description of paper**

1. The Senate is invited to confer the title of Professor Emeritus upon those professors who retired recently or whose retirement is imminent.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. For approval.
3. For E-Senate, a comment need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed approved. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting “comment on e-S 20/21 1 I”. These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

**Discussion**

4. This Senate is invited to confer the title of Professor Emeritus upon those professors who retired recently or whose retirement is imminent. A Special Minute is attached as an appendix.
5. The Special Minute for Professor Ribchester is closed because details of one of his honorary appointments referenced in the Special Minute is soon to be publically announced by the awarding institution. At that point, the Special Minute will become ‘Open’ and will be published on the ‘Agendas and Papers’ section of the Senate website.

**Resource implications**

6. None.

**Risk management**

7. Not applicable.

**Equality & diversity**

8. Not applicable.

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

9. Those Professors who have been conferred with the title of Professor Emeritus will be contacted in due course.

**Author**

Senate Secretariat  
September 2019

**Freedom of Information**

This paper is closed because it contains personal information.

**Special Minute**  
**Professor Richard Ribchester, BSc (Joint Hons), PhD, DSc**  
**Emeritus Professor of Cellular Neuroscience**

Professor Richard Ribchester will retire on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 after 40 years of service at the University of Edinburgh. Richard was the first and only graduate from the then unique joint BSc Honours degree programme in Chemistry and Zoology from the University of Durham in 1974, while also captaining the Durham University fencing team! He went on to study for his PhD (1974-1977) in one of the first translational research units in the UK, the Muscular Dystrophy Research Laboratories at Newcastle University, under the supervision of Professor John B Harris. During his PhD research, Richard developed tools and undertook physiological characterisation of neuromuscular junctions that became his lifelong research passion, with his very first publication in the leading journal *Nature*. From 1977-79, Richard held a Muscular Dystrophy Association fellowship in the laboratory of Professor William J Betz at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, USA where he developed novel preparations for studying neuromuscular development and reinnervation as well as new methods for manipulating neuromuscular activity during synaptic competition. Following a Wellcome Trust Travelling European Fellowship, hosted in in the laboratory of Professor Jan KS Jansen at the Institute of Physiology, Oslo, where he made the first intracellular recordings from embryonic chick spinal motor neurones *in situ*, Richard was recruited to a Lectureship in Physiology at the University of Edinburgh, in October 1980.

In Edinburgh, Richard established his pioneering research on development and plasticity of neuromuscular innervation, most notably in the areas of the control of remodelling of neuromuscular connections by neural activity and cellular mechanisms of degeneration following nerve damage. He has published over 80 influential peer-reviewed papers in academic journals with his laboratory supported from multiple sources including the Medical Research Council, Wellcome Trust and other research charities. In 2005 he was appointed Personal Chair in Cellular Neuroscience and awarded a DSc from the University in recognition of his work. In 2015, he received the international Delsys Prize for Innovation in Electromyography. Richard was instrumental in establishing the first philanthropically supported research centre in the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine, working closely with the MacDonald family and with the Development and Alumni office to establish the Euan MacDonald Centre for Motor Neurone Disease Research, for which he was the first, acting Director from 2006-2009. Richard has also contributed enormously to the wider dissemination of research and promotion of Physiology and Neuroscience including serving on national committees of the Physiological Society and British Neuroscience Association. His broader contribution to Physiological research has been recognised by Fellowship and subsequently Honorary Membership of the Physiological Society. He has played a central role in leading academic Journals, including the Journal of Physiology as Editorial Board member, Editor and Distributing Editor (1986-92). He was the inaugural Editor-in-Chief of Current Opinion in Physiology (2016-2019) and most recently served as an Associate Editor of a new neuroscience journal, Brain Communications.

Throughout his career in Edinburgh Richard has also been an inspirational and highly creative teacher and mentor. He established and led the highly successful MSc by Research in Neuroscience programme (1995-2005), completely reinvigorated the Honours BSc Neuroscience programme as organiser from (2009-2013) introducing a range of innovative approaches to engage and inspire students, and from 2006-2016 single-handedly developed and delivered an Honours elective course on his favourite topic – Neuromuscular Junctions in Health and Disease. Richard has been a highly collegial member of Biomedical Sciences making major contributions to student and staff mentoring and support, internal and external examining at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and training a cadre of PhD students some of whom are now leading University Professors. He has made major contributions across the University including as co-lead of the Biomedical Sciences Athena Swan award and a variety of contributions to committees at Departmental, School, and College level. He has also been highly active in disseminating science and enthusing the next generation through a wide variety of public engagement activities, appearing on national radio and television, and participating in local science events and festivals.

Richard has been an exceptionally collegiate and supportive colleague who contributed hugely to the Biomedical Sciences and wider University community in Edinburgh – he will be sorely missed.

In his retirement he is looking forward to having more time to pursue his varied interests, continuing his research on neuromuscular synaptic physiology, exploring teaching innovations, enjoying Edinburgh cultural life, and spending time with family, including his fraternal-twin grandchildren. We wish Richard and his entire family all best wishes and happiness in the next phase of life's journey.

**Electronic Senate**

**15 – 23 September 2020**

**Notification of amendment to Senate Standing Orders**

**Description of paper**

1. Notification of minor amendments to the Senate Standing Orders

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is asked to note the proposed amendments. In compliance with Standing Order 26, this paper gives notice of the proposed change, and the proposed change will be presented to Senate for approval at the next meeting of Senate on 7 October 2020.
3. For E-Senate, a comment need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed noted. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting "comment on e-S 20/21 1 J". These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

**Background and context**

4. Standing Order 9 describes the constitution of the Senate Exception Committee.

**Discussion**

5. It is proposed that Standing Order 9 be amended to include the Convener of the Research Policy Group as a member of the Senate Exception Committee, in order to acknowledge and strengthen Senate's role in 'promoting research.'
6. It is also proposed that Standing Order 9 be amended to remove reference to the Senior Vice-Principal and to include reference to the Vice-Principal Students, to reflect changes in roles and align with changes made to the Senate Exception Committee Terms of Reference in September 2019.
7. The Standing Orders, with proposed amendments to Standing Order 9 marked, are appended below.

**Resource implications**

8. None.

**Risk management**

9. Effective academic governance assists the University in managing risk associated with its academic activities.

**Equality & diversity**

10. The membership of the Committee is largely a consequence of decisions taken elsewhere to appoint individuals to particular roles. Ensuring that appointment processes support a diverse staff body is part of the broader responsibility of the University.

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

11. Any comments received will be reported to the next meeting of Senate on 7 October 2020.

**Author**

Kathryn Nicol  
Academic Policy Officer  
September 2020

**Freedom of Information**

Open



## APPENDIX 1

### THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

### STANDING ORDERS OF THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS

#### MEETINGS OF THE SENATUS

1. Ordinary Meetings of the Senatus shall be held at least three times per session, normally on Wednesdays at 2.00 p.m.; the dates of meetings in any academic year shall be determined by the Senatus at the final Ordinary Meeting of the previous academic year and published on the University's web site or in such manner as the Senatus may decide.
2. Special Meetings may be called by resolution of the Senatus or by the Principal, or on a requisition specifying the object signed by twelve Members. Save in exceptional circumstances, a Special Meeting shall be held within fourteen days of being called, and notice of the time, place, and reason for such a Meeting shall be given to members by the Secretary as far as possible in advance: Special Meetings will not normally be held outside semester.
3. A Graduation Meeting shall precede each Graduation Ceremonial, in order to approve the list of Graduands. At a Graduation Meeting, other business of a non-contentious character may, at the discretion of the President, be transacted.
4. Any Ordinary or Special Meeting may adjourn until a date or time to be agreed.

#### CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

5. In terms of the Universities (Scotland) Act, 1858, Section 5, "one-third of the Senatus shall be a quorum, and the Principal shall be the ordinary President, with a deliberative and casting vote". In the absence of the Principal, a Vice-Principal present shall preside, with the same voting power. If at any Meeting the attention of the President be drawn to the fact that a quorum is not present, those in attendance may provisionally deal with such unopposed business as the President shall judge to be of a non-contentious character; but such business shall not in any case include the approval of the Minutes of any previous Meeting. All other business shall be deferred until the next Ordinary Meeting. At a Graduation Meeting, it shall not be competent for any member to draw attention to the fact that a quorum is not present.
6. At the opening of the meeting, the Minutes of the previous Ordinary Meeting, or any intervening Special Meeting, and of any Graduation Meeting and Ceremonial, shall be submitted and approved, except in the circumstances referred to in Order 5. The order of business thereafter shall, subject to the discretion of the President, be as stated in the Billet.
7. The Billet for any Ordinary Meeting shall be established seven days before the Meeting and made available to members at least two days before the Meeting, but the Senatus may consider non-contentious or urgent business which has not been included in the Billet.

8. The Senatus may conduct business electronically under such arrangements as it may from time to time approve.

9. An Exception Committee will under delegated authority, make urgent formal business decisions which would otherwise require the Senatus approval between meetings of the Senatus, on the understanding that any matter so referred can be referred to the full Senatus should this be the wish of the Exception Committee. The Committee shall consist of at least six members. The Principal, the ~~Senior Vice-Principal Students, Principal, and~~ the Convener of each of the Senatus Standing Committees, ~~and the Convener of the Research Policy Group~~ shall be ex officio members of the Committee. Unless otherwise represented the membership of the Committee must also include two Senate members and a representative of the Students' Association (normally the President). The Committee will be convened only if required and much of its business is expected to be conducted through correspondence. The consultation period can be no shorter than a 24 hour period. Four members of the Committee shall be a quorum and will include the Principal or ~~Senior Vice-Principal~~ Students and a Senate member. A formal minute will be kept of proceedings and submitted for approval as soon as practicable to members of the Committee. The draft minute will be agreed with the Convener of the Committee prior to circulation. A report on decisions made by the Committee will be provided to the next available Ordinary meeting of the Senatus. Membership of the Committee will be published on the University's website.

## MOTIONS

10. Motions which members wish to bring forward to any meeting must be communicated in writing to the Secretary in time to be entered on the Billet, as provided in Order 7. Motions and Amendments arising out of business on the Billet may be dealt with without being previously notified; before putting such a Motion or Amendment the President may call for it to be placed in his/her hands in writing. All Motions and Amendments must be proposed and seconded.

11. When the Report of a College or Committee on any matter which requires the approval of the Senatus has been presented by or on behalf of the Head of College or Convener, it shall be deemed that a Motion that the Senatus approve the Report has been made, and duly seconded.

12. The Honorary Degrees Committee shall from time-to-time submit Motions for the award of Honorary Degrees in the form of a written report which shall be made available to members at least two days before the Ordinary Meeting at which it is to be presented.

13. An amendment, if moved and seconded, shall be put before the Motion to which it refers; when there are two or more Amendments, they shall be put in the order determined by the President.

14. No amendment shall take the form of a direct negative of a Motion.

15. At any time after a Motion has been made and duly seconded, any Member may propose the Previous Question, viz., "That the Senatus do pass to the next item on the Billet", or move the Closure, viz., "That the Senatus do not proceed to vote on the Motion". These motions, if duly moved and seconded, shall normally be put immediately and without debate.

16. No decision on the Senatus shall be rescinded except on a Motion which is competent in terms of Standing Order 8 or 9.

17. Decisions of the Senatus shall, except as provided in Order 23, be taken by show of hands, unless a secret ballot be demanded. A Member may require his/her dissent from a decision to be recorded.

18. A Member wishing to take part in any discussion shall rise and address him/herself to the Chair.

19. A Member shall not, except by permission of the President, speak more than once to any Motion or Amendment in one debate upon one subject, except to order, in explanation, or in reply as the mover of the resolution under discussion.

20. In seconding a Motion or Amendment, a Member may, if he/she refrain from making observations at the time, reserve the right to speak at a later stage.

#### MINUTES OF MEETINGS

21. The Secretary shall be responsible for preparing Minutes of all Meetings, which Minutes shall normally be circulated with the Billet for the next Ordinary Meeting.

#### COMMITTEES

22. (a) The Senatus may appoint Committees, which need not be composed entirely of its own members, and delegate to any Committee such powers as the Senatus may think fit; and abolish existing Committees. The Senatus may also appoint members to Joint Committees responsible to both the Senatus and the University Court. All members of Senatus shall be invited annually to submit suggestions for membership of these Committees. Senatus will approve the membership of these committees annually, normally in the second semester, having regard to the principle of rotation of membership where this has been approved by the Senatus, and to other Resolutions concerning appointment to Committees which have been or may be passed by the Senatus from time to time. (See Minutes, Vol. XV, pp.938 f.; Vol. XIX, p.724.)

(b) Committees of the Senatus shall report to the Senatus on an annual basis, either directly or through such other committees as may be approved by the Senatus from time to time, except where the Senatus provides otherwise, and such Reports shall include action taken under powers delegated by the Senatus.

#### REPRESENTATION ON UNIVERSITY COURT

23. When a vacancy arises in the representation of the Senatus on the University Court, the Secretary shall invite nominations to fill it. Each nomination shall be signed by two members of Senatus who will be deemed to have formally proposed and seconded the nominee.

24. A Committee, to be known as the Scrutinising Committee, shall be appointed by the Senate to scrutinise nominations and confirm the validation of the nominations and hear any appeal against disqualification by the Returning Officer. The Committee shall consist of a representative of the University Court, a representative of the Senatus and a representative of the University Secretary. The decision of the Scrutinising Committee is final.

25. Regulations for the conduct of an election will be approved by an Ordinary Meeting of Senatus and circulated to members of Senatus.

#### SUSPENSION, AMENDMENT OR REPEAL OF STANDING ORDERS

26. The Standing Order of Senatus, of which this article is one, shall in no case be suspended unless a quorum be present, and then only with the approval of two-thirds of those voting. The Standing Orders shall not be amended or repealed except after notice given in the last preceding Ordinary Meeting of Senatus. Amendment or repeal shall require the approval of two-thirds of those voting on the Motion for amendment or repeal, provided also that at least fifty members vote in favour of such a Motion.

Document control

Date of approval / amendment	Details
18/9/14	Approved by Senate

**Electronic Senate**

**15 – 23 September 2020**

**Communications from the University Court**

**Description of paper**

1. To update Senate on certain matters considered by the University Court at its meetings held by videoconference on 27 April and 15 June 2020.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to note the report.
3. For E-Senate, a comment need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed noted. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting "comment on e-S 20/21 1 K". These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

**Resource implications**

4. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

**Risk management**

5. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

**Equality and diversity**

6. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

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

7. Where applicable, as covered in the report.

**Author**

Dr Lewis Allan  
Head of Court Services  
11 September 2020

**Freedom of Information**

Open Paper

# COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT

27 April 2020

## 1 Introductory Items

The Vice-Convenor welcomed members and attendees to the meeting, held by videoconference. Andrew Wilson and Oona Miller, Students' Association President and Vice-President Welfare respectively, were thanked for their service to the student body and the University over the past year and wished well for the future. Janet Legrand, Senior Lay Member-elect and Ellen MacRae and Rachel Irwin, Students' Association President-elect and Vice-President-elect Activities & Services respectively, were welcomed as observers to the meeting.

## 2 Principal's Report

Court noted the contents of the report and additional information on the approach taken in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, prioritising health and safety considerations for students and staff. Future planning work is for 'adaptation and renewal' rather than 'recovery' given the need for new approaches as the virus and its impact persist. Similar to other research-intensive universities, research is not fully-funded and is supported by income from other activities, particularly from international student tuition fees and accommodation, catering and events. Reductions in these areas will therefore impact on research sustainability unless the model of research funding shifts to full funding and this is being articulated in sector discussions with research funders.

Preparations for hybrid online/in-person teaching next semester were discussed and the varying impact of remote working and studying on different groups, particularly staff and students with caring responsibilities who are more likely to be female.

## 3 Covid-19: Mitigation and Renewal – Prioritisation and Management

The approach to co-ordination and governance of the institutional response to the Covid-19 outbreak was reviewed. The University's pandemic plan was refreshed following the emergence of the virus and a co-ordination team established alongside specialist academic contingency and admissions mitigations groups. The University moved to remote teaching

and assessment from 23 March and transitioned from immediate contingency planning to a short-term operating model, now mostly complete. Work on the next phase, adaptation and renewal, is underway and is led by a group convened by the Principal with supporting workstreams led by identified senior leaders. The following points were raised in discussion:

- integrating staff views into the workstreams – with Staff Experience Committee providing a forum which many workstream leaders attend, additional meetings with Trade Unions are taking place and the intention to host virtual ‘Town Hall’ meetings or other similar means of seeking staff views;
- assessing the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) impacts of the pandemic on students and staff and reporting findings to Court – the EDI Committee chaired by Sarah Cunningham-Burley will consider this and can report appropriately; and,
- procedures to enable rapid decision-making as required – all relevant committees will have processes for rapid decision-making incorporated into their terms of reference and workstream leads have delegated responsibilities in their areas.

#### **4 Covid-19 Communications Reporting & Evaluation**

A report on the University’s media coverage and communications with external and internal audiences regarding the Covid-19 pandemic was considered. The importance of communicating with prospective students was noted, with a ‘see you soon’ video message receiving high levels of engagement. Future communications with prospective students could include messages from current students to help with student community building. Appropriate internal and external communication of the challenges facing the University was discussed and is being considered by the Director of Communications & Marketing in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team.

#### **5 Student Experience Update**

The Vice-Principal Students provided a verbal update on the University’s move to remote teaching from 23 March and planning for the coming academic year. It is expected that a hybrid model of teaching will be developed for the next semester, blending online and in-person teaching with social distancing measures. Building an esprit de corps for all members of the student community, whether on campus or online will be a key component.

The Students’ Association President thanked University staff for the collaborative approach taken in responding to the pandemic’s impact on the student community and noted the continued importance of activity to improve the student experience, including in attracting

prospective students. Members discussed seeking student input in redesigning courses for Semester 1 of the next academic year and recognising this with academic credits plus the likely flexibility for Schools to operate fully online or hybrid models of teaching next Semester. Hybrid models of teaching are expected to be offered next semester that are more closely matched to expectations set in student prospectuses than online-only provision.

## **6 EUSA President's Report**

The Students' Association President reported on recent developments including the serious financial impact anticipated from the Covid-19 pandemic on the Association given the cancellation of the Edinburgh Festivals and generally reduced commercial trading activities. Mitigating actions planned or underway include utilising the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and discussions with University staff are ongoing regarding future financial planning.

## **7 Gujarat Biotechnology University**

Court confirmed its continued support for the partnership proposal and approved the next steps, including the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement.

## **8 Outcome Agreement 2020/21**

A proposed single year Outcome Agreement for 2020/21 was approved and authority delegated to the Deputy Secretary Strategic Planning to refine the detail of the document prior to submission to the Scottish Funding Council.

## **9 Resolutions**

The following draft resolutions were referred to Senate and the General Council for observations:

Draft Resolution No. 9/2020: Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations

Draft Resolution No. 10/2020: Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations

*[Note: these were considered at the e-Senate meeting of 5-13 May 2020]*

**15 June 2020**

## **1 Introductory Items**



The Rector welcomed members and attendees to the meeting, held by videoconference. New members Ellen MacRae (Students' Association President) and Rachel Irwin (Students' Association Vice-President Activities & Services) and attendee Catherine Martin (Vice-Principal (Interim) Corporate Services) were welcomed to their first meeting. Janet Legrand (Senior Lay Member-elect), Fiona Mackay (Academic Staff Member & Senate Assessor-elect), Sarah McAllister (Professional Services Staff Member-elect), Joyce Anderson (Trade Union Professional Services Staff Member-elect) and Kathryn Nash (Trade Union Academic Staff Member-elect) were welcomed as observers before taking office on 1 August 2020. Court's gratitude was recorded to Anne Richards (Vice-Convener), Elizabeth Bomberg (Senate Assessor), Jo Craiglee (Non-Teaching Staff Assessor), Alexander 'Sandy' Tudhope (Senate Assessor), Susan Rice (Co-opted Member) for their service and contribution as Court members at their last formal meeting before demitting office on 31 July 2020.

## 2 Principal's Report

Court noted the contents of the report and additional information on:

- Student and staff wellbeing: the rapid move to remote learning has been successful but as the pandemic has continued the challenges of continued remote working for some staff have inevitably grown. Good Friday and Easter Monday were granted as additional leave days for all staff in recognition of the efforts made to date and managers are encouraging staff to take annual leave as normal where appropriate and to show flexibility in cases where a normal workload is not possible, e.g. health concerns or caring responsibilities. Targeted 'pulse' surveys of staff are being considered to seek quick feedback on certain areas, such as experiences of remote working. Student feedback has centred on seeking as much clarity as possible on what the learning environment and wider student experience will be in the coming academic year. Messaging has highlighted that the value of a University of Edinburgh degree will remain unchanged and that the city and University will be a safe and welcoming place for all students;
- UK Government: the announcement of a cap on the number of English domiciled students at Scottish universities is not expected to impact on planned recruitment. A Research Sustainability Forum has been established with devolved nation representation and it is hoped that this will lead to a genuinely sustainable research funding model;
- Scottish Government: the Scottish Funding Council has been asked to initiate a review of the coherence and sustainability of provision in further and higher education. The first phase of the review is expected to conclude by the end of August 2020. Separately, £75 million of additional funding to support research has been announced and will be allocated in proportion to the current distribution of the core research grant, with the University expected to receive around £23.2 million. The funding is to support early career researchers and coronavirus research in particular;
- Black Lives Matter: the University has issued a public statement, with added urgency given to work already underway led by Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley (University Lead on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion) and Professor Rowena Arshad (Chair in Multicultural and Anti-Racist Education).

Members discussed the current position for student admissions and the Black Lives Matter campaign. On student admissions, application figures are encouraging for both undergraduate and postgraduate admissions but significant uncertainty exists on the likely conversion rate of offers into acceptances and subsequent enrolment figures. On Black Lives Matter, the Principal and colleagues have met with student representatives to discuss matters raised in a petition. An open letter from members of staff on institutional racism at the University has been received and will be shared with Court members. Developing an integrated response is key, with Professor Rowena Arshad convening a sub-group of the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee on racial inequalities.

### **3 Student Experience Update**

An update on student experience developments and future planning since the move to remote learning in mid-March was reviewed. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Government decisions on physical distancing requirements for students and staff in University buildings will have a major impact on how teaching, learning and student services and facilities operate in the new academic year (e.g. a 2 metre distancing rule can reduce the capacity of a large lecture theatre from 500 to 20 people). Extending the teaching hours in a day would provide some mitigation – this and other options are under consideration before timetabling decisions are taken in the summer;
- Curriculum reform was a priority before the pandemic and remains a priority but with learning from the current circumstances, such as building resilience against future shocks with expanded hybrid teaching models. A recent Senate discussion on the topic attracted a record number of attendees and could be discussed at Court in future;
- The importance of protecting key student experience projects and considering students most adversely affected by the present situation – a paper will be considered by the University Executive tomorrow that proposes prioritising the following student experience projects: student mental health and wellbeing; enhanced peer support; subtitling of recorded lectures; and student support hubs; and,
- Involving the Sports Union in forming a sense of community and maintaining a sports offering, particularly outdoor sports, where possible.

### **4 EUSA President's Report**

The Students' Association President reported on recent developments, including: the full year financial report to March 2020, where financial performance was ahead of budget until the final month of the year, when greatly reduced activity in March led to a small deficit for the year as a whole; work to reduce costs in the current year given the significant reduction in income expected; and, supporting student activism to eliminate racism in the University and community. Members discussed the practical measures intended to decolonise the curriculum, such as broadening course reading lists and reiterated their support for the Students' Association and Sports Union in managing the impact of the pandemic.

## **5 Equality, Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) Reports**

- **EDMARC Staff and Student Reports 2019**
- **EDMARC Ethnicity Report – preliminary findings**

The annual report on staff and student data from the Equality, Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee and preliminary findings from an ethnicity report covering the undergraduate student journey from application to degree and graduate outcomes were reviewed. Sarah Cunningham-Burley, University Lead on Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, noted that the University adds to the racial and ethnic diversity of the City of Edinburgh, although the proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff is lower than in the City as a whole, particularly in professional service categories and there is an opportunity to seek to improve this with local recruitment. Considering the student data, while the proportion of UK students from BAME backgrounds has increased to 13%, an attainment gap persists in the award of first class and upper second class honours degrees, a pattern seen in the sector as a whole, with this to be a priority for follow-up work along with better understanding of intersectional issues (e.g. socio-economic factors, gender, age) and improving offer and acceptance rates. Court welcomed the reports and approved the annual staff and student reports for publication. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Ensuring that the variation across Colleges and Schools is considered in follow-up work and School level work incentivised – the EDMARC committee will become a sub-group of the new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC) which is linked into Schools through its membership to help with more close working and sharing of best practice;
- The likely scope of follow-up analysis – targeted qualitative research is being considered to identify what would best meet the needs of staff and students. EDIC and its sub-groups will develop action plans, with the anti-racism sub-group intending to finalise its own action plan over the summer. High levels of engagement from the staff and student community are helping drive this forward;
- The regularity of reporting – the annual EDMARC reports will continue with additional 'deep dives' when sufficient trend data is available. Highlighted areas such as attainment, offer and acceptances will be monitored on an annual basis; and,
- Being conscious of the importance of individual decisions at every level and being open to taking bold actions as well as incremental improvements.

## **6 Strategy 2030 Strategic Performance Framework Update**

An update on work to develop a Strategic Performance Framework to assess performance against Strategy 2030 objectives was reviewed ahead of an anticipated first report in November. Work to align reporting on outcomes for the Social and Civic Responsibility Plan

and Strategy 2030 was welcomed, as was developing an additional tier of more granular measures at an operational level.

## **7 Prevent Duty Implementation Update**

An annual report on the University's implementation of the Prevent duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) was noted. The Students' Association President reiterated that the Students' Association remains opposed to the Prevent duty, while recognising that the University's implementation is in compliance with legal obligations. It was agreed to circulate further detail on the Students' Association position for information.

## **8 Education Act 1994 Compliance**

A Certificate of Assurance from the Students' Association to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the Education Act 1994 was noted.

## **9 Senate Report**

The report and the annual report from the Senate Committees was noted and, on the recommendation of the Senate, Court resolved that Ordinance No. 212 (Composition of the Senatus Academicus) shall come into force on 1 August 2020 to ensure that the new Governance Act-compliant composition of Senate will be established for the new academic year.

## **10 Ordinances**

Court:

- noted the responses received during the statutory consultation;
- approved Ordinances No. 215 (Amendment of Ordinance 208 (Employment of Academic Staff)) and No. 216 (Removal of Members of the University Court) and their submission to the Privy Council Office; and,
- delegated authority to the University Secretary to agree any further non-material changes to the Ordinances if requested by the Scottish Government or Privy Council.

## **11 Resolutions**

The following draft resolution was referred to the General Council and to Senate for observations:

Draft Resolution No.74/2020: Removal of Members of the University Court

*[note: this is contained within a separate paper to e-Senate]*

The following resolutions were approved:

Resolution No. 5/2020: Foundation of a Charles and Ethel Barr Chair of Cancer Research

Resolution No. 6/2020: Foundation of a Chair of Digital Manufacture

Resolution No. 7/2020: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Chemical Engineering  
Technology

Resolution No. 8/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Future Construction

Resolution No. 9/2020: Undergraduate Degree Programme Regulations

Resolution No. 10/2020: Postgraduate Degree Programme Regulations

Resolution No. 11/2020: Alteration of the title of the Chair of Physics

Resolution No. 12/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Pure Mathematics

Resolution No. 13/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Exoplanet Characterisation

Resolution No. 14/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Palaeontology and Evolution

Resolution No. 15/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Volcanology

Resolution No. 16/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Applied Physics

Resolution No. 17/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Microbial Evolution

Resolution No. 18/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Industrial Mathematics

Resolution No. 19/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Harmonic Analysis and Partial  
Differential Equations

Resolution No. 20/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Membrane Separations

Resolution No. 21/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Software Transformation

Resolution No. 22/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Sustainable Biotechnology

Resolution No. 23/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Artificial Intelligence

Resolution No. 24/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Earth Dynamics

Resolution No. 25/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Category Theory

Resolution No. 26/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Experimental Particle Physics

Resolution No. 27/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Stem Cell Biology and Early  
Development

Resolution No. 28/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Geometry

Resolution No. 29/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Hydrogeology and Coupled  
Process Modelling

Resolution No. 30/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Digital Design

Resolution No. 31/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Robotics

Resolution No. 32/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Global Change Mapping

Resolution No. 33/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Machine Learning and  
Inference

Resolution No. 34/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Biophysics

Resolution No. 35/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Robot Learning and Autonomy

Resolution No. 36/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Urban Geography

Resolution No. 37/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Signalling and Proteostasis

Resolution No. 38/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Fluid Dynamics

Resolution No. 39/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Energy, Environment and  
Society

Resolution No. 40/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Modern and Contemporary Art  
History

Resolution No. 41/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Scots Private Law  
Resolution No. 42/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Architectural History  
Resolution No. 43/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Modern British History  
Resolution No. 44/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Social and Economic Anthropology  
Resolution No. 45/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Literature and the Environment  
Resolution No. 46/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Multilingualism  
Resolution No. 47/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Global Urbanism and Resilience  
Resolution No. 48/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of European and Global Education Governance  
Resolution No. 49/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Finance  
Resolution No. 50/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Craft History and Theory  
Resolution No. 51/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Cinema and Iran  
Resolution No. 52/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of South Asian and Comparative Politics  
Resolution No. 53/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of American Literature  
Resolution No. 54/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Germline Biology  
Resolution No. 55/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Population Medicine & Veterinary Public Health Policy  
Resolution No. 56/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Small Animal Orthopaedics  
Resolution No. 57/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Developmental Psychology  
Resolution No. 58/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Cardiovascular Pharmacology  
Resolution No. 59/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Arterial Remodelling  
Resolution No. 60/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Integrative Fish Genomics  
Resolution No. 61/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Molecular Neural Development  
Resolution No. 62/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Veterinary Parasitology  
Resolution No. 63/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Conservation Science  
Resolution No. 64/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Sociology of Science and Medicine  
Resolution No. 65/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Experiential Student Learning  
Resolution No. 66/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Medical Imaging and Physics  
Resolution No. 67/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Translational Chemistry and Biomedical Imaging  
Resolution No. 68/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Neurology & Clinical Epidemiology  
Resolution No. 69/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Clinical Pharmacology  
Resolution No. 70/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Clinical Cardiology  
Resolution No. 71/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Developmental Endocrinology  
Resolution No. 72/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Property Law  
Resolution No. 73/2020: Foundation of a Personal Chair of Dermatology

**Electronic Senate**

**15-23 September 2020**

**Knowledge Strategy Committee Report**

**Description of paper**

1. The paper reports on the Knowledge Strategy Committee meeting held by videoconference on 22 May 2020 and seeks approval for two minor updates to the Committee's Terms of Reference.

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. Senate is invited to note the report and to approve two minor updates to Knowledge Strategy Committee's Terms of Reference as set out in section 6 of the report.
3. For E-Senate, a comment need only be submitted to raise an objection/suggest corrections. If no comments are received the paper will be deemed approved. In this context any comments on this paper should be emailed to [SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk](mailto:SenateSupport@ed.ac.uk) quoting "comment on e-S 20/21 1 L". These comments will be added verbatim at <https://edin.ac/2DYSYJT>

**Resource implications**

4. None.

**Risk management**

5. Not applicable.

**Equality & diversity**

6. Equality and diversity implications were considered within each agenda item.

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

7. Regular reports on aspects of the Committee's work of interest to Senate will continue to be submitted.

**Author**

Dr Lewis Allan  
Head of Court Services  
11 September 2020

**Freedom of Information**

Open paper

# REPORT FROM THE KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY COMMITTEE

22 May 2020

## 1 Information Services Group and Covid-19

A pre-recorded presentation from the Vice-Principal & Chief Information Officer on the initial response of the Information Service Group to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the University had been circulated to the Committee in advance, with questions considered under section 2 below.

## 2 Information Services Group Planning Round: Covid-19 Addendum 2020/21

A list of accelerated or proposed new projects and initiatives to support and underpin the University's plans to restart research and to prepare for teaching at the start of the new academic year was reviewed. The following points were raised in discussion:

- Support for an accessibility project on the subtitling of recorded teaching material – students could be employed to assist with the project, such as checking the work of automated subtitling tools, with additional funding required;
- As well as projects to support hybrid teaching, projects to support hybrid research are proposed or underway, including large-scale virtual conferencing tools, an institutional subscription to videoconferencing service Zoom to aid collaboration with researchers in other universities using Zoom and training tools for researchers now home working. For those conducting research on items in the University's heritage collections, it may be possible to offer remote access, such as high definition videos or photographs of items;
- While many publishers have provided universities with increased access to electronic journals at lower cost than usual it is anticipated that this will be on a temporary basis and future price rises are to be expected, likely linked to 'Plan S' open access changes;
- The 'Learn Foundations' project to upgrade the Virtual Learning Environment 'Learn' platform to provide a consistent template for over 5,000 courses was supported;
- Creating an e-exams platform to allow for proctored exams is important for many courses in the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine, and enabling the presentation of visual information as well as written text in e-exams will also be important for many parts of the University;
- Concerns that a reduction in exam assessment may be encouraged without full consideration of the academic merits – it was noted that assessment pedagogy is outwith the remit of the Committee [*post-meeting note: Senate Education Committee has confirmed that remote exams should be used in the December diet – unless in-person exams are unavoidable – with alternative assessments to be considered where appropriate*]; and,
- Remote working guidance to aid wellbeing and mental health was supported.



The paper was welcomed and a high level summary of the projects to be taken forward requested.

### **3 Makerspace Ecosystem**

Following the successful introduction of a makerspace in the Main Library, a paper setting out the concept of a makerspace ecosystem for the University as a whole was considered. Individual makerspaces can be established under a funding model appropriate to their context and be assessed on a case by case basis by the Committee to avoid duplication. The concept of a makerspace ecosystem was supported and approved.

### **4 Core Systems Cloud Computing Strategy**

A draft cloud computing strategy was reviewed, to support the move towards cloud computing at the University. The clear articulation of benefits and risks in the strategy was welcomed and the risk of higher charges from vendors once customers are 'locked in' to the use of a particular cloud system noted. In mitigation, it is proposed that a public cloud service is provided by the University for research groups and other users to protect data and reduce the risk of vendor 'lock-in'. It was confirmed that a recharging procedure for a public cloud to avoid the raising of purchase orders by individual units will allow for splitting of charging. Noting that the required external review had concluded successfully, it was anticipated that the draft strategy would return for formal approval.

### **5 University Computing Regulations**

Minor revisions to the University Computing Regulations were recommended for approval by Court. Members discussed the risks of using personal devices to access University information and communicating these risks and the requirements set out in the regulations. Staff can use personal devices for work purposes but any portable device used to access University information must be encrypted, responsibility for which sits with the staff member (with iPhones and iPads that have password protection automatically encrypting data).

### **6 Terms of Reference Update**

It was agreed to recommend for approval by Court and Senate updates to the Terms of Reference, as marked up in the text below, to make explicit the Committee's ability to meet virtually by videoconference and teleconference and a minor update to the title of one member.

## **2 Composition**

2.3 *The Students' Association shall appoint, on an annual basis, a representative to be a member of the Committee. This will normally be the Vice-President ~~Academic Affairs~~ Education of the Students' Association who will remain a member of the Committee for the length of their term of office.*

## **3 Meetings**

3.1 *The Committee will meet as required to fulfil its remit and will meet at least twice in each academic year. Meetings may be held in person or virtually by the means of videoconference, teleconference or other means. With the prior approval of the Convener of the Committee urgent matters may be considered through correspondence.*