

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Quality Assurance Committee
Tuesday 10th September 2024, 2pm –5pm
Hybrid meeting: Argyle House Mtg Room 14, Floor E and Microsoft Teams

A G E N D A

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|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Welcome and Apologies | |
| 2. | Minutes of the previous meeting To approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note of e-business April 2024• May 2024 | SQAC 24/25 1A SQAC 24/25 1B |
| 3. | Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convener's communications• SFC Tertiary Quality Review | Verbal Update |
| SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS | | |
| 4. | University of Edinburgh Students' Association Vice President Education Priorities 2024/25 To comment. | SQAC 24/25 1C |
| 5. | School Annual Quality Reports 2023/24: Sub Group Report To discuss and approve recommended actions. | SQAC 24/25 1D |
| 6. | Internal Periodic Review Themes 2023/24 To discuss and approve. | SQAC 24/25 1E |
| 7. | Student Support – 2023/24 Feedback Outcomes To note. | SQAC 24/25 1F |
| 8. | Student Support – Evaluation and Monitoring Framework Plan To note. | SQAC 24/25 1G |
| ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING | | |
| 9. | Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2022/23 To note. | SQAC 24/25 1H |
| 10. | Committee Administration: To note: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee Terms of Reference• Committee Membership 2023/24 | SQAC 24/25 1I |
| 11. | Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses* | SQAC 24/25 1J |

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|------------|---|--|
| | <p>The Committee is invited to approve the IPR reports and responses published on the Committee SharePoint.</p> <p>*Please note that reviewing of reports and responses has been assigned to the relevant Dean of Quality due to volume of reading.</p> | |
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| 12. | Any Other Business | |
| 13. | <p>Date of next meeting Thursday 5th December 2024, Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and Microsoft Teams</p> | |

**Senate Quality Assurance Committee e-business
Monday 29th April – Monday 6th May 2024 5pm**

Note of e-business

| | | |
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| 1. | Items for noting | |
| 1.1 | Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2024. To note. | SQAC 23/24 4A |
| | <p>The Committee had discussed these minutes in the meeting of 25th April 2024 and agreed to amend the wording around feedback quality and turnaround times, in the context of the QESR recommendation.</p> <p>This amendment was incorporated and the updated, final version was shared with the Committee via e-business for noting.</p> | |
| 2. | Items for approval | |
| 2.1 | Committee Priorities 2024/25 Revised draft – for approval. | SQAC 23/24 4H |
| | <p>This item was discussed in the meeting of SQAC on April 25th and comments from members had been noted. A revised draft was shared via e-business.</p> <p>Two members confirmed approval through e-business. Comments received from other members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The QESR Priority clarifications are good, but there still needs to be language reflecting the committee agreement that one of SQAC's roles in this priority is to facilitate greater ownership and understanding of QESR and related processes and requirements in Senate at large. I appreciate that this aspect is now included in the updated TQEF priority. • The SSM Priority updates are good, and there still needs to be added the aspect of SQAC to consider implications for the role of quality assurance in change management more broadly, and how the rollout of SSM was able to get so far past the pilot phase without a QA framework. • Under the P&A Monitoring Priority, this should include the discussed dimension of focusing on quality data and high standards of evidence collection and use. • Need to make sure all QESR priorities for 2024-25 are explicitly identified. <p>These comments were incorporated into the revised draft which will be presented at the meeting of SQAC on 16th May.</p> <p>One further comment was received via e-business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I also thought the committee had a consensus on the additional priority of assessing our QA apparatus for internal systems and change processes including core teaching infrastructure such as VLEs, Exceptional Circumstances, and Timetabling. | |

| | | |
|-----|--|---------------|
| | <p>During its meeting on 25th April 2024, this had been discussed by the Committee and agreed as an area of focus rather than a priority, due to the overall responsibility falling within the remit of the Deputy Secretary, Students. Therefore, this item was not included as a Committee priority.</p> <p>This paper was approved on the basis of a majority nil response, recorded as assent. A member raised concern that it is inappropriate to regard a nil response as assent, and the Committee's legitimacy depends on being able to demonstrate thorough and active responsibility for items in its remit.</p> | |
| 2.2 | <p>Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses</p> <p>The Committee is invited to approve the IPR Final Reports and Responses published on the Committee SharePoint.</p> | SQAC 23/24 2H |
| | <p>Comments received from the Committee as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Divinity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In relation to paired Level 10/11 courses - clarification on a desirable ratio or limit that programme directors can work towards along with a timeframe for completion. • Moray House School of Education and Sport <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is recognition that much of the work against recommendations remains ongoing with the change in leadership necessarily resulted in some delays. ○ It seems the Moray House work on the recommendations is still mostly incomplete, with many at the point of convening groups to look at issues that haven't finished meeting or reporting yet. We should try to understand to what extent that is a fault of poor goal-setting vs insufficient attention to the goals. Where activities have taken place with MH, evidence of effectiveness could be improved. ○ Branding work delayed by change of Head of School but query if this would have been a good use of resources anyway. ○ What is the desired outcome of improved staff data literacy? The comments suggest risk of mission drift and redundant effort. <p>The reports and responses were reviewed by the Committee, and critical comments and questions will be tracked through Academic Services. As there was no direction not to approve, these are taken as approved by assent.</p> | |
| | <p>Date of next meeting Thursday 16th May 2024 2-5pm, Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room Charles Stewart House and Microsoft Teams</p> | |

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Thursday 16th May 2024, 2-5pm
Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House
and Microsoft Teams

1. Attendance

| Present: | Position: |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Professor Tina Harrison | Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) (Convener) |
| Professor Matthew Bailey | Dean of Quality, CMVM |
| Professor Laura Bradley | Doctoral College Representative of CAHSS (PGR) |
| Marianne Brown | Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling |
| Brian Connolly | Acting Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services |
| Dr Anne Desler | School Representative of CAHSS |
| Dr Gail Duursma | School Representative of CSE |
| Olivia Eadie | Co-Director, Institute for Academic Development |
| Dr Pia Helbing | Senate Representative |
| Professor Nazira Karodia | Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching, Edinburgh Napier University |
| Professor Linda Kirstein | Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, CSE |
| Callum Paterson | Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator |
| Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar | School Representative of CMVM |
| Dr Emily Taylor | Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, CAHS |
| Professor Jose Vazquez-Boland | Senate Representative |
| Sinéad Docherty | Committee Secretary, Academic Services |
| | |
| Apologies: | |
| Dr Michael Barany | Senate Representative |
| Carl Harper | Vice President (Education), Students' Association |
| Dr Pia Helbing | Senate Representative |
| | |
| In attendance: | |
| Dr Steven Morley | Senate Representative (on behalf of Dr Michael Barany) |

2. Minutes of meeting held on 25th April 2024

The Committee discussed the minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2024. A point of clarification had been proposed around the accreditation requirements of the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery (BVM&S) programme addressed in paper G of the previous meeting. This amendment was agreed by the Committee.

The Committee approved the minutes pending the minor change.

3. Matters Arising

- **SQAC & Curriculum Transformation Workshop**

The Committee reflected on the recent workshop that had been arranged by the Curriculum Transformation (CTP) team. It was felt to have been a useful session which surfaced important issues around regulations and process.

- **Annual Monitoring**

The Committee were informed that the annual monitoring templates have been circulated to the Directors of Quality for each School and to the College Quality Offices. An appendix is yet to be circulated; this has been requested by the Curriculum Transformation team and will include questions on the level of programme readiness for the PGT CTP framework.

The Committee were supportive of the annual monitoring process being used to gather this information, noting that it was an effective use of time and energy to combine the questions through the one process.

Action: Academic Services to share the CTP question(s) with the College Deans of Quality for their approval before circulating to Schools.

- **Student Support Services Annual Review (SSAR)**

It was confirmed that the SSAR process will be reviewed by Academic Services and the Deputy Secretary, Students. Any changes will seek to align with the outcomes of the tertiary review which are expected to be announced over the summer. The Committee were made aware that there will be changes to funding arrangements in the sector which will impact the work of external bodies (QAA and SFC), to whom the University reports its quality assurance activities.

- **Thematic Review**

The Committee were informed that the Deputy Secretary, Students is continuing with plans for a thematic review to take place in the second semester of 2024-25. A proposal is expected by the Committee in autumn.

4. Degree Awarded Analysis 2022-23 (Paper B)

This report was presented by the Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling. As part of its standard business, the Committee is required to take a detailed look at the degree outcome data. The Committee were informed that, due to changes in statutory reporting, the Higher

Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data is not yet available and therefore it has not been possible to undertake the usual benchmarking activity to be included in this report. As a point of feedback, the Committee advised that the language used in relation to this matter should refer to the “awarding gap” rather than “attainment gap”.

The report for 2022-23 focussed on analysis at institution and School level, as well as key cohort groups. It was noted that the analysis shows outcomes are returning to pre-pandemic levels. There remains an increase in first class awards but this is levelling off. The awarding gap is most significant in comparisons between BAME and white students and, despite some fluctuations in the pandemic years, the gap has largely remained the same since 2018-19. Students from a widening participating (WP) background are also notably impacted by the awarding gap.

The Committee discussed the best way to address and improve the awarding gaps. It was felt that institution-wide actions may not help the pockets of students who are affected; action at School and programme level would be expected to have more impact. The Convener informed members that the QAA have announced provision of a resource to help to address awarding gaps.

It was noted that the disability gap is smaller than that of ethnicity and WP and this was attributed, in part, to the concrete actions that have been taken across the University to address this gap and increase support.

It was reported by the external member of SQAC that Edinburgh Napier University’s efforts to address the BAME awarding gap included increasing resources, developing an anti-racist curriculum and gathering views from the international student perspective to inform actions. Edinburgh Napier University had discovered that international students were less likely to come forward for student support. The Committee requested that, in future reports, UK BAME and international BAME students be presented separately in the data to better understand the impact of the awarding gap.

The Committee discussed the grading scale and the legacy of Schools being asked to award marks in the 80s and 90s to make full use of the scale. The Committee also recognised that the use of elevated hurdles for students to progress to honours year can act as an early intervention mechanism and has an impact on awards and outcomes.

An appendix had been provided with this paper to give further context to the mitigations and impact of the marking and assessment boycott (MAB). It was confirmed that Schools has engaged fully with the data collection and reporting, but analysis of unclassified degrees did not separate out MAB mitigations from factors such as extensions and special circumstances, and therefore it was not possible to fully understand the impact of the MAB from this report. The Committee were informed that Schools should be able to provide this insight. The Committee requested, going forward, a clearer indication from School data as to which mitigations have been applied in order to better understand the impact of specific factors.

In relation to the next steps, SQAC agreed that outliers illustrated in the data should be referred to the relevant local area for investigation. It was also agreed that the analysis is relevant to the work of the Student Data Monitoring Group and the Group should liaise with the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team to agree the areas and focus and granular detail to be provided in future reports. Once the HESA data is available, the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team will carry out benchmarking activity and report back to SQAC on their findings.

Action: Head of Student Analytics to report back to SQAC on benchmarking activity once progress has been made.

5. Student Data Monitoring (Paper D)

Following the Committee's decision to approve the establishment of the Student Data Monitoring Group in its previous meeting, an updated paper detailing the proposed remit, composition and Terms of Reference was presented for approval during this meeting.

It was outlined that the group will report in to SQAC and is tasked with setting a systematic approach to monitoring data at University-level across key stages in the student lifecycle, including retention, progression and attainment. An initial focus of the group will be to ensure that the adopted approach addresses the recommendations made to the University in ELIR 2021 and QESR 2023 reviews, which require the University to make progress in monitoring the awarding gap and sharing good practice to support staff across the University in taking effective action.

In discussion of the composition of the group, SQAC proposed that a colleague in the role of subject-level EDI Director would be valuable to the group. It was noted that early engagement with key cohorts is also vital and the use of Section Representatives to form reference groups will help with consultation and support the work of the core group.

It was agreed that the group is expected to meet early in the next academic year to agree its membership and set short-term and long-term objectives. SQAC expects regular updates in the next academic year around the action and activities of the group.

Action: Academic Services to approach key colleagues to form group and set up initial meetings.

6. Student Support: Evaluation Plan (Paper E)

The Committee were updated on the development of the evaluation framework to measure the effectiveness and impact of the Student Support model. The key indicators are to be established

by the Project Board in June 2024 and SQAC expect an update in due course, as part of their oversight role in monitoring the Student Support model.

Discussion of the evaluation approach highlighted the need for a focus on data and evidence and the importance of asking students about the benchmarks that are important to them. Letters of recommendations for medical students was given as an example of a concrete interaction that can be benchmarked and tracked. The length of waiting times for the provision of support and availability of meetings with Student Advisors were also identified as elements which can be measured as key indicators.

It was recognised that Schools must be aware of how to use the relevant data to report on their Student Support outcomes, and additional support may need to be offered to School staff to ensure they have the tools and knowledge to do this. Some variation in the indicators is expected across Schools but the expectation is for a set of standard baseline measures to be in place. More prompts and guidance have been included in the annual monitoring templates to set the expectation for more evidence-based reporting on Student Support.

The Committee also discussed the importance of PGR voices and PRES results feeding into the evaluation of Student Support across all students, and not only taught students. Whilst the new model has been implemented for taught students, the overall support available for PGR students must also be included in the University's oversight and evaluation activity. The PGR Wellbeing work being led by the Doctoral College was cited as an example of activity that can intersect with the Student Support evaluation work and provide more insight into the PGR student experience.

The Committee reflected on the value of a holistic overview of Student Support, taking into account the full eco-system across the institution for all students. Harnessing institutional-level improvement was highlighted as a particular challenge, although the SSSAR review was proposed as a means to align QA monitoring with the continuous improvement work of Student Support.

Action: Convener and Academic Services to liaise with Deputy Secretary, Students and seek to align SSSAR changes and continuous improvement work.

7. External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy Review (Paper E)

This paper was presented by the Acting Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services for approval. The Committee welcomed the review of this policy and requested some slight amendments to the wording of points 10(c), 21.2, 38.1 and 53(a).

In relation to point 33 of the policy, the Committee discussed setting expectations around training for external examiners. Training is not currently provided and there was concern that this is a gap at institutional level. The Committee recognised the nuances around conflict of interest and collaborations that may develop with External Examiners, and agreed that it was appropriate for local areas to measure the significance of any collaborations and declare such

conflicts. External examining activity should be recorded in Pure, which can assist with managing conflicts.

Action: Convener to escalate concerns around training expectations for EEs and report back to Committee with an update.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer changes to policy authors, and then circulate updated policy to members of the Committee electronically.

8. Work-based and Placement Learning Policy Update (Paper F)

The Committee commended the paper authors on a thorough review of this policy. There was a query on the application of the policy to non-credit bearing activities that may be required by a programme, or non-credit bearing activities that a student may choose to do. It was agreed clarification on this point would follow.

The Committee recommended that the language used in the scope of the policy be updated to reflect the Student Support model that is now in place for taught students.

Action: Committee Secretary to refer changes and point of clarification to policy authors, and then circulate updated policy to members of the Committee electronically.

9. Operation of Senate Standing Committees (Paper G)

The Committee noted the upcoming Effectiveness Review which will be circulated to all Senate Standing Committee members in the summer of 2024.

It was suggested that an area for improvement is the way in which members review the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) reports and responses to ensure thorough scrutiny. It was confirmed that the Deans of Quality will form a reading group for the IPR reports and responses and this will form the first layer of scrutiny.

The timing of the survey was also discussed, and it was highlighted that circulating the survey during the summer is prohibitive for the VP Education who steps away from their role in May of the academic year.

Action: Academic Services to review timing of effectiveness survey circulation going forward.

10. Scotland's Rural College (SRUC): Accreditation Committee Annual Report 2023-24 (Paper H)

The Committee were presented with the annual report relating to SRUC, for their information. The Accreditation Committee had affirmed continued accreditation for the BSc Environmental

Management and PhD Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies programmes. SQAC highlighted the many examples of good practice demonstrated by SRUC and noted the potential for learnings that the University of Edinburgh can take from SRUC. It was noted that SRUC has a lower level of first-class degree outcomes, and it was understood that this is due to lower entry requirements with SRUC. The Committee were informed that SRUC benchmarks well across the sector.

The Committee were advised that SRUC are working towards their own taught degree awarding powers, and this will change the nature of the relationship between UofE and SRUC in future.

11. Annual Monitoring and Internal Periodic Review Themes 2022/23: University Level Actions (Paper I)

The Committee noted the University- level responses to issues raised through annual monitoring and IPR cycles in 2022/23. Committee members requested a more detailed update from the Vice-Principal Corporate Services and Convenor of the Staff Experience Committee outlining more specific action taken and areas of focus. A member of the Committee highlighted that the last online publication of minutes from the Staff Experience Committee was in 2020, although meetings have been taking place periodically.

Action: Convenor to approach the Vice-Principal Corporate Services and Convenor of the Staff Experience Committee to obtain a more substantial response and to enquire into the availability of minutes from that Committee.

12. Committee Priorities 2024/25 (Paper J)

Following initial discussion at the April meeting and consultation on the revised draft via e-business, the final version of the Committee Priorities for 2024/25 were presented to the Committee for noting.

The revisions made to each priority as a result of consultation were indicated to the Committee. An additional priority of assessing the QA framework for internal systems and change processes, including VLEs, Timetabling and Exceptional Circumstances, had been raised through e-business consultation. This item had been discussed at the previous meeting and the Committee agreed that as the portfolio sat within the remit of the Deputy Secretary, Students, it would be an area on which to receive reports but not to set as a Committee priority. The Convener is to liaise with the Deputy Secretary, Students to investigate the relevant reporting strategies for internal systems and update the Committee.

13. Terms of Reference and Membership 2024/25 (Paper K)

The Committee noted the updated ToRs and membership for the next academic year. The Convener extended thanks to outgoing members; the EUSA VP Education, Senate elected members who have served their one-year term and the School representative from CSE who has also completed their term.

The Committee discussed the two vacant positions within the membership for co-opted members. Suggestions were made for another student member to join and a colleague with a role in University strategy and operations. It was highlighted that all Senate Committees can invite participants to attend meetings when they have specific expertise that would be useful in discussions.

Action: Members to submit any nominations for co-opted roles to the Convener and Committee Secretary.

14. Internal Periodic Review: Reports & Responses (Paper L)

The Committee discussed the IPR reports and responses that had been presented for approval. Particular reflections on the final IPR report of the Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences (MolGenPop) were noted, with the lack of a Workload Allocation Model (WAM) recognised as an area for development. If a WAM is to be introduced, it was suggested that CMVM could learn from the work CAHSS have done in this area.

The Dean of Quality for CMVM highlighted the multiple IPRs that had taken place within CMVM in 2023/24 and informed the Committee that recommendations relating to structural elements of the Deaneries and College are being brought together to inform the modernisation plans.

The Committee approved the IPR reports.

15. A.O.B.

There was no other business.

16. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 10th September 2024, 2-5pm.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

10 September 2024

Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for 2024/25

Description of paper

1. This paper notes the priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education and the Sabbatical team for 2024-25.

Fit with remit

| Quality Assurance Committee | Y/N |
|--|-----|
| Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements. | Y |
| In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University's quality framework. | Y |
| Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives. | Y |
| Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development. | Y |

Action requested / recommendation

2. For information and discussion.

Background and context

3. Each year a report is presented to the Senate standing committees on the priorities of the student representatives for the coming year.

Discussion

4. See attached paper.

Resource implications:

5. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have resource implications. These will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

Risk management:

6. The risk of any action arising from the ideas discussed in the paper will be assessed if specific action is proposed.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals:

7. This paper does not itself directly impact the SDGs or Climate Emergency, but this will be considered when specific actions are proposed or progressed.

Equality & diversity:

8. The ideas discussed in the paper aim to encourage and support equality, diversity, and inclusion. The equality impact of any specific actions arising from the paper will be assessed once the actions are proposed.

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

9. This will be agreed if specific actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper are identified.

Author

Callum Paterson

Academic Engagement and Policy
Coordinator
Edinburgh University Students'
Association

Presenter

Dylan Walch

Vice President Education 2024-25
Edinburgh University Students'
Association

Freedom of Information *Open*

Priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education for 2024-25:

- Advocate for transparency and accountability in University decision-making, giving students the power to shape their experience. This includes work around informed decision making for students, allowing them to make properly informed course choices and learning support conversations, and empowering student representatives with data so they can be more effective.
- Enhance students' experience of interacting with the University, by streamlining key processes and setting high standards of service delivery. This includes making student support services easier to identify and navigate, exploring improvements to PATH to make course choice easier, and assuring the quality of lecture recordings.
- Empower student leaders to create positive change within Schools, with strong governance, ensuring staff engage meaningfully with student feedback. This includes exploring pay and reward for student representatives, and ensuring they are key components of the feedback loop.

Shared priorities of the Sabbatical Officer team for 2024-25:

- Build a University for all, that centres student communities who have historically been marginalised, from international and Widening Participation students, to trans and Black and Minority Ethnic students.
- Make students' lives easier, ensuring they have what they need to thrive academically and personally, from affordable housing, transport, and food to accessible support services and academic processes.
- Lobby for institutional reform, whilst empowering students to create positive change, in accessible ways, on the issues that matter to them, from racial justice to the climate crisis.

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

10 September 2024

**School Annual Quality Reports
Sub-Group**

Description of paper

1. This report updates the Committee on the sub-Group tasked with reviewing School annual quality reports and highlights the key University-wide themes arising from the analysis and recommended actions,
2. For reference, the School Annual Quality Reports (SAQR) are saved here: [School Annual Quality Reports 2024 \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

Fit with remit:

| Quality Assurance Committee | Y/N |
|---|------------|
| Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University’s quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements. | Y |
| In partnership with Edinburgh University Students’ Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University’s quality framework. | Y |
| Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice. | Y |
| Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University’s activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business. | Y |
| Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development. | Y |

Action requested / recommendation

3. Discuss the positive practice and themes for further development at University level and approve recommended actions.

Background and context

4. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) approved an enhanced template for the 2023-24 reports with core questions (focused on updates on previous actions, what worked well and areas for development), a new free text box (to provide an opportunity to reflect on issues specific to local areas which are not addressed elsewhere in the report), and a specific response box to ensure that reports capture reflections on postgraduate research (PGR) provision as standard.

The reports noted examples of low engagement with Cohort Lead events, feedback from students indicating a perceived loss of the student-academic relationship and concern that roles are unclear to students. Reports suggested a need for greater clarity around the roles in relation to academic and pastoral support, and general administrative and teaching support. Students on joint programmes were identified as a cohort potentially at risk of receiving conflicting advice from student support teams (e.g. on issues such as resits).

Some Schools have adapted the Cohort Lead role or added a further role to provide academic guidance and support within the new student support model. Within CMVM, some Schools and Deaneries have implemented mentors, Academic Advisors or Deputy Year Directors to enhance academic guidance and support the professional competency development of students across the programmes.

Action: Student Support Implementation Board to consider as part of the planned evaluation of the Student Support Model how to increase the effectiveness of the Cohort Lead role and academic support to students.

2.1.2 Assessment and Feedback

Schools were asked to provide an update on the implementation of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities. The majority of Schools provided data on their assessment and feedback turnaround times, facilitated by the University-led tracking system to monitor this, highlighting considerable room for improvement still in turnaround times. This, alongside the quality of feedback, continues to be a priority for the University.

Many Schools reported on the challenges of meeting the three-week turnaround timeframe when the moderation process causes a delay or there is a significant number of extensions applied to students within the cohort. A revision to the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities has been requested from the Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Oversight Board, to provide greater clarity on expectations, and will address this for the start of the academic year.

Schools raised concerns regarding the impact of ~~AI~~ on assessment. Some Schools provided detail on the actions they have taken to address concerns over the use of ~~generative AI~~, including changing assessment formats and surveying students on the impact of AI on learning and teaching to help inform School strategy. Some Schools noted a shift to in-person exams to safeguard against the use of ~~AI~~. Schools sought further guidance and policy development from the University to provide more support on how to use, communicate about and detect ~~AI~~ content.

Action: Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group to include in its plans for updated/new guidance and support for students and staff on the use of ~~AI~~ AI in assessments.

Schools continue to make significant efforts to provide opportunities for students to feedback on their student experience through locally organised student voice mechanisms, and provided examples of feedback mechanisms used. Many of these included interactive examples in class, providing opportunities for dialogue with students. Some schools also provided examples of where they had worked in partnership with students to enhance the student experience. These examples of practice can be seen in the appendix.

However, many Schools, particularly those using survey tools, reported issues with engagement and low response rates, with concerns regarding the utility of feedback derived from such low levels of engagement.

It was common for Schools to report high student satisfaction with opportunities for providing feedback, but a much lower student satisfaction in terms of feeling that feedback is valued and action taken as a result. The sub-Group noted that the School reports generally lacked information on actions taken in response to feedback from students, and approaches to closing the feedback loop, and agreed that the template next year should prompt for this.

The sub-Group noted that a possible aspect challenging closing the feedback loop may be due to the challenges of identifying and responding to issues at School level (which can be addressed and responded to locally) versus those that are not within the control of the School and which require institutional-level response and action, making it more challenging at School level to close the feedback loop and may create a disconnect between students and decision makers. The sub-Group noted a need for a more effective means of escalating issues that cannot be addressed at School level.

Actions:

(1) School Quality Reporting template to be revised to prompt Schools next year to update on actions taken in response to student feedback and approaches to closing the feedback loop.

(2) Colleges to encourage and support Schools to consider feedback mechanisms that encourage dialogue with students, reducing reliance on surveys attracting low responses.

(3) EUSA and the University to work together to consider an effective approach for escalating issues requiring University level attention and response through the student representation structures.

2.1.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The updated School report template included a section on student outcomes which resulted in more detailed reflections on awarding gaps. Many Schools referred to the centrally held data to report on student outcomes and noted awarding gaps in their areas. The most impacted groups, as identified by the reports, were WP and BAME students. Schools were able to provide clear data on the extent of gaps, and

some also provided commentary on the efforts they had made to address these gaps or particular factors they had identified as contributing to the gap.

Concerns were raised by some Schools about the accuracy of the progression data as presented on the annual monitoring dashboards. Some Schools expressed the need for statistics within the dashboard, to allow for more rigorous and informative analysis. Queries were also raised around the definition and criteria for progression within the central data, which did not align with the Schools understanding of their own progression rates. The SQAC Student Data Monitoring task group has been established to consider these aspects.

The reports also included accounts of a number of initiatives/actions taken by Schools and Deaneries to develop an inclusive learning environment that can be seen in the Appendix.

Action: Student Data Monitoring task group to consider data needs, accuracy and statistical analysis as part of its remit.

2.1.5 Postgraduate Student Experience

The guidance included in the templates this year asked for Schools to confirm the average time for completion and completion rates for PGR students. Prompted by the focus on this area, a number of reports noted concerns over the increasing time taken to complete PhDs, with average timeframes stretching to 4 years and beyond, and suggested that the current standard model may need to be reviewed.

Schools also raised support for research students, noting that they are not included in the new student support model. Whilst supervisor relationships are key to the PGR experience, wider student support is also essential.

Another theme evident throughout the reports was training for PGR students who teach. Schools were asked to confirm that arrangements are in place for training for PGR students that teach. The Group noted that some reports may be conflating 'induction' with 'training', and that monitoring of the training undertaken by PGR students remains an area that lacks consistency across the institution.

Action: Doctoral College to follow up with all School to ensure that engagement in appropriate training is recorded for all PGR students that teach.

2.1.6 Student attendance

Student attendance was flagged as a concern in some reports, with low attendance at in-person teaching. Some Schools highlighted a link between attendance and attainment, or the expectation of a correlation between the two. There was also recognition that monitoring class attendance and engagement can be a useful way

for Student Advisors to identify students who may need more support at an earlier stage.

There were examples of some courses having trialled the use of attendance and participation marks. The sub-Group noted concerns about this practice and recognised concerns around EDI considerations in this matter, which had been identified in the relevant report.

2.1.7 Industrial Action

Schools were asked to report on the impact of industrial action over the 2023-24 academic year. The majority of Schools reported minimal or no impact from industrial action during 2023-24.

However, some Schools experienced significant impact, with the effects of the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) still felt through progression and exam resits. Some Schools report ongoing impact, with resit opportunities made available in August 2024 to students who had been given conditional progressions in 2022/23. Concerns around student workload with the timing of resits was highlighted in some reports.

2.1.8 Learning & Teaching Infrastructure

Several reports noted issues and challenges in relation to the availability and use of space and required technology to support learning and teaching. Particular examples included teaching spaces that are not fit for purpose, with issues of screens being too small or practical sessions being split across separate rooms which make it impossible for one single member of staff to deliver the session. Some reports highlighted that Student Advisors struggle to find suitable, confidential spaces for meetings with students.

There was some reflection on how the space restrictions affect particular groups of students e.g. PGR having to hot-desk and commuting students not having access to suitable study space. Some Schools highlighted that they were notably affected by RAAC issues and this impacted the student experience in 23/24.

2.1.9 Learning and Teaching Enhancements

Throughout the review process, the sub-Group noted a number of examples of practice aimed at enhancing the learning and teaching experience for students and the adoption of new and innovative ways to support learning. There were also many instances of academic staff designing learning and teaching activities to promote community building and foster relationships amongst students and staff. These examples can be seen in the appendix.

3. Reflection on the Process

The Group commended the Directors of Quality and all the School staff who had collaborated in the process for their excellent work in providing updates and responses through annual monitoring.

The Group was in agreement that the new themed template had allowed for a more standardised approach to reporting while also enabling Schools and Deaneries the scope to expand on specific local issues and activities. There appeared to be some variation of how Schools engaged with the data provided by the University systems and dashboards; further efforts will be made next year to support engagement with the data and understanding of the data that is collected centrally.

It was noted that the areas for improvement section often reflected on challenges at School level, sometimes repeating the areas/themes that had been identified for action by the School in the coming year. It was agreed that the templates for 2024-25, when presented to SQAC, should provide clearer guidance on identifying challenges at College and University level which can be amplified through SQAC.

The Group noted that approaches to programme reports and clustering can also differ, and it would be preferred to have confirmation that programme-level monitoring has taken place and informed the School-level reports. The Group also expressed a need for assurance that the Head of School has seen and approved the report before submission to Academic Services. Therefore, the templates will be updated to include tick boxes on programme monitoring and Head of School sign-off on the report.

The Group noted that the reports represented a rich repository of good practice that should be shared across the University.

Appendix of Good Practice Examples

Student Voice

- **Biomedical Sciences:** Two courses have used interactive feedback sessions to improve engagement with student voice. In Applied Pharmacology 3 WooClap was used during a lecture session to promote conversation about the course and, in Research Skills for Health Sciences, an ice-breaking activity was used to collect student ideas for enhancing learning in statistics.
- **Chemistry:** Took part in the Community Champions pilot project and hired two PGR and two PGT students to work on various aspects of developing their communities. This has proved very successful and the School are evaluating how to continue to support this in 24/25 without the additional pilot funding.
- **COL:** Embarked on a working-group-led student voice project, to identify core student voice mechanisms and innovative ways for student voice to fully inform COL provision and practices. As one small outcome: two pilots for surveys have resulted in greatly improved return rates of 70% and 85%.
- **HCA:** The Student Support and Experience Team (SSET) have continued to hold regular events, such as academic and wellbeing workshops, coffee

mornings, writing retreats, and trips. These have helped to create supportive spaces for discussion and improve community in the School.

- **Mathematics:** A survey of UG and PGT students on the impact of generative AI on learning and teaching had a reasonably good response rate and yielded useful information. This is helping the School in its efforts to develop a strategy for dealing with this challenging topic.
- **MolGenPop:** Emphasis placed on student voice and co-creation was evident and commended in the IPR process with co-creation selected as one of the special remit items and in MolGenPop being the first IPR team in the University to employ a student IPR coordinator. This has been disseminated this to other IPR teams, and in a co-written Teaching Matters blog. Academic Services both provide the co-created report as an example and recommend this practice to other IPR teams.
- **Vet School:** At UG level, the BVM&S instituted a new Student Voice Policy in 2023/2024. This includes enhanced support, training and financial support available for the student representatives who chair SSLCs.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

- **Business School:** The School commissioned a Widening Participation film for staff, which was created by the UEBS Graduate Leaders work placement trainee. The Widening Participation staff development video is designed to help us raise awareness of our students who are identified as Widening Participation, understand the kinds of challenges these face, and consider how to best support them. It is now a formal part of staff induction.
- **ECA:** Curriculum maintenance and approval - ECA introduced EDI approval into its new course approval process. An online tool to support inclusive course design developed by one of the ECA EDI Directors has been shared widely in CAHSS and the UoE.
- **HiSS:** the School have undertaken lot of work on decolonising the curriculum this year with many events, seminars, symposiums for students this year alongside EUSA awards for inclusive teaching and new courses under development.
- **Law:** The School has introduced a series of champions for various protected characteristics, represented on the school equality and diversity committee. Each champion is charged with promoting the interests of the characteristic within the School and to review matters within the School to ensure these interests are considered. One champion introduced in 2023-24 is a new role for a champion for carers. The impact will be reviewed in future reports.
- **LLC:** the LLC EDI team have developed innovative new resources to support staff in improving accessibility and EDI, including the LLC EDI Anti-Racism Resources Hub and LLC EDI in course design guide.

- **Physics & Astronomy:** The approach of giving all students an iPad has led to a lot more equality between students and is appreciated. We plan to continue this.
- **SPS:** The IPR of UG and PGT programmes commended the School's work on widening participation, particularly the support provided by the School and the involvement of WP students in designing this support.

Learning and Teaching Enhancements

- **Biological Sciences:** In the Hons Immunology programme, the course Immunology 3 was short-listed for EUSA Course of the Year. Student lab meetings ran across the year and allowed students to provide peer feedback to one another. These sessions helped to build their confidence and led to an increase in student questions during the final honours presentation session.
- **Clinical Sciences:** The Deanery held a flash talk event for 2nd year PhD students. Students presented 1 slide and received questions from judges and audiences. This event had excellent attendance from early career researchers, great audience questions from a range of people including from MSc and Honours project students and received very positive feedback after the event.
- **Divinity:** Introduced a first-year foundation seminar integrating study skills, transition into university, and research-led teaching. This received positive feedback from students especially on skills development. A related suite of online subject-specific skills development material was made available, by request from student representatives, to the whole student body.
- **DSTI:** Reported enhancements to their online provision. This included weekly live sessions to discuss the week's theme, which were really well received by students. Also created short informal weekly intro and wrap-up videos, which gave a personal touch that helped bring the online environment to life. It was found that video lectures incorporating other members of staff have been a big hit with students feel more connected to the department.
- **EFI:** Reported success with organisation into short blocks of flipped-unflipped classroom: Approximately 30-minute blocks, moving between traditional lectures, group work, gamified quizzes, and student presentations.
- **Engineering:** There have been improvements to the Engineering Maker Space and this has allowed good use for project work. The students welcome this facility.
- **GeoSciences:** The annual PGR student conference was widely commended by students and supervisors for the professional standard of the organisation and the talks, giving second year PhD students an opportunity to receive feedback from academic staff and their peers. This is a key part of creating a collective student experience for PGR students.

- **Medical School:** For PGT students, a peer feedback approach has been adopted across the programme for formative assignments. This approach requires learners to work in discussion groups to provide feedback/feedforward to their peers on formative work. Learners are then asked to reflect on their own learning from engaging in this process.
- **Physics & Astronomy:** Introduced a new scheme of PhD prizes for best theses from 2024 onward. This has two benefits, it allows for competition to improve overall PhD research quality and it also provides a valuable accolade for the successful students, which should help them to have more items of recognition when applying for fellowship and seeking tenured positions later in their career.
- **PPLS:** Held a special teaching event held in May aimed at showcasing the diverse and innovative teaching practices within the School.

Professor Tina Harrison

(Convener)

Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)

Brian Connolly,

Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services

Sinéad Docherty

Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

September 2024

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

10 September 2024

Internal Periodic Review Themes 2023/24

Description of paper

1. Identifies areas of good practice and further development arising from internal periodic reviews held in 2023/24, and proposes responsibility for action in response.
2. This paper contributes to the strategic aims of enhancing the student experience. It also fulfils a regulatory requirement.
3. Fit with remit:

| Quality Assurance Committee | Y/N |
|---|------------|
| Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice. | Y |
| Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business. | Y |

Action requested / recommendation

4. For discussion and approval of proposals for action in response.

Background and context

5. Eight Internal Periodic Reviews were held during 2023/24:
 - Biomedical Sciences (undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision including Zhejiang)
 - Chemistry (postgraduate research provision)
 - Clinical Sciences (undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision) – incorporates Oral Health Sciences
 - Engineering (postgraduate research provision)
 - Medicine (undergraduate provision)
 - Physics and Astronomy (undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision)
 - Molecular, Genetic and Population of Health Sciences [MGPHS] (postgraduate taught provision)
 - Social and Political Science [SPS] (all undergraduate provision)
5. Overall, there were 95 commendations, 97 recommendations and 56 suggestions across the eight reviews.
6. Recommendations and commendations were themed and, where possible, sub-themed, to support the analysis of the outcomes of IPRs. This was done

retrospectively and to the most pertinent theme and/or sub-theme (as outcomes may span multiple themes and/or sub-themes). Due to the qualitative nature of recommendations and commendations, analysis is a manual process. Themes were identified from text data and then used to code the content for analysis. The themes used for this analysis broadly align with the topics covered by the University Standard Remit for Internal Periodic Reviews and the priorities identified following the external quality review.

7. The Quality Team in Academic Services has identified the need to develop and agree consistent themes and sub-themes to support effective recording and analysis of quality process outcomes and good practice. Although, the Team have been unable to progress this due to current resourcing for the 2023/24 reviews, there are plans to develop this during 2024/25.
8. Individual review reports are available at: [IPR Reports 2023/24](#)

Discussion

9. The following areas of good practice are drawn from commendations which are not review-specific, appear across a number of reviews, and/or align to a broader theme.

- **Student support** was the most common theme with 28 commendations across all eight reviews. These included eight commendations, in six Schools, relating to the sub-theme of the new student support model: commitment and positive impact of Student Advisers, and implementation of the student support model were identified by review teams in relation to this sub-theme. The review teams identified one good practice example relating to the Student support theme:

“The review team identified the implementation of the new student support system as an area of good practice and commends the Student Advisers for their highly valued contribution and the positive impact they are making as very new members of the Deanery community.” [MGPHS PGT]

Additional example commendations in this theme included:

“The review team were impressed by the commitment of those in cohort lead roles and commend the cohort lunch events for the provision of social and academic aligned activities.” [Physics & Astronomy UG/PGT]

“The review team commend staff for the way in which the new Student Support Model has been adopted and developed in the School to the advantage of PGR students, with particular commendation [the] Head of Student Experience for establishing and developing the service.” [Chemistry PGR]

- **Learning and teaching** as a theme was commended 10 times across five Schools. Review teams most often commended the quality of provision and staff commitment to enhancing learning and teaching. Two examples of good practice in relation to student co-creation were identified:

“The review team commends the Deanery’s cutting-edge ideas in this area (co-creation) which are currently at the forefront within University practice.” [MGPHS PGT]

“The review team commends the exemplar pathways, co-created with students, as an area of good practice that could be shared across the Deanery.” [MGPHS PGT]

- There were six commendations in the **Curriculum** theme. Although there were no common sub-themes and no specific examples of good practice identified in this theme, an example of commendations received is included below:

“The review team commend the School’s plans for developing the curriculum in order to equip the next generation of doctors with the skills for the future of the medical profession, and noted that the ambitions for future-proofing the curriculum were sector-leading.” [Medical Education UG]

- There were also six commendations in the **Student Voice** theme, with examples as follows:

“The review team commend the work of the Director of Teaching and the wider teaching team in listening to the student voice and in their willingness to effect change. There was clear evidence in all sessions with students, both UG and PGT, that issues raised by students were considered and addressed where possible.” [Physics & Astronomy UG/PGT]

“The review team commend the work undertaken by the Director of Teaching to improve Student Staff Liaison Committee processes, to strengthen student voice.” [Chemistry, PGR]

- In addition to the examples identified in the Student Voice theme above, review teams also identified three examples of good practice in relation to **Student Partnership/Co-creation** activity in two reviews:

“The Deanery appointed a student co-ordinator to help with preparations for this review following a business case presented to College. The review team commends this appointment as an area of good practice and an example of the co-creation activity within the Deanery.” [MGPHS PGT]

“The review team heard that this (School Student Development Office-led Widening Participation (WP)) working group had included student participation from the WP demographic and colleagues acknowledged the sound evidence-base this inclusion had provided for the small group’s subsequent decision-making and actions taken to support WP students. The review team commends this as a potentially transferrable and extendable area of good practice....

“The review team commends the Widening Participation internships and working group as an area of good practice and an excellent example of student partnership working.” [SPS UG/MSW]

Areas for further development

10. The following areas for further development are drawn from recommendations which are not review specific, appear across a number of reviews and/or align to a broader theme. Some overarching themes also received a number of recommendations across reviews but those recommendations were review-specific and/or so varied that a strong theme for further development at University-level could not be extracted.

| Theme | Proposed responsibility for action |
|--|---|
| <p>Strategic overview: management and resourcing of learning and teaching (20 recommendations across six reviews) Recommendations covered allocation and quality of space, staff resources including tutors and demonstrators</p> | <p>Align with QESR response Tutors and Demonstrators working group Schools/Colleges</p> |
| <p>Student support (20 recommendations across seven reviews) Recommendations covered the new student support model, and support for students on placement/exchange</p> | <p>SQAC: evaluation of Student Support Model Schools/Colleges</p> |
| <p>Assessment and feedback (Eight recommendations across five reviews) Recommendations covered formative feedback, and feedback turnaround times</p> | <p>Align with QESR response Schools/Colleges</p> |

Resource implications

11. There are no additional resource implications associated with this paper at this point.

Risk management

12. Failure to respond to areas for further development would constitute an institutional risk to the strategic aims for the student experience and learning and teaching within the institution.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

13. This paper does not contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a regulatory requirement.

Equality & diversity

14. The paper itself does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. The Equality Impact Assessment for internal periodic review processes is published at:
<https://edin.ac/2p3B7WZ>

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

15. Areas which have responsibility for action, such as relevant Schools/Colleges or the QESR oversight group, will be informed of the recommendations and informed of the relevant process through which their progress against these recommendations will be monitored.
16. College Deans of Quality are asked to communicate the areas and the outcome of the discussion to relevant College committees.
17. Academic Services communicates the areas for further development arising from internal periodic review reports and responsibility for action to Schools/subject areas which had provision reviewed in 2023/24.
18. Academic Services will work with the Institute for Academic Development to share examples of good practice across the University.
19. Areas for further development will also be reported to University Executive.

Author

Susan Hunter
6 August 2024

Presenter

Brian Connolly

Freedom of Information The paper is open.

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

10 September 2024

Student Support – 2023/24 Feedback Outcomes

Description of paper

1. This paper summarises high level areas identified for continued improvement as the student support model embeds across the University.
2. These themes have been identified through gathering insights from staff and students through focus groups which were run across the 2023/24 academic year.
3. Fit with remit:

| | |
|---|----------|
| Quality Assurance Committee | |
| Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements. | Y |
| In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University's quality framework. | Y |
| Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business. | Y |
| Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development. | Y |
| Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity. | Y |

Action requested / recommendation

4. The committee are asked to note this paper.

Background and context

5. The new Student Support Model was implemented across 2022/3-2023/4, through a phased approach. During the implementation period, feedback was gathered from staff and students to provide an understanding of how effectively the model was being adopted across the University. This allowed the Student Support Project Team to identify areas for improvement, and enabled them to work with College Implementation Groups to develop resources, guidelines and training to support the adoption of the model across the implementation period and into business as usual.

6. Student and staff feedback gathered in 2022/23 focussed on understanding student and staff views on the provision of student support across the core pillars identified in the model, both understanding areas which were working well and areas requiring improvement. This ensured that staff and student voices shaped development of the model as it was rolled out across the University.
7. The evaluation in 2023/24 sought to understand whether areas identified through these focus groups in Phase 1, and responded to by the project team (in collaboration with Schools and Colleges), had improved from the previous year. There was also a focus on understanding student experiences of the Personal Tutor model in comparison with the new model.
8. This paper summarises the high-level insights arising through the feedback gathered in 2023/24, with a focus on areas for continued development. The Student Support Continuous Improvement Group (SSCIG) will be responsible for determining next steps in addressing these themes. A more detailed report will be available in September following SSCIG discussion and prioritisation of any next steps.

Discussion

9. The student and staff focus groups were rich with insights regarding the new student support model and focussed in particular on where improvements could be made within the model. This summary outlines some key themes which have emerged, and which should be considered to ensure the model effectively supports our students.
 - a) Students continue to feedback they don't know how and when to access support. We must reinforce that Student Advisers are the single point of contact for support – and that the Student Adviser will then direct the student to the appropriate person, service or resource depending on the support type. This also includes where academic support is required.
 - b) Inconsistency in the application of the model is resulting in inefficiency and inequitable student and staff experience – this is a source of frustration for staff and students.
 - c) Students need to be proactively supported, in a personalised manner. There are many reasons why a student may not reach out for support, despite needing it. This requires capacity within Student Adviser workloads, and tools, to do this effectively.
 - d) Relationships are fundamental for students to feel supported. Opportunities must be sought for these relationships to be built, in the absence of prescribed meetings.
 - e) Staff remain concerned the new model has introduced a gap in academic support for students. We need to understand more about this gap (i.e. what does “academic support” mean in this statement) and whether the gap is real or perceived. As part of this we need to reinforce the holistic approach of the model and all staff roles within it – i.e., Cohort Leads are not solely responsible for academic support; Teaching Teams have a key role.
 - f) Clarity in roles has improved as the model has evolved. There is continued work needed to ensure that staff across support roles understand their roles and are aware of the resources and support available to them.

10. The project team has reviewed these themes (and more detailed feedback) and are drafting proposed next steps which will be discussed and expanded on by SSCIG.

Resource implications

11. The Student Support Continuous Improvement Group will be responsible for identifying resource implications as part of any agreed next steps in response to feedback.

Risk management

12. The University is investing in student support as part of mitigating concerns in student satisfaction. Ensuring that there is on-going evaluation and monitoring of the support model is critical to ensure that standards are upheld and that the model achieves what it aims to for our students. Failure to do so carries reputational risk, does not deliver student experience as set out in strategy 2030 and continues to affect the University's standing in national league tables.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

14. The work undertaken will support greater equality, diversity and inclusion for students within our community, through ensuring student voices are reflected within evaluation outcomes and institutional reporting.

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

15. This paper presents an update for noting.

Author

*Marianne Brown
Head of Timetabling, Examinations and
Student Analytics
August 2024*

Presenter

*Marianne Brown
Head of Timetabling, Examinations and
Student Analytics
August 2024*

Freedom of Information

Open paper

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

10 September 2024

Student Support – Evaluation and Monitoring Framework

Description of paper

1. This paper provides an update on how student support for taught students will be evaluated across the University following the implementation of the new student support model.
2. Fit with remit:

| Quality Assurance Committee | |
|---|----------|
| Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements. | Y |
| In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University's quality framework. | Y |
| Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business. | Y |
| Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development. | Y |
| Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity. | Y |

Action requested / recommendation

3. The committee are asked to note this paper.

Background and context

4. The Student Support Project Board approved a framework for continuous evaluation of the new student support model in July 2024. The framework will ensure that the effectiveness of the model will continue to be monitored as the model embeds across the institution.
5. The primary objectives of the evaluation plan are:
 - To evaluate the extent to which objectives of the model of student support were achieved;
 - To assess the impact and effectiveness of the model on students, staff, and organisational goals;
 - To ensure consistency of student and staff opportunity across the institution according to the detailed model design agreed by project governance.

6. A core objective of the evaluation approach has been to integrate with existing quality processes overseen by Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC). This seeks to reduce duplication of activity, but also to ensure that School/Deanery voices working within the model contribute to the monitoring and evaluation.
7. A close relationship between SQAC and the Student Support (Continuous Improvement) Group (SSCIG) will be key to ensuring appropriate oversight of the model on an on-going basis. Registry Services will be responsible for ensuring the communication between groups as appropriate.

Discussion

8. The evaluation approach is outlined in appendix A, with the detail of each contributing component outlined in appendices B-E.
9. A proposal for a cohort evaluation, which will enable on-going integration of student voices into evaluation and monitoring processes, is in development in collaboration with academic colleagues in Health in Social Sciences.

Resource implications

10. The evaluation plan has been created to align with existing processes where possible and reduce duplication of effort. Resources to support additional institutional reporting will be managed through Registry Services. Support for a cohort evaluation pilot is under review.

Risk management

11. The University is investing in student support as part of mitigating concerns in student satisfaction. Ensuring that there is on-going evaluation and monitoring of the support model is critical to ensure that standards are upheld and that the model achieves what it aims to for our students. Failure to do so carries reputational risk, does not deliver student experience as set out in strategy 2030 and continues to affect the University's standing in national league tables.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

13. The work undertaken will support greater equality, diversity and inclusion for students within our community, through ensuring student voices are reflected within evaluation outcomes and institutional reporting.

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

14. This paper presents an update for noting.

Author

Marianne Brown
Head of Timetabling, Examinations and
Student Analytics
August 2024

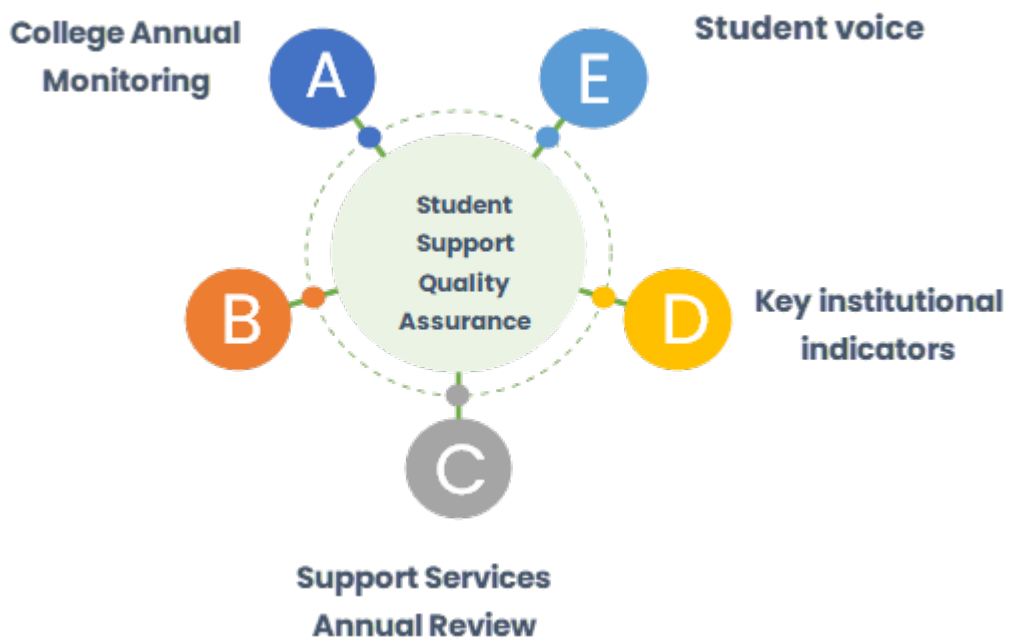
Presenter

Marianne Brown
Head of Timetabling, Examinations and
Student Analytics
August 2024

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

Appendix A: Quality Assurance of the Student Support Model: Summary

Quality assurance of student support will be monitored through a combination of existing quality assurance processes and through newly identified key indicators and student voice mechanisms.



Governance

Quality assurance will be overseen through collaboration between the following groups:

Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) – responsible for University quality assurance arrangements (responsible for inputs A, B, C)

Student Support (Continuous Improvement) Group (SSCIG) – responsible for oversight of student support arrangements post-project (responsible for inputs D, E)

Student Lifecycle Management Group (SLMG) - oversight of evaluation outcomes

An evaluation report will be produced through SSCIG with updates to SQAC as required. SSCIG will be responsible for ensuring appropriate dissemination of evaluation outcomes and developing any recommendations and next steps.

Inputs A, B, C

Annual monitoring and the Support Service Annual Review will include prompts for staff to reflect on the effectiveness of student support arrangements within their area. This may include directive questions regarding specific components of the model.

Directors of Quality should engage with teams involved in delivering student support to ensure the lived experience of Student Advisers, Cohort Leads, teaching teams and other support staff is reflected within the report.

Supporting documentation will be provided to outline the objectives of the model (short and long term) and to suggest data which will support their reflections in whether these objectives are being achieved. (See documents A, B, C).

Inputs D and E

Key indicators will be monitored by Registry Services reporting to SSCIG. Contextual data will be drawn upon where relevant (See document D.) A baseline report will be created in Summer 2024.

A cohort evaluation model will be run to ensure that student voices continue to be listened to and to enable monitoring of students as they progress through their academic journey (entry to alumni).

Institutional Report

Inputs A-E will form the basis of an institutional report which will ensure that staff and student voices are embedded within the quality assurance process, alongside a set of key institutional metrics which can be monitored year on year. This report will be produced annually by Registry Services with oversight from SSCIG.

Communication

The institutional report will be available to all staff to ensure that continuous improvement principles are embedded within the model. The below confirms expected communication routes for communication and disseminating evaluation outcomes.



Appendix B: Annual Monitoring – College (Document A)

This table is an extract from the student support logic model which articulates the short and long-term objectives of the student support approach at the University of Edinburgh and the impact we expect it to have on staff and students. The full model is available [here](#). Colleagues are asked to reflect on the effectiveness of support arrangements within their College, focussing on the provision of **consistent support** to students and **staff experience**.

| Short-term outcomes | Long-term outcomes | Impact |
|---|--|--|
| Students are offered consistent , quality and appropriate support across the University Students feel part of a community of learners | Staff have opportunities to develop professionally | Staff are / feel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students • Given opportunities to develop professionally |

The College will be asked to confirm that the following baseline requirements of the model are in place for all taught students within their College.

| Data source | Measure | Outcomes/Impact |
|--|---|---|
| School feedback & <i>EUCLID data to be revisited</i> | All taught students have a Student Adviser All students have a Cohort Lead All Teaching Teams are clear what role they play in supporting students All Schools/Deaneries have Peer Support opportunities | Students are offered consistent support across the University |
| College office | Staff in support roles have opportunities to share best practise and learnings | Staff are / feel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students |

Appendix C: Annual Monitoring – School (Document B)

This page outlines the short and long-term objectives of the student support approach at the University of Edinburgh and the impact we expect it to have on staff and students. These are extracted from the Logic Model which was developed in 2024 to support monitoring and evaluation of the support approach - full model [here](#). These outcomes should be considered when reviewing the effectiveness of student support arrangements in your local area.

| Short-term outcomes | Long-term outcomes | Impact |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>Students are supported in making appropriate course / programme choices</p> <p>Students are given opportunities to collaborate with peers</p> <p>Students are satisfied with the range of opportunities for their personal development</p> <p>Students feel part of a community of learners</p> | <p>Students are able to appropriately support themselves / make informed decisions</p> <p>Students have a sense of belonging to their cohort</p> <p>Increased collaboration and trust between teams (within Schools and with central services)</p> <p>Student mental health and wellbeing improves</p> <p>Student satisfaction overall improves</p> <p>Student engagement and attendance in learning activities improves</p> <p>Student progression and completion rates improve</p> <p>Student outcomes are maintained or improved</p> | <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported • Part of a community of learners • Valued as an individual • Supported to reach their academic potential • That they have agency in their learning journey • That support experienced by students is of high quality and timely <p>Staff are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students • Given opportunities to develop professionally |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Staff are clear about when to and to whom they should refer students with complex issues</p> <p>Non-engaging students are proactively engaged and reengaged with</p> <p>University has greater awareness of individual students needs / issues (e.g. student is known to SA before submission to special circumstances)</p> <p>Academic time (non CLs) is focussed on teaching and research</p> | <p>Staff have opportunities to develop professionally</p> | <p>Academic staff feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their time is spent on academic matters rather than supporting wellbeing or administrative processes • CL academic staff feel that they have greater opportunities to build cohort identity and programme affiliation |
|--|---|--|

Data sources

This table outlines data sources which can be used to support your review of the effectiveness of student support. Availability of this data will vary depending on response rates and local data collection arrangements. Measures are listed against the outcomes and impact which they relate to.

| Data source | Measure | Outcomes and Impact (Logic Model) |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Student Life Survey (SLS)</p> | <p>I feel comfortable in reaching out to my Student Adviser for support</p> <p>I know how to find out about the support services the University offers</p> <p>I have access to the academic support I need to succeed at University</p> | <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> |
| <p>National Student Survey (NSS)</p> | <p>How easy was it to contact teaching staff when you needed to</p> | <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | <p>How well have teaching staff supported your learning (NSS)</p> <p>I have been able to explore academic interests with other students. (B12 Opt NSS)</p> <p>I feel part of a group of students committed to learning. (B12 opt NSS)</p> <p>I have been able to explore academic interests with other students. (B12 Opt NSS)</p> <p>I feel part of an academic community in my college or university (B12 Opt NSS)</p> <p>How well has your course developed your knowledge and skills that you think you will need for your future?</p> <p>Overall satisfaction</p> | <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>Students are given opportunities to collaborate with peers</p> <p>Students feel part of a community of learners</p> <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported • Part of a community of learners • Valued as an individual • Supported to reach their academic potential • That they have agency in their learning journey • That support experienced by students is of high quality and timely |
| <p>Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)</p> | <p>The support for my health and wellbeing meets my needs</p> <p>I was given appropriate guidance and support when I started my course</p> <p>The support for academic skills meets my needs</p> <p>The course has created sufficient opportunities to discuss my work with other students (in-person or virtual/online)</p> <p>I feel part of a community of postgraduate taught students</p> | <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>Students feel part of a community of learners</p> <p>Students have a sense of belonging to their cohort</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Matriculation tracker (data to be expanded)</p> | <p>Confirmation of attendance - timing</p> <p>Course enrolments processed - timing</p> <p>Number of changes to enrolments post X</p> | <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>Students are supported in making appropriate course / programme choices</p> |
| <p>Making Transitions Personal</p> | | <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported • Valued as an individual • Supported to reach their academic potential • That they have agency in their learning journey |
| <p>Local sources (will vary in availability)</p> | <p>Response times to email enquiries according to operating guidelines</p> <p>Number of cohort activities provided to cohort</p> <p>Attendance at cohort activities</p> <p>Budget allocated to cohort activities</p> <p>Email enquiry themes and volumes</p> <p>Case management system (local):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Active” students of support • Breakdowns across student groups • Student Adviser workload <p>Number of available peer support options within School</p> | <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>Cohort Leads feel that they have greater opportunities to build cohort identity and programme affiliation</p> |
| <p>Annual monitoring quality dashboards</p> | <p>Degree outcomes are maintained or improved</p> <p>Improvement or maintenance of completion rates</p> | <p>Student progression and completion rates are maintained or improve</p> <p>Student outcomes are maintained or improved</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | | <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported to reach their academic potential |
| <p>Staff engagement survey (relevant roles) <i>(awaiting confirmation from HR whether we will be able to drill to specific roles)</i></p> | <p>My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment</p> <p>I am clear what I am expected to achieve in my role</p> <p>I have the resources I need to complete my job effectively</p> <p>I am satisfied about my opportunities for career development</p> <p>The training and development opportunities I receive help me to do my job more effectively</p> <p>Number of proactive engagements with individual students</p> <p>I am satisfied with the support in place to help me manage my health and wellbeing at work</p> | <p>Staff are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students Given opportunities to develop professionally <p>Academic staff feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their time is spent on academic matters rather than supporting wellbeing or administrative processes <p>Staff have opportunities to develop professionally</p> |

Appendix D: Annual Monitoring – Student Support Services (Document C)

This page outlines the short and long-term objectives of the student support approach at the University of Edinburgh and the impact we expect it to have on staff and students. These are extracted from the Logic Model which was developed in 2024 to support monitoring and evaluation of the support approach - full model [here](#). These outcomes should be considered when reviewing the effectiveness of student support arrangements provided by your service.

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------|
| Short-term outcomes | Long-term outcomes | Impact |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------|

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>Staff are clear about when to and to whom they should refer students with complex issues</p> <p>Non-engaging students are proactively engaged with</p> <p>University has greater awareness of individual students needs / issues (e.g. student is known to SA before submission to special circumstances)</p> | <p>Students can appropriately support themselves / make informed decisions</p> <p>Students' mental health is improved</p> <p>Increased collaboration and trust between teams (within Schools and with central services)</p> <p>Staff have opportunities to develop professionally</p> | <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported • Valued as an individual • That support experienced by students is of high quality and timely <p>Staff are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students • Given opportunities to develop professionally |
|--|---|--|

Data sources

| Data source | Measure | Objective |
|--|--|--|
| National Student Survey (NSS) | <p>How well communicated was information about your university's mental wellbeing support services</p> | <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> |
| Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) | <p>The support for my health and wellbeing meets my needs</p> | <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> <p>Students are offered consistent, quality, and appropriate support across the University</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Student Life Survey (SLS)</p> | <p>I know how to find out about the support services the University offers.</p> <p>Response “I have never heard of this service” to question “My needs as a student have been met by this service.”</p> <p>My needs as a student have been met by this service (all university support services)</p> | <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> <p>Students are offered consistent, quality, and appropriate support across the University</p> |
| <p>Service data</p> | <p>Student Wellbeing Service</p> <p>Referral time from creation to allocation (dashboard)</p> <p>Meetings offered</p> <p>It was easy to access support from the SWS (service survey)</p> <p>The Wellbeing Adviser helped me to develop and identify strategies and resources I can use to support my wellbeing (service survey)</p> <p>The Wellbeing Adviser helped me to connect with other services to support my wellbeing (service survey)</p> <p>The Wellbeing Adviser supported me when I needed to make choices and decisions about my life at University and/or my studies.</p> | <p>Students are offered consistent, quality, and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>Students can support themselves / make informed decisions</p> <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported • Valued as an individual • That support experienced by students is of high quality and timely |
| <p>Student Wellbeing Dashboard</p> | <p>Number of referrals to the Wellbeing Service from staff groups</p> <p>Numbers of referrals under categories not for Wellbeing Service</p> <p>Referral time from creation to allocation (dashboard)</p> | <p>Staff are clear about when to and how to refer students with complex issues</p> <p>Increased collaboration and trust between teams (with central services)</p> <p>Students are offered consistent, quality, and appropriate support across the University</p> |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Staff engagement survey | <p>My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment</p> <p>I am clear what I am expected to achieve in my role</p> <p>I have the resources I need to complete my job effectively</p> <p>I am satisfied about my opportunities for career development</p> <p>The training and development opportunities I receive help me to do my job more effectively</p> | <p>Staff are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students • Given opportunities to develop professionally <p>Staff have opportunities to develop professionally</p> |
| HR or service data | Low turnover in student service support roles | <p>Staff are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students • Given opportunities to develop professionally |
| People and Money | Staff have taken up training opportunities | <p>Staff are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given opportunities to develop professionally |

Appendix E: Institutional Report (Document D)

This page outlines the short and long-term objectives of the student support approach at the University of Edinburgh and the impact we expect it to have on staff and students. These are extracted from the Logic Model which was developed in 2024 to support monitoring and evaluation of the support approach - full model [here](#). These outcomes will be considered when reviewing the effectiveness of student support arrangements at the University.

| Short-term outcomes | Long-term outcomes | Impact |
|--|---|--|
| Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it | Students are able to appropriately support themselves / make informed decisions | <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported • Part of a community of learners |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>Students are supported in making appropriate course / programme choices</p> <p>Students are given opportunities to collaborate with peers</p> <p>Students are satisfied with the range of opportunities for their personal development</p> <p>Students feel part of a community of learners</p> <p>Staff are clear about when to and to whom they should refer students with complex issues</p> <p>Non-engaging students are proactively engaged and reengaged with</p> <p>University has greater awareness of individual students needs / issues (e.g. student is known to SA before submission to special circumstances)</p> <p>Academic time (non CLs) is focussed on teaching and research</p> | <p>Students have a sense of belonging to their cohort</p> <p>Student mental health and wellbeing improves</p> <p>Increased collaboration and trust between teams (within Schools and with central services)</p> <p>Student satisfaction overall improves</p> <p>Student engagement and attendance in learning activities improves</p> <p>Student progression and completion rates improve</p> <p>Student outcomes are maintained or improved</p> <p>Staff have opportunities to develop professionally</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valued as an individual • Supported to reach their academic potential • That they have agency in their learning journey • That support experienced by students is of high quality and timely <p>Staff are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students • Given opportunities to develop professionally <p>Academic staff feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their time is spent on academic matters rather than supporting wellbeing or administrative processes • CL academic staff feel that they have greater opportunities to build cohort identity and programme affiliation |
|---|--|--|

Key indicators

A series of key indicators will be used to monitor student support arrangements at institutional level. These will be evaluated in conjunction with other contextual data where applicable and will be evaluated across key student groups, where robust data is available.

Each key measure listed corresponds to outcomes and impacts as listed in the logic model on page 1.

| Data source | Key measure | Outcomes and Impacts |
|--|--|--|
| Student Life Survey | I feel comfortable in reaching out to my Student Adviser for support | <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported |
| Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) | There are people and services to support me | <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>University has greater awareness of individual students needs / issues (e.g. student is known to SA before submission to special circumstances)</p> <p>Student mental health improves</p> <p>Student satisfaction overall improves</p> <p>Student progression and completion rates improve</p> <p>Student outcomes are maintained or improved</p> <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported • That support experienced by students is of high quality and timely |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Matriculation tracker | Student attendance processing | Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University Staff are / feel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students |
| Annual monitoring datasets | Student outcomes are maintained/improved (course and programme) | Student progression and completion rates improve Student outcomes are maintained or improved Students are I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported to reach their academic potential |
| NSS PTES | Overall satisfaction improved | Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University All |
| Student Life Survey PTES NSS Optional Bank 12 | The University provides opportunities for building connections with other students I feel part of a community of postgraduate taught students I feel part of an academic community in my college or university | Students feel part of a community of learners Students have a sense of belonging to their cohort |
| Staff engagement survey | I am satisfied with the support in place to help me manage my health and wellbeing at work | <i>(awaiting confirmation from HR whether we will be able to drill to specific roles)</i> |
| Staff engagement survey | My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment | <i>(awaiting confirmation from HR whether we will be able to drill to specific roles)</i> |

| | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| People and Money | Recommended training is undertaken | Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University Staff are / feel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students |
| Student Voice | | |
| Student Staff Liaison Committees or cohort evaluation* | Student feedback on experience | Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University |

*Detail of cohort evaluation study is in development

Supplementary Data

The following data sources will be used in the creation of the institutional report to ensure that a holistic approach to evaluation is taken, which embeds staff and student voices as well as quantitative measures. This list is not exhaustive.

| Data source | | |
|---|---|---|
| School level annual monitoring reports | Confirmation of how effective student support arrangements are from a staff and student perspective, including reflection on programme level report | See School level |
| College level annual monitoring reports | College confirmation of measures in place to ensure sharing of learning, best practice and baseline of consistency in delivery of support roles and reflection on effectiveness of these measures | Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University Staff are equipped / empowered to provide appropriate support to students |
| Student Support Services Annual Review | Confirmation from Student Support Services of ways in which support is delivered to students and how effective this support is | See Student Services level |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Internal Periodic Reviews | Institutional question on student support effectiveness | Institutional question TBC |
| Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey | <p>There are people and services to support me</p> <p>The support for academic skills meets my needs</p> <p>The support for my health and wellbeing meets my needs</p> <p>There are sufficient opportunities to interact with other postgraduate taught students</p> <p>I feel part of a community of postgraduate taught students</p> <p>I feel a sense of belonging at my institution</p> | <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>Students are given opportunities to collaborate with peers</p> <p>Students feel part of a community of learners</p> <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported • Part of a community of learners • Valued as an individual • Supported to reach their academic potential • That support experienced by students is of high quality and timely |
| National Student Survey (NSS) - Optional Banks | <p>I feel part of an academic community in my college or university (B12 Opt NSS)</p> <p>There is sufficient welfare and student services to meet my needs / information advice has been helpful (B9 opt NSS)</p> <p>When needed, the information and advice offered by welfare and student services has been helpful (B9 NSS Optional Bank)</p> | <p>Students know what support is available and how to access it when they need it</p> <p>Students are offered consistent, quality and appropriate support across the University</p> <p>Students have a sense of belonging to their cohort</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Student Life Survey (SLS)</p> | <p>The University provides opportunities for building connections with other students</p> <p>I have access to the academic support I need to succeed at University (SLS)</p> | <p>Students have a sense of belonging to their cohort</p> <p>Students feel part of a community of learners</p> |
| <p>Making Transitions Personal</p> | | <p>Students are / feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported • Valued as an individual • That they have agency in their learning |
| <p>Graduate Ceremony Registration</p> | <p>Student plans after their University studies finish</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are/feel: • Supported to reach their academic potential |
| <p>Datasets outlined in School reports</p> | | |

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

10 September 2024

Senate Committees' Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

Description of paper

1. This paper provides Senate Quality Assurance Committee with analysis and proposed actions drawn from the responses received to the Senate Standing Committees internal effectiveness review conducted in summer 2024.
2. Fit with remit:

| Quality Assurance Committee | Y/N |
|---|-----|
| Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity. | Y |

Action requested / recommendation

3. To note the analysis of feedback received and comment on the proposed actions set out in Appendix 1, which is intended to aid continuous improvement of our approach to academic governance.

Background and context

4. The University is required under the 2023 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance to carry out an annual internal review of Senate and its Committees which carry delegated responsibilities.
5. In summer 2024, Academic Services issued a questionnaire to Senate Standing Committee members and their responses were collated.

Discussion

6. An analysis of questionnaire responses received from members and proposed actions can be found in Appendix 1.
7. Proposed actions for the Standing Committee, in response to the feedback from members, are intended to be proportionate to the scope of an annual effectiveness review, and the volume of feedback received.
8. Senate will receive the analysis of responses and proposed actions for each Standing Committee in October.

Resource implications

9. The resource implications of the proposed actions will be considered within Academic Services alongside other work for 2024/25. Actions will be prioritised and taken forward in line with available resources and in consultation with Senate Standing Committee Conveners. An update on progress with actions will be presented to a future meeting of the relevant Standing Committee.

Risk management

10. This activity supports the University's obligations under the 2023 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance.

Equality & diversity

11. The review provides an opportunity to identify any equality and diversity issues in the composition of Senate Standing Committees, and the way they conduct their business.

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

12. As detailed in paragraphs 7 and 8.

Author

Sinéad Docherty

August 2024

Presenter

Brian Connolly

Freedom of Information *Open*

Appendix 1: Report of Senate Quality Assurance Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2023/24

In 2023/24 Senate Quality Assurance Committee had 18 members. The Convener, Secretary and representative from Academic Services did not take part in the survey. Therefore, of the remaining 15 members, 11 responses were received to the Internal Effectiveness Review Questionnaire equating to a 73% response rate.

Good Practice

- There were four respondents to the survey who were new to SQAC in 2023/24. In terms of the induction being effective, two strongly agreed, one agreed and one gave a neutral response. The induction was described as “very good” and “helpful”.
- All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that SQAC is supported effectively by Registry Services. Support for the Committee was described as “excellent”, “of a very high standard” and staff as “congenial and helpful”.
- All respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the work of SQAC links to University strategic priorities.
- Ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Equality and Diversity are appropriately considered and promoted in the work of the Committee.
- Ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they are able to effectively engage with and contribute to the work of the Committee.

Survey Responses

Overview of the responses given within each section:

- **Composition of the Committee**

1. The composition of the Committee enables it to fulfil its remit

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 6 |
| Agree | 4 |
| Neutral | 0 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 |



2. The size of the Committee is appropriate for it to operate effectively

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Strongly agree | 7 |
| Agree | 3 |
| Neutral | 0 |
| Disagree | 1 |
| Strongly disagree | 0 |



General comments received in relation the Composition of the Committee remit are as follows:

- Two respondents noted that the external member of the Committee brings in valuable perspectives.
- Two respondents noted their support for more student representation on the Committee.
- One respondent proposed that it would be useful to add an EDI representative to the Committee or invite one for selected sessions/items.
- One respondent noted a deficit in representation amongst teaching-active staff representing the variety of modes of teaching (online, on-campus, experiential, partnered, etc.)
- One respondent noted a high representation of managerial/executive/administrative roles to the exclusion of a more comprehensive and representative composition of those with a governance stake in QA.

- **Support and Facilitation of Committee Meetings**

4. The information provided supports effective decision-making by the Committee

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 5 |
| ● Agree | 5 |
| ● Neutral | 1 |
| ● Disagree | 0 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 0 |



5. The Committee is supported effectively by Registry Services

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 8 |
| ● Agree | 3 |
| ● Neutral | 0 |
| ● Disagree | 0 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 0 |



6. For new members in 2023/24: I received an effective induction when I joined the Committee

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 3 |
| ● Agree | 1 |
| ● Neutral | 2 |
| ● Disagree | 0 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 0 |



General comments received in relation to the support and facilitation of Committee meetings are as follows:

- One respondent noted that papers could be clearer about the ask on the Committee and shortened where possible.
- One respondent noted that whilst most reports presented to the Committee are excellent, there are occasionally some that are less thoroughly prepared and leave some questions open.
- Two respondents noted preference for expanding the use of the SharePoint and Forms to facilitate out-of-meeting business.
- Three respondents noted the time spent dealing with Committee administration and remit matters within the meetings.
- One respondent noted that the Committee does not really take decisions in the way that would be expected from a governance perspective, but tends rather to provide feedback on already-packaged decisions or reports. This activity was felt to be fairly effective, but not decision-making.
- One respondent noted that their “neutral” response in relation to the induction was because they were not new to the Committee in 2023/24 and did not have an induction in 2023/24.

• **Engagement of members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits**

8. The Committee’s remit is clear

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 7 |
| ● Agree | 3 |
| ● Neutral | 1 |
| ● Disagree | 0 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 0 |



9. The scope of the Committee’s remit is appropriate

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 8 |
| ● Agree | 2 |
| ● Neutral | 0 |
| ● Disagree | 1 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 0 |



10. I am clear on my role and responsibilities as a member of the Committee

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 6 |
| ● Agree | 2 |
| ● Neutral | 2 |
| ● Disagree | 0 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 0 |



11. I am able to engage effectively with and contribute to the work of the Committee

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 5 |
| ● Agree | 5 |
| ● Neutral | 0 |
| ● Disagree | 1 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 0 |



General comments received in relation to the engagement of Committee members and knowledge and understanding of their roles and committee remits:

- One response noted that meetings are always very informative, discussion based and helpful.
 - One response noted the Committee does not do enough to support the wider Senate's role of governance, with the example of the QESR reporting in September/October side-lining attempts from Committee members and wider Senate members to engage with the report.
 - One response noted that Committee members are knowledgeable and understand their role in the Committee. Where this may be not fully aligned with the TOR, the Convener has appropriately reminded members.
 - One response noted an issue with the volume of papers, mainly IPR reports, and the length of time given to read these reports.
- **Impact and Strategic Relevance of Senate Committee's Work**

13. The work of the Committee makes a positive impact

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 5 |
| ● Agree | 5 |
| ● Neutral | 1 |
| ● Disagree | 0 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 0 |



14. The work of the Committee links to University strategic priorities

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 5 |
| ● Agree | 6 |
| ● Neutral | 0 |
| ● Disagree | 0 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 0 |



15. Equality and diversity are appropriately considered and promoted in the work of the Committee

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 1 |
| ● Agree | 9 |
| ● Neutral | 0 |
| ● Disagree | 1 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 0 |



17. The work of the Committee is communicated effectively to the wider University

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| ● Strongly agree | 0 |
| ● Agree | 4 |
| ● Neutral | 4 |
| ● Disagree | 2 |
| ● Strongly disagree | 1 |



Responses to the section reflecting on Impact and Strategic Relevance of Senate Committee's Work have informed the areas identified for development below.

Areas for Development

Two central themes were identified from respondent feedback as being areas where the Senate Quality Assurance Committee could seek to focus enhancement.

1. Effective Communication:

The area in which negative or neutral responses outweighed positive responses was in relation to the statement that the work of the Committee is communicated effectively to the wider University (item 17). Visibility of the Committee, establishing and promoting the relevance of QA and communication with the wider University were all identified as areas to improve.

Two respondents noted the perception that QA is seen as a separate strand of work, whereas it should be considered as central to the operation of the University. It was proposed that there may be a role for the Committee in improving its visibility and perceived relevance to the rest of student business.

One respondent highlighted the challenge of surfacing areas that require further action, and handing the responsibility to another Committee or area of the University to progress and oversee. It was acknowledged that the Committee makes an impact by asking other areas to respond, but there can be frustrations with ownership.

Three respondents highlighted the challenge around communicating the work of the Committee with the wider University, with particular mention of engaging with academic and professional services staff working at School level.

One respondent noted that communication should promote meaningful engagement from the wider University, starting with supporting real governance responsibility from wider Senate.

2. EDI and representation

A theme throughout the free text responses addressed EDI and representation on the Committee. Overall, responses were largely positive to questions about the size and composition of the Committee, and its approach to considering and promoting EDI. One respondent highlighted the discussions of needs and views of the different groups and acknowledgment of the complexity in the area, and another respondent reflected on the thoughtful conversations about how Committee decisions impact on EDI.

However, there were suggestions of increasing student representation on the Committee and the addition of an EDI leader to Committee membership. Another suggestion proposed that the Committee strengthen its relationship with EDIC to use the expertise of that Committee and its subcommittee structures more effectively where relevant.

It was also proposed by one respondent that paper authors should be encouraged to make more use of the EDI box on the paper template. It was highlighted that often they say 'no impact' but that in itself may actually be an impact as the University should be striving to enhance EDI in all its work.

It was noted by one respondent that while the Committee often recognises the need to consider diversity, actual follow-through is less common; there appears to be limitations in the data or other capabilities and a reluctance to formally expect evidence of impact from action on diversity-related QA goals, where the norm is to report forming a working group or studying a problem.

Proposed Actions

- In order to enhance the feedback rate, Registry Services propose to allocate time during the last Committee meeting of the academic year to provide members the opportunity to complete the internal effectiveness review survey. This will apply across all three Senate Standing Committees.
- Registry Services will update the paper template for Senate Standing Committees, listing the remits of each Committee and requesting authors highlight where their paper aligns.
- Continue to explore ways to diversify the membership of the Committee and effectively consider EDI matters.
- Committee members to discuss how the work of the Committee can be better communicated throughout the University.
- Committee to continue to focus on, and embed, data and evidence in quality processes.
- Committee Secretary to develop the use of the Committee SharePoint to improve availability of IPR documents and minutes ahead of meeting and facilitate out-of-meeting activity.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

10 September 2024

Membership and Terms of Reference 2024/25

Description of paper:

1. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) Membership and Terms of Reference for 2024/25.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. The Membership and Terms of Reference are presented to SQAC for members to note and advise of any forthcoming changes not already highlighted.

Background and context:

3. The membership for SQAC is presented to Senate annually for approval. Any subsequent amendments to the membership are reported to Senate at the next Ordinary meeting, usually held in October.
4. Senate Standing Committees formally report to Senate annually in addition to providing updates on recent and forthcoming business at each ordinary meeting of Senate. These committees feed into and out of College level committees (Undergraduate Education, Postgraduate Education, Quality Assurance) and specialist Support Services (the Institute for Academic Development, Registry Services) via committee membership. Therefore, a number of committee roles are ex officio, to ensure that committee members have the appropriate knowledge, expertise, responsibility and accountability to fulfil the committee remit. In October 2022, Senate agreed to expand the membership of each Standing Committee to include three elected Senate members. An election is held annually to fill the three positions. All committees include student representation. SQAC includes an external member from another Scottish university.

Discussion

5. The Committee membership for SQAC will be presented to Senate for approval at its October meeting.
6. Changes to membership to take effect from 1 August 2024 are highlighted.
7. The SQAC webpages will be updated with membership once all positions are confirmed.
8. The SQAC Terms of Reference remain unchanged and are published on the Academic Services website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/education/terms-reference>

Resource implications

9. No amendments with resource implications are proposed.

Risk management

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

Equality & diversity

11. The composition of the Senate Committees is largely determined according to defined role-holders (e.g. defined Assistant or Vice-Principal, Dean of Quality) or as representatives of particular stakeholders (e.g. a College or the Students' Association). The membership of SQAC is therefore 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

12. SQAC's Membership and Terms of Reference are communicated via the Academic Services website: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/education>

13. Senate Standing Committees are subject to an annual internal review process, and this is reported annually to Senate.

Author
Registry Services
September 2024

Freedom of Information: Open

SQAC 24/25 11

| Name | Position | Term of Office |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Professor Tina Harrison (Convener) | Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) | Ex Officio |
| Professor Matthew Bailey (Vice-Convener) | College Dean of Quality (CMVM) | Ex Officio |
| Professor James Hopgood | Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture (CSE) | Ex Officio (from October 2024) |
| Dr Emily Taylor | Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS) | Ex Officio |
| Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar | School representative of CMVM (Director of Quality) | 1 August 2023-31 July 2026 |
| Faten Adam | School representative of CSE (Head of GeoSciences Student Services) | 1 August 2024-31 July 2027 |
| Dr Anne Desler | School representative of CAHSS (Director of Quality) | 1 August 2023-31 July 2026 |
| Professor Laura Bradley | Representative of Doctoral College | |
| Olivia Eadie | Representative of Institute for Academic Development | |
| Professor Nazira Karodia | Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching, Edinburgh Napier University (external member from within the Scottish H.E. sector with experience in quality assurance) | 1 August 2023-31 July 2026 |
| Dylan Walch | Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association | Ex Officio |
| Callum Paterson | Academic Engagement & Policy Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association | Ex Officio |
| Brian Connolly | Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services | Ex Officio |
| Marianne Brown | Co-opted member (Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling) | 1 August 2024 – 31 July 2027 |
| Dr Michael Barany | Representative of Senate | 1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025 |
| Sinéad Docherty | Committee Secretary | |

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

10 September 2024

Internal Periodic Review

Description of paper

1. Reports and responses from the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) process.
2. Fit with remit:

| Quality Assurance Committee | |
|---|---|
| Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements. | Y |
| Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice. | Y |
| Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business. | Y |

Action requested / recommendation

3. The Committee is invited to note and approve:
 - the IPR reports from the 2023/24 cycle
 - the progress reports provided in the 14-week and year-on responses.

All reports are available here on the Committee SharePoint: [10th September 2024 \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Background and context

4. IPRs form part of the standing items within SQAC business.
5. The IPR reports and responses have been made available to Committee members via the Committee SharePoint and the College Deans of Quality tasked with reviewing the documentation relevant to their College.

Discussion

6. Committee members should be assured that the scrutiny of the College Deans of Quality will identify areas of good practice to share and any recommendations to be tracked through existing quality processes.
7. The College Deans will be invited to highlight themes and issues from the reports and responses relevant to their College.
8. The Committee will be invited to discuss and approve the reports and responses in the light of the College Deans' comments.

Resource implications

9. No additional resource implications.

Risk management

10. The paper does not require a risk assessment.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

11. This paper does not contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is a regulatory requirement.

Equality & diversity

12. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the IPR process. Equality and diversity will be considered as part of any proposed actions.

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

13. Comments will be reported back to the School/Subject Area and the reports and responses published on the Academic Services website.

Author

*Sinéad Docherty
Academic Policy Officer
Academic Services*

Presenter

*Brian Connolly
Academic Policy Manager
Academic Services*

September 2024

Freedom of Information *Open*