

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

Deanery of Clinical Sciences

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught provision

26-27 February 2024

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## Executive summary

This report comprises the outcomes from the internal periodic review of undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision in the Deanery of Clinical Sciences.

The Review Team found that the Deanery of Clinical Sciences has effective management of the quality of the student learning experience, academic standards, and enhancement and good practice.

The report provides commendations on the Deanery's provision, recommendations for enhancement, on which the Deanery will be asked to report progress to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee, and suggestions on how to support developments.

### Key Commendations

The Review Team acknowledged the significant body of work and commitment by the Deanery staff since the previous IPR. In the context of the challenging landscape for healthcare and education, including the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Review Team was pleased to make the following commendations.

- The Review Team **commend** the successful development and implementation of the Clinical Sciences Teaching Organisation (CSTO).
- The Review Team **commend** the Deanery teams' commitment to delivering high quality programmes with a global reach and impact.
- The Review Team **commend** the Deanery for developing educational provision supported by highly specialised clinicians and experts from multiple disciplines to assure cutting-edge and practice-relevant learning.

Further commendations are included in the report.

### Key recommendations

The top three recommendations identified by the Review Team for the Deanery to prioritise were:

- The Review Team **recommend** that the Deanery develop a strategy and implementation plan to facilitate the sharing of good practice and innovation in teaching and supporting learning across programmes.
- The Review Team **recommend** that the Deanery develop a strategy for the orientation of staff to relevant University learning and teaching policies, processes, and structures. Staff would include those who are teaching, supervising, and/or have a support for learning role.
- The Review Team **recommend** that the Deanery facilitates Cohort Leads to share experiences and develop an approach applicable to the Deanery programmes and context.

## Commendations, recommendations and suggestions

### Commendations

Key strengths and areas of positive practice for sharing more widely across the institution.

| No | Commendation  | Section in report |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 1. | The Review Team <b>commend</b> the successful development and implementation of the Clinical Sciences Teaching Organisation (CSTO).   | B 1               |
| 2. | The Review Team <b>commend</b> the Deanery teams' commitment to delivering high quality programmes with a global reach and impact.  | B 2.1             |
| 3. | The Review Team <b>commend</b> the Deanery for developing educational provision supported by highly specialised clinicians and experts from multiple disciplines to assure cutting-edge and practice-relevant learning. | B 2.1             |
| 4. | The Review Team <b>commend</b> the Deanery for their support of students in the implementation of the new Student Support Model.  | B 2.3             |
| 5. | The Review Team <b>commend</b> the swiftness of reply and level of support provided by Student Advisers. It is clear that the team is well supported and responsive to a diverse group of students across programmes.   | B 2.3             |
| 6. | The Review Team <b>commend</b> the implementation of administrative forums as a positive mechanism for sharing practice.  | B 2.1             |

### Recommendations

Areas for development and enhancement – progress to be reported.

| No  | Recommendations   | Section in report                  | Responsibility                         |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Staff Experience, Training and Development</b> |   |                                    |  |
| 1.  | The Review Team <b>recommend</b> that the Deanery develop a strategy and implementation plan to facilitate the sharing of good practice and innovation in teaching and supporting learning across programmes.   | B 2.1<br>(also noted within B 2.7) | Deanery Management                     |
| 2.  | The Review Team <b>recommend</b> that the Deanery develop a strategy for the orientation of staff to relevant University learning and teaching policies, processes, and structures. Staff would include those who are teaching, supervising, and/or have a support for learning role. | B 2.7<br>(Also noted within B 2.2) | Deanery Management and Programme Teams |
| 3.  | The Review Team <b>recommend</b> that the Deanery facilitates Cohort Leads to share experiences and develop an approach applicable to the Deanery programmes and context.   | B 2.3                              | Deanery Management and CSTO staff      |

|   |  |                 |                                   |
|---|--|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
| 4.  | The Review Team <b>recommend</b> that the Deanery facilitate ongoing professional development training for Student Advisers as the role develops.  | B 2.3 and B 2.7 | Deanery Management and CSTO staff |
| 5.  | The Review Team <b>recommend</b> that the Deanery consider the introduction of a Workload Allocation Model (WAM) to inform and improve staff experience.                                     | B 2.7           | Deanery Management                |
| <b>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)</b> |  |                 |                                   |
| 6.  | The Review Team <b>recommend</b> that the Deanery prioritise the engagement of an EDI lead to develop internal EDI structures (e.g. through the establishment of an EDI committee).          | B 2.5           | Deanery Management                |
| 7.  | The Review Team <b>recommend</b> that Student Support staff such as Student Advisers are able to access specific EDI training opportunities given the diverse student intake of the Deanery. | B 2.5           | Deanery Management and CSTO staff |

### Suggestions

For noting – progress reporting is not required.

| No | Suggestion  | Section in report |
|----|---|-------------------|
| 1. | The Review Team <b>suggests</b> the College work with the Deanery to evaluate and identify effective means of communicating with all Deanery staff in relation to the Governance Review.  | B 1               |
| 2. | The Review Team <b>suggests</b> the Deanery expedites the proposed work to develop a Deanery-specific Welcome/Orientation. This should include signposting to how staff (Professional Services, Academic, Tutors etc) can access information, advice and guidance on personal and professional development. | B 2.7             |
| 3. | The Review Team <b>suggests</b> the College supports the Deanery to explore and identify space where teams can come together to learn, share, and develop relations and shared understandings.  | B 2.7             |
| 4. | The Review Team <b>suggests</b> that the Deanery team which are leading curriculum reviews draw on insights and experiences from across the University e.g. the Digital Futures group, Digital Education Unit, or other Schools which have complex programmes to inform the review work.                    | B 3               |
| 5. | The Review Team <b>suggests</b> that the Deanery explore what practical actions can be taken to enable the Oral Health Sciences students to feel more integrated with the wider student body.   | B 2.8             |

## Section A – Introduction

### Scope of review

Range of provision considered by the review (see Appendix 1).

The Internal Periodic Review of Deanery of Clinical Sciences in 2023/24 consisted of:

- The University's remit for internal review (see Appendix 2).
- The subject specific remit items for the review:
  1. **Staff Experience** - A review of current practices to enhance staff experience and build a community of staff within the Deanery/CSTO.
  2. **Enhance the Learning Community for Students** - To review how the Deanery could best optimise the new Student Support Model (SSM), specifically how the Cohort Lead role could be used to develop an online cohort in the context of competing student demands.
  3. **Longer Term Strategy** - This item was linked to recommendations from the last IPR in 2017, and the Deanery wanted to review how best to execute a strategy that provided a secure foundation for growth and development, specifically focusing on: How best to operationalise delivery review of long-established programmes, and a strategy for the delivery of programmes that have the capacity to expand.
- The Reflective Report and additional material provided in advance of the review.
- The meeting of the Review Team including consideration of further material (see Appendix 3).
- The final report produced by the Review Team.
- Action by the Deanery and others to whom recommendations were remitted following the review.

### Review Team Members

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Convener                  | <b>Dr Anja Klein</b> – Senior Lecturer in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, School of Divinity  |
| External Member           | <b>Professor Stella Howden</b> – Associate Professor (Learning and Teaching Enhancement), Learning and Teaching Academy, Heriot Watt University |
| External Member           | <b>Professor Joanne Harris</b> – Dean of Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Buckingham                                      |
| Internal Member           | <b>Dr Martin Simmen</b> – Senior Lecturer, Centre for Discovery Brain Sciences  |
| Student Member            | <b>Henriette Johansen</b> – School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences  |
| Review Team Administrator | <b>Scott Harrison</b> – Quality and Curriculum Administrator, College of Science and Engineering  |

## The Deanery

The Deanery of Clinical Sciences is based within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) and is part of the Edinburgh Medical School (EMS). The EMS comprises four Deaneries: Biomedical Sciences, Clinical Sciences, Molecular, Genetic & Population Health Sciences, and Medical Education.

## Physical location and summary of facilities

The Deanery and CSTO offices are housed in the Chancellor's Building, situated within the BioQuarter campus. Deanery teaching and support staff are dispersed across four key locations in Edinburgh including Online Distance Learning (ODL).

These include:

1. **The Western General Hospital:** Home to the Deanery's Internal Medicine Programme. (ODL)
2. **Canongate:** Home to the Deanery's Surgical Hub Programmes. (ODL)
3. **Lauriston Building:** Home to the Deanery's Dental Hub (On Campus and ODL) and the Ophthalmology Programmes. (ODL)
4. **BioQuarter Campus:** This location encompasses several locations:
  - The Royal Hospital for Sick Children and Young People: Home to the Paediatric Emergency Medicine Programme. (ODL)
  - The Chancellor's Building: Home to some of the Clinical Care Hub Programmes (ODL) and the central CSTO Offices.
  - The Queens Medical Research Institute: Home to some of the Clinical Care Hub Programmes.
  - The Institute for Regeneration and Repair: Home to some of the Clinical Care Hub Programmes.

## Date of previous review

Deanery of Clinical Sciences 2017; Oral Health Sciences 2020

## Reflective Report

The lead author of the report was the Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) Dr Susan Morrow. Co-Authors noted were Dr Laura Denby (Deputy Director of QAE), Mrs Moira Henderson (Student and Academic Services Manager), Professor Simon Riley, (Director of Teaching Post Graduate Taught (PGT)). Special acknowledgements were given to Dr. Chris McKenzie (Programme Director), and Lindsay Rutherford (Director of Students), for their critical review and feedback.

Subject-specific remit items were formulated in collaboration with the Deanery staff, the College's QAE team, and the student community within the Deanery. During the Deanery's annual programme monitoring cycle, consultations with programme teams were conducted. Programme teams met with the QAE Director, QAE Deputy Director, Director of PGT, Director of Postgraduate Research (PGR), and Student and Academic Services Manager to discuss their reports and explore any areas of interest. Additionally, staff within the CSTO were invited to provide feedback on the proposed subject-specific remit items through an anonymous survey, email, or an all-staff meeting.

Data from student surveys, feedback questionnaires, student representative feedback, and Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC) were utilised to develop remit items. Additionally, all students were invited to provide feedback on proposed subject-specific remit items through an anonymous survey.



## Section B – Main report

### 1 Strategic overview

The Deanery of Clinical Sciences is one of four such organisations located within the EMS, which is part of CMVM. The Deanery's leadership includes the Interim Head of Deanery, supported by a team comprising the Director of Professional Services, Business Support Manager, Deanery Resources Manager, and Administrative Secretary.

The Deanery offers 23 PGT Programmes, with 19 being online and 4 on-campus. The Deanery also offers a single undergraduate programme: Oral Health Sciences (BSc Hons). This on-campus programme is a part of the Edinburgh Dental Institute and is fully accredited by the General Dental Council (GDC). The Deanery primarily caters to medical professionals globally who are seeking career advancement through part-time training programmes delivered online. This represents the main student profile within the Deanery.

The CSTO, established in 2017 following the previous IPR, oversees all taught and research student activities within the Deanery, including PGT and UG programmes. Following the establishment of the CSTO and its progressive evolution over five years, the Deanery is now pivoting its focus towards a long-term strategy aimed at providing a stable foundation for sustained growth and development. Since the last IPR, it was observed that the CSTO's professional services team had facilitated the administrative connection of the three Hubs within the Deanery, and are building on successes by sharing good practices internally. Throughout this period, the CSTO grappled with challenges such as navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a direct impact on a significant number of clinical staff and tutors, and adjusting to extensive University system changes. The Review Team **commend** the successful development and implementation of the CSTO.

Regarding the third Subject Specific Remit Item, Longer-Term Strategy, a significant aspect of the Deanery's Strategic Overview was related to the initiation of a Governance Review by CMVM. This review is anticipated to directly influence the Deanery's direction and has offered valuable insights into the implementation of internal changes. A primary focus of the Governance Review is the availability and application of data and its potential to instigate changes at the College level, thereby impacting future structures within EMS Deaneries. The Review Team **suggests** the College work with the Deanery to evaluate and identify effective means of communicating with all Deanery staff in relation to the Governance Review.

One of the main objectives of the Deanery of Clinical Sciences management team was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Deanery's own capabilities and resources, thus enabling effective change management in response to the outcomes of the Governance Review. Long-established programmes can be reviewed using suitable procedures to help effectively navigate changes when more information is gathered. Deanery Management have stated that their overall strategy aligns closely with the University's 2030 strategy. They also aspire to be recognised as global education partners, primarily offering professional training and research opportunities. Additionally, there is a desire to explore the possibilities of lifelong learning in the wider long-term strategy of the Deanery.

Separate from the CMVM Governance Review, there have also been mandated items to address from the University following the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) University-level Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR). In relation to the Deanery and this IPR, *assessment and feedback* had been identified as a crucial area for

improvement across the University. The QESR report outlines actions to be undertaken in the 2023/24 academic year, focusing on enhancing turnaround times and the quality of assessment and feedback. These actions are centrally mandated by the University, with monthly reports being submitted to the Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Board. In relation to this, the Deanery expressed its approval of the University's principles and priorities for assessment and feedback. This was noted to have led to thorough internal discussions about the alignment and compliance of teaching practices with these principles and priorities and the overall University Learning and Teaching Strategy. Colleges are collaborating to devise a strategy that meets the necessary requirements, and this strategy will subsequently be disseminated to the Deanery for implementation.

An observation was made that the tuition fees for Deanery programmes are high compared to those of similar institutions. This has been accompanied by a reported decrease in both applicant and enrolment numbers in recent years. Additionally, it was noted to the Review Team that the lack of flexibility in the University's fee structures can cause issues, especially considering the global reach of the Deanery. This inflexibility primarily impacts mid to low-income countries, posing a barrier to growth and expansion. To partially address the issue of high fees, the Deanery identified scholarships as a potential area for development. Examples were provided to illustrate how scholarships are currently applied under different circumstances. The Deanery suggested the University's aspiration for growth will primarily be achieved through ODL programmes due to the limited physical space in Edinburgh. It was highlighted that a reassessment of the fee structures at the University level could be advantageous for both the Deanery and the College.

## **2 Enhancing the student experience**

### **2.1 The approach to enhancing Learning and Teaching**

- The Deanery's programme portfolio is overseen by the CSTO Executive Committee. Curriculum design for PGT is aligned to the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy, the University's Programme and Course Approval and Management, and CMVM's 'Developing and Approving New Postgraduate Taught Programmes' guidelines. This takes into account the University's graduate attributes, programme level requirements, and the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF), with a similar approach taken for the design of PGRT courses.
- Work-based learning and placements primarily occur at the Edinburgh Dental Institute. This learning mostly applies to UG students pursuing an Oral Health Sciences degree who engage in clinical training at dental practices in southeast Scotland throughout the programme. The reason for the low number of work-based learning opportunities and placements is largely due to the ODL nature of the majority of degree programmes in the Deanery and the fact that the PGT student body generally consists of medical professionals who are already employed.
- A number of the Deanery's programmes work with external groups in either collaborative or accreditation agreements. The Deanery has a number of strategic partnerships and has memoranda of agreements with the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh (RCS(Ed)), aligned to the suite of surgery programmes, and the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (RCP(Ed)), aligned with the programmes in Internal Medicine and in Critical Care. These partnerships were also recognised for their connections to scholarships and marketing. It was explained to the Review Team that these carry weight in the student experience and can have a close connection to the

reasons for studying at the University. These partnerships were also noted to be extremely valuable for the Deanery's reputation and status.

- The Deanery, catering to a global student body, extensively employs ODL delivery and is open to new innovations with regards to digital education. It was noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Deanery assisted the broader University and was able to successfully advise and propose effective strategies and techniques for the University to adopt during this challenging time. The Review Team received reports of global success stories from the Programme Teams and staff at the Deanery, who were recognised for their dedication and passion in teaching delivery. The Review Team **commend** the Deanery teams' commitment to delivering high quality programmes with a global reach and impact.
- Essential to the Deanery is the use of highly skilled and specialised external tutors who may be clinicians or staff members of the NHS. This interaction was noted to be invaluable for students on the related programmes, as they have access to professionals in a similar position to themselves and can learn from their professional experience. It was noted to be a unique position within the wider University but fundamental to teaching delivery in Clinical Sciences. The Review Team **commend** the Deanery for developing educational provision supported by highly specialised clinicians and experts from multiple disciplines to assure cutting-edge and practice-relevant learning.
- The Review Team frequently observed that academic programme teams and disciplines spoke about ways of working that meant they felt isolated from other Hubs within the Deanery, thereby missing out on the exchange of ideas and good practices. It was recognised that the CSTO had effectively bridged this gap by integrating staff within the Hubs for administrative work and had established routine administrative forums. These forums serve as a platform for staff members to exchange their experiences and provide a conducive environment for fostering collaboration and idea sharing. The review team **commend** the implementation of administrative forums as a positive mechanism for sharing practice. The Review Team outlined that this practice is crucial for the academic staff as well, and it is vital to provide a platform for academic programme teams to exchange best practices. The Review Team **recommend** that the Deanery develop a strategy and implementation plan to facilitate the sharing of good practice and innovation in teaching and supporting learning across programmes.

## 2.2 Assessment and Feedback

- A primary assessment and feedback method explored in the review was the use of online discussion boards. Discussion boards serve as a key element of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) experience, providing a platform for students and tutors to engage and learn collaboratively. One of the noted difficulties highlighted during the review was the change to Learn Ultra, in which notification features and the nesting of discussion topics changed. It was observed to have mainly impacted students who had used both systems. The Review Team appreciated the Deanery's efforts to adapt to the new system, ensuring that the ongoing assessment of interactions on the discussion boards remains a valuable learning tool. They noted that without clear guidelines on the expected interaction, students might find this style of continuous assessment difficult. The Discussion Board assessment method

has, however, been recognised for fostering peer support among students, as it enables students to interact with each other online with the input of a dedicated tutor.

- The Review Team heard that programme teams have aligned their practices with principles outlined in the University's Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities documentation. This is to ensure that course assessments are effective and align with programme learning outcomes. Assessment practices undergo regular monitoring at the programme level through programme reviews and Board of Examiners meetings; these are also reviewed by External Examiners.
- The University Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities documentation and policy serve as a general guide for the monitoring of tutors' assessment skills within the Deanery. Questions were asked about the methods used to develop/train and calibrate new/external tutors to ensure they understand and meet the required standards regarding grading and feedback. The feedback provided to the Review Team primarily concerned the development of well-structured rubrics at the programme level to help maintain consistency and uniformity in assessment and feedback. This induction training was reported to largely be an informal process at the programme level, but a more structured approach could be adopted to help monitor the assessment skills of all tutors. It was highlighted that tutors from some programmes are encouraged to undertake courses such as a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) or the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP) to improve their assessment abilities, but there is no formal induction or foundational training currently available, largely due to the wide array of tutors involved. The Review Team observed that this training component also contributes to the recommendation underscored in Section 2.7 relating to staff induction, training, and development processes.
- Based on the information collected from the student meeting at the review, it appeared that the turnaround times for receiving feedback adhered to the University's policies and regulations, although it was noted that the Review team met a relatively small number of students. Likewise, while the overall quality was deemed satisfactory, a comprehensive assessment by the Review Team was not possible due to the small number of students who attended the meeting.

### 2.3 Supporting students in their learning

- The University's new SSM for UG and PGT students was launched by the Deanery at the beginning of the 2023/24 academic year. As it was the early stages of the implementation of the new system, it made it difficult to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the new model, but the Review Team found that anecdotal evidence strongly supported and endorsed the changes across the Deanery. Deanery staff noted that the change from academic staff providing this support to professional services staff has been beneficial. The Review Team **commend** the Deanery for their support of students in the implementation of the new SSM.
- The Review extensively highlighted the proactive and engaged approach of the Student Support team. This was further substantiated through meetings with professional services staff, academic staff, and students. Notably, the Student Support Team and Student Advisers were reported to respond to student enquiries

within a day. The role of the Well-Being adviser was also praised as a success so far in the new SSM. The Review Team **commend** the swiftness of reply and level of support provided by Student Advisers. It is clear that the team is well supported and responsive to a diverse group of students across programmes. To maintain the high level of support for diverse group of students, the Review Team **recommend** that the Deanery facilitate ongoing professional development training for Student Advisers as the role develops. This also corresponds to a recommendation in Section 2.7 aimed at enhancing training measures in response to the diverse student population within the deanery.

- A major difficulty reported by the Deanery was the University's focus on on-campus UG students, which does not apply to the majority of the Deanery's students. It was felt that there was a gap in the training with regards to the specific challenges that the Student Advisers deal with in the Deanery. It was also reported that students are often overloaded with information, which is sometimes unhelpful. This issue arises due to a discrepancy between the Deanery's provision, which is primarily online for part-time PG students, and the central University communications, which are mainly directed towards full-time UG on-campus students. As a result, the Student Support team has additional tasks to complete because they must verify or correct the accuracy and applicability of the information that the University has provided to the students.
- The Deanery of Clinical Sciences' Hub on Learn Ultra is accessible to all students, both new and returning. This Hub is a comprehensive resource, offering a variety of materials such as welcome week activities, orientation details, information about the Deanery and College, guidance on extensions and special circumstances, and resources for student support and well-being. Recognising that some online part-time professional students may have diverse learning backgrounds, may have been away from academia for a while, or may not have engaged in online academic study beyond Continuing Professional Development (CPD), efforts have been made to improve the pre-arrival and induction processes internally.
- The Deanery noted that the transition into the workplace is generally less challenging for most of their students. As the majority are qualified healthcare professionals who are already employed, they have a clear understanding of their career progression within their vocational field and recognise the value of the programmes they are enrolled in.
- The Deanery had faced challenges in fostering a student community and peer support, partially due to the diverse backgrounds of students from around the world. The second subject-specific remit item, which focused on enhancing the student learning community, prompted the Deanery to seek advice from the Review Team on leveraging the role of Cohort Leads to strengthen the student community. The Deanery revealed that coordinating events and ensuring adequate attendance is particularly challenging, given that the majority of the student body consists of working professionals. The Review Team acknowledged the significance of benchmarking at the University level and the additional pressure it brings. The efforts that Cohort Leads were already making were recognised, specifically the fact that they had already scheduled many online events in the evening to fit with the working patterns of their students. It was found that sessions framed around academic or professional skills were much more likely to engage students, especially those who

are in employment, as there is a clear benefit to their attendance. Furthermore, the review session with Cohort Leads highlighted the potential for sharing valuable experiences among colleagues to enhance their offerings and share good practices. The Review Team **recommend** that the Deanery facilitates Cohort Leads to share experiences and develop an approach applicable to the Deanery programmes and context.

- It was noted in the review meetings that Programme teams had expressed concerns that the University's Special Circumstances Policy does not adequately address the unique challenges faced by mature online students, many of whom are full-time healthcare professionals in demanding roles. There is a need for clearer guidance to students on the distinction between Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances, as students often struggle to determine which option is most suitable for their situation. This sentiment was reiterated by students during the Review Team meetings. International students, in particular, often find it challenging to determine the most appropriate course of action, which can exacerbate stress levels.
- Concerning Special Circumstances, it was observed that the Deanery adopts a different approach to cater to the needs of their student body. While the process is managed as usual under central oversight, a separate Deanery Committee is convened to promptly communicate the outcomes to relevant programme teams to inform students of the outcomes. The Review Team was informed that this approach is essential to alleviating stress among students, particularly those who are part-time learners and concurrently employed.

#### 2.4. Listening and responding to the Student Voice

- Regarding the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results, the Deanery stands out with notable student satisfaction rates, especially in comparison to other Schools and Deaneries within the University. The Review Team frequently received feedback about the students' high regard for the teaching and the practical experience facilitated by Clinical tutors. This has been a significant factor contributing to the high satisfaction rates, as it provides teaching applicable to real-life scenarios and practice.
- Concerning SSLCs, these meetings take place each semester within the Deanery. The challenge of promoting engagement has been noted; the difficulty is partially due to the international makeup of the student body, meaning that the task of scheduling appropriate times has been complex for staff and students. The Review Team acknowledged this issue, understanding that such coordination can be challenging, even for on-campus students.
- The administration of Course Evaluation Questionnaires (CEQs) is assigned to programme teams within the Deanery, and the return rates were reported to be similarly low as in previous years. Internal efforts are being made to investigate methods for enhancing these response rates. Despite the low completion rate, the feedback received suggested a high level of satisfaction with the courses throughout the Deanery, consistent with feedback reported to the Review Team across various different methods.

## 2.5 Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation

- It was reported that the Deanery currently does not have a designated staff member responsible for internal EDI matters. Although EDI considerations were noted to have been considered within relevant processes in the Deanery, specific action had been recommended to ensure consistency and full evaluation of EDI issues. It was also noted that there was no process or committee at the Deanery level for the ethical review of PGT projects. Therefore, programme-level systems were established to adhere to the University's ethical review processes. The Deanery was also advised to ensure that its programmes aligned with EDI principles as necessary. The Review Team **recommend** that the Deanery prioritise the engagement of an EDI lead to develop internal EDI structures (e.g. through the establishment of an EDI committee). This recommendation recognises the need for flexibility, permitting either a newly appointed individual or a current staff member to take on the role. Nonetheless, it is essential to confront this matter to further and prioritise EDI dialogues via internal structures within the Deanery.
- Student Support Staff and Student Advisers during the review were noted to engage with many different students from varying backgrounds around the world. It was often noted that cultural differences and difficult circumstances are important to be aware of in these roles, particularly for Student Advisers. There was a strong sentiment that further training specifically related to these situations would be beneficial given the global context of the Deanery's provision. The Review Team **recommend** that Student Support staff such as Student Advisers are able to access specific EDI training opportunities given the diverse student intake of the Deanery. The Review team also noted that enabling diversity through staff recruitment to these roles may be valuable.

## 2.6 Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes

- Work-based learning plays a crucial role in the UG Oral Health Sciences programme, with students undertaking clinical training during placements in dental practices. The integration of work-based learning into the curriculum has been key to developing well-rounded, skilled professionals ready to contribute to the field of oral health sciences.
- Students' professional experiences significantly enhance the learning environment in the Deanery, particularly in discussion board assessments, where international perspectives and clinical expertise are shared between students and tutors. The Review Team had noted from anecdotal evidence that students valued the opportunity to learn from their international peers, which offered them a diverse range of perspectives on clinical issues. This international collaboration broadened their understanding and approach to various clinical problems, thereby enhancing their learning experience.
- Ongoing dialogues are maintained with professional bodies such as the GDC, which includes routine reaccreditation processes. Additionally, regular board panel meetings are held with the Royal Colleges and the Deanery.
- The Curriculum Transformation Project's (CTP) contemplation of incorporating lifelong learning for healthcare professionals signifies a significant growth opportunity

for the Deanery. The potential application of lifelong learning was examined during the review, as was how this can develop graduate attributes and employability. However, further exploration is needed to understand the desired methods and application, as well as how this aligns with the overall University strategy.

## 2.7 Supporting and developing staff

- This thematic area was closely linked to one of the Deanery's Subject-Specific Remit items relating to Staff Experience, guiding numerous discussions throughout the Review.
- The Deanery promotes staff participation in CPD opportunities to enhance learning and teaching, such as support to gain fellowship (Advance HE), PgCAP, and the Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA). However, due to limited capacity in EdTA, the Deanery had set up an informal network to assist staff seeking HEA (Advance HE) accreditation via the direct route. During discussions, the Review Team observed that many tutors had successfully enrolled in and completed these courses, which were found to enhance their teaching and development. These tutors were primarily from programmes recognised for their good practices, and this observation contributed to the Review Team's recommendation to facilitate the sharing of effective practices outlined in Section 2.1. The Review Team **suggests** the Deanery expedites the proposed work to develop a Deanery-specific Welcome/Orientation. This should include signposting to how staff (Professional Services, Academic, Tutors etc) can access information, advice and guidance on personal and professional development.
- The Deanery has shown a strong interest in awarding CPD and PDP credits. However, they have often struggled with providing this consistently due to a lack of coordination and difficulties in developing effective delivery systems. The Review Team was informed of the pilot schemes being used and the use of 'Canvas' to help address system issues. CPD and PDP, along with postgraduate specialty and sub-specialty training, are particularly important within the healthcare discipline and are acknowledged as an important part of the profession.
- Feedback from staff forums and quality reports indicated potential inconsistencies and areas for improvement in staff induction, training, and development processes. It was noted that academic staff induction is delegated to the programme teams within the Deanery and was predominantly reported to be an informal process. The Review Team observed notable inconsistencies in the induction and training provided at the programme level, related to taught provision, particularly concerning external tutors. The tutor group's composition is complex, often comprising multiple different NHS staff members and clinicians with specialised knowledge. These tutors, potentially numbering in the hundreds for a specific suite of programmes, might only be required for a two-week period. The time commitment and the challenge of maintaining consistency were identified as ongoing issues for the Deanery with regards to external tutors. The Review Team **recommend** that the Deanery develop a strategy for the orientation of staff to relevant University learning and teaching policies, processes, and structures. Staff would include those who are teaching, supervising, and/or have a support for learning role.
- Concerning the appointment of Tutors within the Deanery, it was observed that this process is managed at the Programme level. The specialised requirements of



programmes, such as Surgery, necessitate specific recruitment. While this specialist knowledge is advantageous to the Deanery, it leads to a less consistent approach to tutor recruitment due to the diverse needs of different programmes. The support offered to tutors is predominantly localised to their respective programmes. Consequently, the level of tutor engagement with the Deanery as a whole can vary. Anecdotally, the Review Team found that tutors tend to identify more closely with their specific programme and the University than with the Deanery.

- As outlined in Section 2.3, the Student Support Staff within the Deanery often grapple with unique challenges due to the majority global and online nature of the student body. These challenges, distinct from those faced by the wider University, are not addressed in the central training, which primarily focuses on on-campus UG students. Consequently, the Deanery has relied on practical experience and localised training to guide internal procedures. There is an increasing need for supplementary training, specifically designed for the Student Advisers within the Deanery, to complement the central training provided by the University. The Student Advisers in the Review emphasised areas such as mental first aid, crisis training, and the need for more frequent refresher training. The Review Team **recommend** that the Deanery facilitate ongoing professional development training for Student Advisers as the role develops.
- It was observed that, despite the availability of staff support across the University, services are burdened with lengthy waiting lists, such as the Staff Counselling service. It remains crucial for both academic and professional services staff to be aware of the various options accessible to them and how to apply for the relevant support.
- At various points during the visit, staff members reported overworking and low morale among the Deanery staff. A workload allocation model could increase the sense of fairness and open up conversations about how to manage the workload. The Review Team **recommend** that the Deanery consider the introduction of a Workload Allocation Model (WAM) to inform and improve staff experience.
- Programme teams had reported significant delays in payments to external staff, attributed to problems with the new finance system, People and Money (P&M). This indirectly impacted the delivery of programmes, as administrators were burdened with additional workload, diverting their attention from other administrative tasks. The Review Team acknowledged this as a widespread issue, and Programme team leaders expressed the discomfort experienced by Deanery staff when dealing with external partners due to these delays and noted that these issues risked reputational damage to the University, including the risk that some organisations might terminate their partnership with the Deanery's teaching programmes. The Review Team acknowledged that these are serious issues beyond the control of the Deanery staff and that the implementation of the P&M system had also led to an increased workload for many staff, which has adversely affected staff morale, particularly emerging from the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Space within the Deanery was noted to be a particular issue during the review, especially when trying to develop a staff community. It was noted that the teams are located across different buildings within Edinburgh, and it is not possible to have the full team present at one time due to the limited space available. Regrettably, this issue was beyond the Review Team's remit but was acknowledged as a concern and ongoing challenge. The Review Team **suggests** the College supports the Deanery to

explore and identify space where teams can come together to learn, share, and develop relations and shared understandings.

## 2.8 Learning environment (Physical and Virtual)

- The Deanery was recognised as a leader in ODL within the University, excelling in offering online teaching experiences to healthcare professionals. It was reported to the Review Team that the Deanery staff are frequently early adopters of new technology rollouts, such as Learn Ultra, due to their involvement in online delivery. However, on-campus students, mainly those associated with the UG programme, sometimes experience a sense of isolation, both geographically and in connection to the broader Deanery and EMS community. The Review Team **suggests** that the Deanery explore what practical actions can be taken to enable the Oral Health Sciences students to feel more integrated with the wider student body. A significant geographic challenge is also present within the Deanery, given its dispersion across four distinct locations.

## 3 Assurance and enhancement of provision

- The Deanery holds the strategic perspective that QAE plays a significant role in improving teaching and learning activities within its programmes. Considering the Deanery's broad subject area, the QAE model delegates the responsibility of QAE to individual programmes or clusters. This delegation is often supported by direct supervision or collaboration with external Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies. The Deanery's Director of QAE leads the annual reviews of all programmes and prepares an annual quality enhancement report. This report is submitted to the Senate following its review and approval by the CSTO executive committee. Since the last IPR, the Deanery had established a QAE Committee, led by the Director of QAE. This committee convenes every three months and reports to the CMVM QAE committee.
- The approval of new programmes and courses adheres to the procedures laid out by the University. The Deanery's Learning and Teaching Committee and Board of Studies were established following the previous IPR. Depending on their nature, proposals are either endorsed or approved at the Deanery level before going through the College Learning and Teaching Committee and, if necessary, the Senate. The Deanery is currently engaged in an ongoing process of continual improvement in this area to provide more transparency and clarity. For new programme proposals, the Deanery advises teams to follow the QAE benchmarks and the good practice guidelines of the SCQF and relevant professional bodies. The Edinburgh Learning Design Roadmap (ELDeR) workshops, ABC Learning Design workshops, and contributions from the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) have all helped to facilitate new course and programme development. The Review Team **suggests** that the Deanery team which are leading curriculum reviews draw on insights and experiences from across the University e.g. the Digital Futures group, Digital Education Unit, or other Schools which have complex programmes to inform the review work. It is advised within the Deanery that proposals for new programmes adhere to QAE benchmarks, the good practice guidelines of the SCQF, and the guidelines of pertinent professional bodies.
- As outlined in Section 2.3, the Deanery has implemented a distinct approach to accommodate its unique student body in relation to Special Circumstances. While the

process is managed under the usual central oversight, a dedicated Deanery Committee is convened to swiftly relay the outcomes to the appropriate programme teams. This prompt communication is essential for keeping the students informed about the outcomes, a necessity given the nature of the student body.

- At the Deanery level, the programme teams are primarily responsible for admissions and recruitment. The Review Team was informed that, due to the specialised nature of external tutors required, it is often most effective for the programme teams to handle this recruitment.
- Reports from External Examiners are gathered through the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS), following the University's established procedures. A sample of these reports was provided to the Review Team for the IPR meeting.
- Several programmes within the Deanery engage with external groups through either partnerships or accreditation agreements. Most of the Deanery's accreditations are renewed on an annual basis. The Deanery has strategic partnerships with a number of external organisations, memoranda of agreements with the RCS(Ed) and the RCP(Ed), and receives accreditation from the GDC for relevant programmes outlined in the report.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 - Range of provision considered by the review

### Postgraduate Taught Programmes

The Deanery hosts 23 PGT Programmes: 19 online and 4 on campus

### Undergraduate Programmes

The Deanery hosts 1 UG Taught Programme: Oral Health Sciences (BSc Hons).

### Online PGT Programmes:

- Applied Image Analysis (PgCert)
- Clinical Management of Pain (MSc)
- Clinical Ophthalmology (MSc)
- Critical Care (MSc)
- General Surgery (ChM)
- Imaging (MSc)
- Internal Medicine (MSc)
- Neuroimaging for Research (MSc)
- Paediatric Emergency Medicine (MSc)
- Patient Safety and Clinical Human Factor (MSc)
- Positron Emission Tomography and Magnetic Resonance Principles and Applications (PgCert)
- Primary Care Ophthalmology (ChM)
- Restorative Dentistry (MSc)
- Stem Cells and Translational Neurology (MSc)
- Surgical Sciences (MSc)
- Surgical Writing and Evidence Based Practice (PgCert)
- Trauma and Orthopaedics (ChM)
- Urology (ChM)
- Vascular and Endovascular Surgery (ChM)

### On Campus PGT Programmes:

- Endodontology (DClinDent)
- Orthodontics (DClinDent)
- Paediatric Dentistry (DClinDent)
- Prosthodontics (DClinDent)

### New Programmes since Previous IPR

The following programmes are new since the last IPR in 2017:

- Medical Sciences & Translational Research PhD with integrated studies in Engagement for Impact (PhD)
- Critical Care (MSc)
- Patient Safety and Clinical Human Factors (MSc)
- Surgical Writing and Evidence Based Practice (PgCert)
- Stem Cells and Regenerative Medicine with integrated studies (PhD)

## Appendix 2 – University remit

The University remit provides consistent coverage of key elements across all of the University's internal reviews (undergraduate and postgraduate).

It covers all credit bearing provision within the scope of the review, including:

- Provision delivered in collaboration with others
- Transnational education
- Work-based provision and placements
- Online and distance learning
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD)
- Provision which provides only small volumes of credit
- Joint/Dual Degrees
- Massive Open Online Courses MOOCs (even if non-credit bearing)

### 1. Strategic overview

The strategic approach to:

- The management and resourcing of learning and teaching experience,
- The forward direction and the structures in place to support this.
- Developing business cases for new programmes and courses,
- Managing and reviewing its portfolio,
- Closing courses and programmes.

### 2. Enhancing the Student Experience

The approach to and effectiveness of:

- Supporting students in their learning
- Listening to and responding to the Student Voice
- Learning and Teaching
- Assessment and Feedback
- Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation
- Learning environment (physical and virtual)
- Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes
- Supporting and developing staff

### 3. Assurance and Enhancement of provision

The approach to and effectiveness of maintaining and enhancing academic standards and quality of provision in alignment with the University Quality Framework:

- Admissions and Recruitment
- Assessment, Progression and Achievement
- Programme and Course approval
- Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting
- Operation of Boards of Studies, Exam Boards, Special Circumstances
- External Examining, themes and actions taken
- Alignment with SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) level, relevant benchmark statements, UK Quality Code

- Accreditation and Collaborative activity and relationship with Professional/Accrediting bodies (if applicable)

### Appendix 3 - Additional information considered by Review Team

#### Prior to the review visit:

- Clinical Sciences Reflective Report
- External Examiner Reports 2020-23
- Annual Quality Reports 2020-23
- Statistical- Report UG Oral Health and PGT Clinical Sciences
- Analysis of Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results
- General Dental Council – Education Quality Assurance Inspection Report
- Study and Work Away Service (SWAY) Placement Report
- Academic Standards Scrutiny – Clinical Sciences

#### During the review visit

- Discussion Board examples shared by students

### Appendix 4 - Number of students

| <b>Undergraduate: Entrants for Selected Programmes</b> |                |                |                |                |                |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Session Year   | 2023/24        | 2022/23        | 2021/22        | 2020/21        | 2019/20        |
| Programme Name   | Entrants count | Entrants count | Entrants count | Entrants count | Entrants count |
| Oral Health Sciences (BSc Hons)                        | 8              | 11             | 9              | 10             | 10             |

| <b>Postgraduate Taught: Entrants for Selected Programmes</b>                  |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Session Year  | 2023/24        | 2022/23        | 2021/22        | 2020/21        | 2019/20        |
| Programme Name  | Entrants Count | Entrants Count | Entrants Count | Entrants Count | Entrants Count |
| Applied Medical Image Analysis (Online Learning) (ICL) (Pg ProfDev) - 2 years |                |                |                |                |                |
| Applied Medical Image Analysis (Online Learning) (ICL) (PgCert) - 1-2 years   | 2              | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| Clinical Management of Pain (Online Learning) (MSc) - 3 Years (Part-time)     | 15             | 13             | 18             |                | 1              |
| Clinical Management of Pain (Online Learning) (PgCert) - 1 Year (Part-time)   | 9              | 7              |                |                |                |
| Clinical Management of Pain (Online Learning) (PgDip) - 2 Years (Part-time)   | 1              | 1              |                |                |                |
| Clinical Management of Pain (Online Learning)(ICL) (MSc) - 6 years            |                |                | 7              | 19             | 23             |
| Clinical Management of Pain (Online Learning)(ICL) (PG ProfDev) - 2 years     |                |                |                |                |                |

|   |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| Clinical Management of Pain (Online Learning)(ICL) (PgCert) - 2 years |    |    | 1  |    |    |
| Clinical Management of Pain (Online Learning)(ICL) (PgDip) - 4 years  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Clinical Ophthalmology (Online Learning) (ChM) - 2 Years (Part-time)  | 14 | 9  | 21 | 23 | 13 |
| Clinical Ophthalmology (Online Learning) (ChM) (ICL)                  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| Critical Care (Online Learning) (ICL) (PG ProfDev) - 2 Years          |    |    |    |    |    |
| Critical Care (Online Learning) (MSc) - 3 years (Part-time)           | 37 | 35 | 43 | 35 | 20 |
| Critical Care (Online Learning) (PgCert) - 1 year (Part-time)         | 6  | 5  | 11 | 9  | 8  |
| Critical Care (Online Learning) (PgDip) - 2 years (Part-time)         | 3  | 2  | 4  | 1  | 3  |
| Endodontology (DCD) - 3 Years (Full-time)                             | 2  | 0  | 1  | 2  | 2  |
| General Surgery (Online Learning) (ChM) (Part-time)                   | 16 | 23 | 25 | 33 | 28 |
| Imaging (Online Learning) (MSc) - 3 Years (Part-Time)                 |    |    | 0  | 0  |    |
| Imaging (Online Learning)(ICL) (MSc) - 6 years                        | 2  | 3  | 7  | 5  | 9  |
| Imaging (Online Learning)(ICL) (PgCert) - 2 years                     | 2  | 3  | 0  | 4  | 2  |
| Imaging (Online Learning)(ICL) (PgDip) - 4 years                      | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1  |
| Imaging (Online Learning)(ICL) (PgProfDev) - 2 years                  |    |    |    |    |    |
| Internal Medicine (Online Learning) (ICL) (PG ProfDev) - 2 Years      |    |    |    |    |    |
| Internal Medicine (Online Learning) (MSc) (Part-time)                 | 30 | 37 | 45 | 47 | 38 |
| Internal Medicine (Online Learning) (PgCert) (Part-time)              | 4  | 2  | 5  | 6  | 9  |
| Internal Medicine (Online Learning) (PgDip) (Part-time)               | 5  | 4  | 13 | 4  | 6  |
| Neuroimaging for Research (Online Learning) (ICL) (MSc)               | 1  | 9  | 5  | 3  | 2  |
| Neuroimaging for Research (Online Learning) (ICL) (PgCert)            | 2  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 0  |
| Neuroimaging for Research (Online Learning) (ICL) (PgDip)             | 1  |    | 0  | 1  | 1  |
| Neuroimaging for Research (Online Learning) (ICL) (PgProfDev)         |    |    |    |    |    |
| Neuroimaging for Research (Online Learning) (MSc) (Part-time)         |    |    | 0  |    |    |

|   |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| Neuroimaging for Research (Online Learning) (PgDip) (Part-time)                           | 3  |    | 3  |    |    |
| Oral Surgery (DClinDent) (Full-time)  |    |    | 0  | 0  | 1  |
| Orthodontics (DClinDent) (Full-time)  | 2  | 2  | 2  | 3  | 1  |
| Paediatric Emergency Medicine (Online Learning) (PgDip) (Part-time)                       | 6  | 4  | 5  | 4  | 1  |
| Paediatric Emergency Medicine (Online Learning) (ICL) (PG ProfDev) - 2 Years              |    |    |    |    |    |
| Paediatric Emergency Medicine (Online Learning) (MSc) (Part-time)                         | 13 | 12 | 17 | 21 | 13 |
| Paediatric Emergency Medicine (Online Learning) (PgCert) (Part-time)                      | 2  | 4  | 2  | 4  | 3  |
| Patient Safety and Clinical Human Factors (Online Learning) (MSc) - 3 Years (Part-time)   | 25 | 28 | 24 | 28 | 11 |
| Patient Safety and Clinical Human Factors (Online Learning) (PgCert) - 1 Year (Part-time) | 6  | 1  | 5  | 9  | 6  |
| Patient Safety and Clinical Human Factors (Online Learning) (PgDip) - 2 Years (Part-time) | 1  | 3  | 0  | 1  | 1  |
| PET-MR Principles and Applications (Online Learning) (ICL) (Pg ProfDev) - 2 years         |    |    |    |    |    |
| PET-MR Principles and Applications (Online Learning) (ICL) (PgCert) - 1-2 years           |    | 2  | 1  | 0  |    |
| Primary Care Ophthalmology (Online Learning) (MSc) - 3 years (Part-time)                  | 16 | 18 | 25 | 22 | 27 |
| Primary Care Ophthalmology (Online Learning) (Pg Dip) - 2 years (Part-time)               | 0  |    | 1  |    |    |
| Primary Care Ophthalmology (Online Learning)(ICL) (MSc) - 6 years                         |    |    |    |    | 0  |
| Restorative Dentistry (Online Learning) (ICL) (PG ProfDev) - 2 Years                      |    |    |    |    |    |
| Restorative Dentistry (Online Learning) (MSc) - 3 Years (Part-Time)                       | 8  | 7  | 13 | 9  | 12 |
| Restorative Dentistry (Online Learning) (PgCert) - 1 Year (Part-Time)                     | 2  | 1  | 0  | 3  | 1  |
| Restorative Dentistry (Online Learning) (PgDip) - 2 Years (Part-Time)                     | 2  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 0  |
| Stem Cells and Translational Neurology (Online Learning) (ICL) (PG ProfDev)               |    |    |    |    |    |
| Stem Cells and Translational Neurology (Online Learning) (ICL) (PgCert) - 2 Years         | 1  | 3  | 1  | 1  |    |
| Stem Cells and Translational Neurology (Online Learning)(ICL) (MSc) 3- 6 years            | 1  | 0  | 5  | 9  | 9  |



|  |    |    |    |     |    |
|--|----|----|----|-----|----|
| Surgical Sciences (Online Learning) (ICL) (PG ProfDev) - 2 Years |    |    |    |     |    |
| Surgical Sciences (Online Learning) (MSc) (Part-time)            | 25 | 51 | 74 | 110 | 95 |
| Surgical Writing and Evidence Based Practice (Pg Prof Dev)       |    |    |    |     |    |
| Surgical Writing and Evidence Based Practice (PgCert)            | 0  |    |    |     |    |
| Trauma and Orthopaedics (Online Learning) (ChM) (Part-time)      | 17 | 25 | 33 | 16  | 20 |
| Urology (Online Learning) (ChM) (Part-time)                      | 10 | 9  | 13 | 11  | 17 |
| Vascular and Endovascular Surgery (Online Learning) (ChM)        | 13 | 4  | 7  | 9   | 9  |