

The University of Edinburgh

**Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026, 2pm –5pm**

**Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House & Microsoft Teams**

**A G E N D A**

<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Minutes of the previous meeting</b> To approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026</li></ul>	SQAC 25/26 5A
<b>3.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Convener's communications</li></ul>	Verbal Update
<b>SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS</b>		
<b>4.</b>	<b>Student Voice Framework</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy</li><li>- Student Voice Policy</li></ul> For approval.	SQAC 25/26 5B SQAC 25/26 5C
<b>5.</b>	<b>Internal Periodic Review Schedule</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- IPR Forward Schedule 2026-32</li><li>- Postponement of Internal Periodic Review for the Clinical Education (postgraduate taught provision)</li></ul> For approval.	SQAC 25/26 5D SQAC 25/26 5E
<b>6.</b>	<b>Taught External Examiner Reports:</b> Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Thematic Analysis 2024/25  For discussion and noting.	SQAC 25/26 5F
<b>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING</b>		
<b>7.</b>	<b>Professional Services Review and Student Support Thematic Review Update</b> For information.	SQAC 25/26 5G
<b>8.</b>	<b>Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) Update</b> For information.	SQAC 25/26 5H
<b>9.</b>	<b>Scotland's Rural College (SRUC): Accreditation Committee Annual Report 2024/25</b> For information.	SQAC 25/26 5I

10.	<b>Committee Membership 2026/27</b> For information.	SQAC 25/26 5J
11.	<b>Senate and Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review</b> For noting.	SQAC 25/26 5K
12.	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
13.	<b>Date of next meeting &amp; 2026/27 dates (provisionally)</b>  <b>All meetings hybrid and 2-5pm– venue TBC.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September 2026</li> <li>• December 2026</li> <li>• February 2027</li> <li>• April 2027</li> <li>• May 2027</li> </ul>	

**The University of Edinburgh**  
**Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held on**  
**Thursday 23rd April 2026, 14:00-17:00**  
 Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House  
 and Microsoft Teams

## 1. Attendance

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Position:</b>
Professor Tina Harrison	Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) (Convener)
Faten Adam	School Representative of CSE
Katya Amott	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
Professor Matthew Bailey	Dean of Quality, CMVM
Dr Michael Barany	Senate Representative
Marianne Brown	Head of Academic Planning, Registry Services (co-opted)
Brian Connolly	Head of Academic Quality, Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
Dr Anne Desler	School Representative of CAHSS
Professor James Hopgood	Dean of Quality and Enhancement, CSE
Heather Innes	Academic Engagement and Policy Co-ordinator
Professor Nazira Karodia	Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching, Edinburgh Napier University
Dr Jill Mackay	School Representative of CMVM
Dr Sari Pennings	Senate Representative
Professor Carol Richardson	Senate Representative
Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar	Director of Students, EFI (co-opted)
Dr Emily Taylor	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation, CAHSS
Sinéad Docherty	Committee Secretary, Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
<b>In attendance:</b>	
Cristina Matthews	Senior Academic Quality and Standards Manager (Projects), Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
<b>Apologies:</b>	
Professor Cathy Bovill	Head of Academic Development, Academic Quality and Standards
Professor Laura Bradley	Doctoral College Representative (CAHSS, PGR)
Professor Ramon Grima	Director of Quality, School of Biological Sciences, CSE (co-opted)

## 2. Welcome

The Convener welcomed members to the meeting and noted the apologies from those members unable to attend.

## 3. Minutes of previous minutes (SQAC 25/26 4A)

The Convener informed members that some amendments had been made to the minutes prior to the meeting, following circulation and feedback on the initial draft.

The Committee approved the revised draft of minutes.

**Action: Committee Secretary to amend minutes to reflect the agreed changes and publish on Committee webpage.**

## 4. Matters Arising

### English Language Skills Short Life Working Group

Following the previous meeting and the agreement to create this working group, there had been some queries around the proposed membership. Committee members suggested that a colleagues from the following areas/roles should be included: Recruitment and Admissions; the Centre for Open Learning; Academic Development; Director(s) of Teaching; Director(s) of Students; Student Advisor(s). It was agreed that there should be student representation on the group.

**Action: Academic Quality and Standards and Convener to create communication to invite members to the group and approach the identified areas/roles.**

### Annual Monitoring Templates for Academic Year 2025/26

Annual Monitoring templates were finalised through e-business after the February meeting and the final drafts were agreed by Convener and College Deans of Quality. These were shared with the School Directors of Quality last week at the network meeting and Academic Quality & Standards will shortly send communication to all Schools to begin the annual monitoring process for 2025/26.

### Reporting of misuse of Generative AI in the College of Science and Engineering

The Student Conduct Annual Report (closed paper) was discussed in the February meeting of SQAC, and that report highlighted that the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) had recorded zero cases of misuse of Generative AI (GenAI) within their overall number of academic misconduct cases. This was since discussed among elected Senate members and a colleague in CSE reported to this group that the College were instructed not to report these cases as a separate category.

In response, the College Quality Office advised that the potential misuse of GenAI is not a category in and of itself in the Academic Misconduct procedures and there is a risk of double counting cases if this category is used. The College use the best fit overall category as listed within the procedures, and keep a note of where potential misuse of GenAI has been flagged separately. The data is available and can be shared upon request.

The CSE preference would be for there to be a separate category which encompasses the misuse of Generative AI to be able to accurately report on cases where GenAI use has been flagged as potentially inappropriate. The College will continue to engage with appropriate colleagues about how to flag and report cases of Academic Misconduct and raise with the College QA Committee.

### **QAA National Review of Awarding Arrangements**

The Convener advised members that the plan for the QAA review is yet to be communicated in full. The QAA have issued a call for reviewers to participate in up to 10 targeted reviews across the Scottish sector.

## **5. Degrees Awarded Analysis 2024/25 (SQAC 25/26 4B)**

The degree outcomes analysis was presented by the Head of Academic Planning. Key points highlighted to the Committee included widening awarding gaps for some cohorts of students and a decrease in the overall number of high-class degrees awarded across the institution in 2024/25. The analysis compares against a five-year period and it was emphasised that the impact of Covid-19 and the marking and assessment boycott in 2022/23 had an effect in that time.

The Committee recognised the importance of contextualising factors such as the pandemic and industrial action in the data reports. This context can help to indicate which students are most affected by emergency regulations. It was highlighted that this can also be evidenced through concessions which are approved by APRC.

The Committee discussed key demographics and the related data in the report. It was noted that there are significant awarding gaps when ethnicity markers are applied although the gap is less pronounced for UK-domiciled BAME students. It was questioned whether the ethnicity gap is more often experienced by international students and/or non-native-English speakers than UK-domiciled BAME students. Concerns were also raised for Scottish students who experience an awarding gap compared to English students and it was questioned whether the University curriculum is more aligned with the English school-level curriculum rather than the Scottish system. There is a known gap with level 7 courses not being provided by the University, despite the Scottish Highers system only teaching up to level 6.

Members noted the importance of intersectional analysis and how this should best inform which actions and interventions to make and where these should be targeted. It was recognised that, between the Student Analytics team and academic staff specialising in data and statistics, there is a wealth of expertise to engage with intersectional data analysis and dive into more specific areas. There was caution, however, around ongoing data gathering and analysis and also around the potential small numbers and identifiable individuals at School or subject-level. The Data

Monitoring Task Group, which has now evolved into the Student Success Task Group (a subgroup of the Committee), considered many of the same questions, possibilities and limitations with the data. There must be focus on addressing the known awarding gaps and piloting targeted actions in the short-term, as well as long-term objectives around data collection and University systems to support this.

The Convener informed members that the Student Success Task Group is to hold two meetings in May 2026 and will consider this data analysis. The Task Group may identify Schools to take action in relation to their gaps and will monitor the impact of any interventions taken.

**Action: Convener and AQS to add the degree outcomes analysis to the agenda for the Student Success Task Group meeting.**

Committee members suggested some additional areas of focus for future data reports; analysis of students who have withdrawn and what awards they are leaving with, which may indicate some demographic trends, comparison of student offers against outcomes to understand if lower tariffs are a factor in awarding gaps and analysis of postgraduate taught data to illustrate the progression rates to PGT level.

**Action: Academic Planning colleagues to include additional areas of focus in future annual reports.**

## 6. Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy and Boards of Studies Terms of Reference (SQAC 25/26 4C)

A colleague from Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) was in attendance to present this paper. It had been considered at the February meeting of the Committee and feedback has been incorporated. The paper was brought back to the Committee for further comment and approval. Members were informed that the major changes threshold has been clarified and information on Competence Standards and related reasonable adjustments has been included in the policy after the author discussed this with the Bristol Case Working Group.

As agreed at the previous meeting, the Boards of Studies related guidance will be removed from the Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy (PCAM) and included in the Boards of Studies Terms of Reference (ToR). The paper author explained the process of approving the BoS changes through Court resolution, as Court is the owner of the piece. The BoS guidance will remain in the PCAM policy in the interim, to ensure it remains available to colleagues. It is expected that the changes to the BoS ToR will conclude in semester 1 2026/27.

Members discussed the reference to student involvement in the policy and suggested that clearer definition be given around this aspect in order to communicate to Schools the expected level of, and opportunities for, student engagement. On the matter of quorum within Boards of Studies, members highlighted the importance of maintaining sufficient academic expertise within decision-making boards and requested that language which specifies expertise on boards be retained. Further comments were received on the threshold to major changes applied to a programme, the information shared and stored on the Degree Regulations and Programmes of

Study site (DPRS) and the level of detail required in either course outlines or descriptors. It was recognised that courses within programmes may change throughout four years, particularly in fast-moving subject areas, but agreed that any changes must be communicated with students and that information must be made available in a timely manner.

The Committee noted the range of programme types available within the University including distance and online programmes and Transnational Education (TNE) and considered the extent to which the policy covered these types of provision. Discussion also addressed the need for clearer definition around non-credit bearing courses, particularly within the context of the Centre for Open Learning which provides pre-sessional teaching and in-sessional teaching to students, and PhD programmes with non-credit bearing integrated studies.

**Action: Senior Academic Quality and Standards Manager (Projects) to liaise with colleagues in the Centre for Open Learning to establish a helpful definition of non-credit bearing courses.**

It was agreed that the paper author would make the agreed changes as identified during discussion. The paper will be returned to the Committee for final approval once the changes have been incorporated.

**Action: Senior Academic Quality and Standards Manager (Projects) to update paper with agreed changes and submit to the Committee for final approval ahead of academic year 2026/27.**

## **7. External Examiners: Exceptional Appointments Report 2024/25 (SQAC 25/26 4D)**

This paper was presented by the Head of Academic Quality. The report detailed the exceptional External Examiner (EE) appointments made during 2023/24.

On behalf of CAHSS, the Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation shared that the College has received queries about two EEs from the same institution sitting on the same exam board within the University of Edinburgh. These individuals are not reviewing the same programmes and are not contradicting the EE policy, but it was flagged that this may become a more common occurrence as exam boards are condensed and as fewer EEs are available in the sector due to recruitment challenges. It was noted that the Office for Students, the regulator in England, has a different view of the EE role and therefore the University of Edinburgh must be mindful of drawing EEs from outside Scotland who may have a different understanding of this role.

The Dean of Quality and Enhancement for CSE informed the Committee that his College had issued some guidance and the experience and role of External Examiners to help address common queries within the College. There was a concern that there are discrepancies in the rates paid to EEs across the Colleges and that this has not been addressed at institutional level.

**Action: CSE College Quality Office to share College-issued EE guidance with QA colleagues in CAHSS and CMVM for their information.**

## **8. Any Other Business**

The Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation for CAHSS informed members that her term was ending in the role and she will be stepping down in the summer.

The Convener extended thanks to the EUSA VP Education for her contributions to the Committee throughout 2026/27 and her work across many other areas.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 14th May 2026 2-5pm in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and via Microsoft Teams.

## Senate Quality Assurance Committee

14/05/2026

### Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy

#### Description of paper

1. This paper presents the updated Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy. This supports Strategy 2030 by enhancing the quality of the student experience and by supporting user-friendly and efficient processes that encourage student participation and engagement in feedback.

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.	X
In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University's quality framework.	X
Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business.	X
Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.	X

#### Action requested / recommendation

2. Approve the new Student Staff Liaison Committee Policy.

#### Background and context

3. Student Voice is one of the University's lowest-performing areas in the National Student Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey.
4. In 2024/25, a baselining activity was undertaken to understand current Student Voice practice within Schools. This revealed a lack of clarity, consistency, and visibility in Student Voice activities/mechanisms.
5. Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) have been part of the University's student voice activity for many years. They provide a formal opportunity for student representatives and staff to discuss students' feedback on their experiences.
6. SSLCs are a core activity across Schools and Colleges, albeit in different formats, therefore were identified as a priority area to address through a refreshed policy.
7. Consultation has been undertaken with the Student Voice User Group, which encompasses representatives from each College and EUSA, as well as Professional Services and academic colleagues from Schools.

## Discussion

8. The policy sets out several changes designed to enhance SSLCs, improve reporting methods, instigate action and, ultimately, improve the student experience. Key changes or principles include:
  - a. Encourage SSLCs to be **co-chaired with a member of staff or chaired by students with support from staff** to demonstrate partnership working with the aim to balance power dynamics. It is recommended this be the Dean/Director of Quality and EUSA School Representative, to strengthen quality assurance of Student Voice activity (as specified in role outline) whilst allowing local flexibility.
  - b. Encourage Schools to **cluster their SSLCs in a way that is meaningful and sensible** in their local context (i.e. by Subject Area, Department, Year of Study, Honours and Pre-Honours etc.), and to move away from formal SSLCs for each individual course or programme.
  - c. An **indicative timeline** showing the flow of activities from student representative induction to mid-course feedback opportunities, to School-level SSLCs and College SSLCs, allowing filtering and escalation.
  - d. A standardised **recommended membership list** to ensure key student and staff stakeholders are members of the Committee consistently across Schools.
  - e. Designate the Director of Quality and EUSA School Representative **share responsibility for oversight of SSLCs** across the School.
  - f. **Introduce the [Student Feedback Action Log](#)**, where SSLC actions must be logged to identify and provide escalation routes for recurring issues, foster collaboration, and provide a bank of historical knowledge and context to students and staff.
  - g. Establish **expectations to close the feedback loop**, to ensure students know what changes are being implemented, and if they are not, gain an understanding of why
    - i. A [Closing the Feedback Loop Toolkit](#) was released during this academic year.
9. A draft toolkit is in development to provide operational detail on the requirements set out in the policy. This will be presented as a new page on the [Student Voice Portal](#), to allow ongoing editing and improvement in response to staff and student feedback.
10. Further guidance is in development to support Schools following feedback this year, including practical guidance on writing clear actions and specifying which actions should and should not be added to the Action Log.

## Resource implications

11. This policy aims to reconfigure existing planning work due to take place ahead of the new academic year. Adoption of the cluster/single SSLC model may present an opportunity to streamline meeting administration and refocus activity on actions and communication arising from students' feedback.
12. Many Schools maintain their own methods of tracking actions from SSLCs. Use of the Student Feedback Action Log is intended to constitute a change in practice, not to duplicate work already happening within Schools, with the central Action Log acting as the 'golden copy'. There may be some additional workload

required within Schools to collate actions from multiple SSLCs and to input the actions into the Log. The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling (SAIM) team are available to help Schools identify who is best placed within Schools to do this, and have changes in the pipeline to reduce the time required to add actions to the Log (such as through bulk uploading to the Log).

13. Members of SAIM are available to work with Schools to plan for and implement changes, including identifying who is best placed to take on specific roles and clarifying where existing practice aligns with the new policy.

### **Risk management**

14. It is acknowledged that there is a significant volume of change currently in train across the University, and this policy forms part of that change. However, it has been carefully calibrated to minimise the level of change required and to allow for significant local flexibility, while maintaining key principles and common touchpoints, such as use of the Student Feedback Action Log.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

15. This policy responds to SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all) by promoting opportunities for all students to engage with feedback mechanisms and improve the academic and wider student experience.

### **Equality & diversity**

16. An updated Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is provided as an appendix (Appendix 1).
17. This policy primarily has impacts on students and staff with disabilities, however provision is made in the policy to address barriers to participation.

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

18. The updated Student Voice Policy is pending approval by SQAC, and the draft Student Voice Charter and Framework are also pending approval by Student Lifecycle Management Group. Should all be approved, the Student Voice team will ensure they are aligned and contain the relevant links and references.
19. Members of SAIM will prepare a communication in consultation with the Student Voice User Group, which includes members from the three Colleges. This will be issued, with an offer for Schools to meet with the team over the summer to discuss how best to support them in implementing any changes to their current practice as required.

#### **Author**

*Callum Paterson  
Design Lead – Student Voice (Student Analytics, Insights, and Modelling / Registry Services)*

*Marianne Brown*

#### **Presenter**

*Callum Paterson  
Design Lead – Student Voice (Student Analytics, Insights, and Modelling / Registry Services)*

*Marianne Brown*

*Head of Academic Planning (Registry  
Services)*

*Head of Academic Planning (Registry  
Services)*

23/04/2026

**Freedom of Information**  
Open



# Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy

## Purpose of Policy

To set out the operation of School and College Student-Staff Liaison Committees.

## Overview

Student-Staff Liaison Committees are a core element of student voice activity, and this policy sets out minimum expectations for how and when they should operate, including how actions arising from student feedback should be logged.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

This policy applies to all students and staff involved in Student-Staff Liaison Committees for taught provision across the University.

## Contact Officer

Academic Quality

[academic.quality@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academic.quality@ed.ac.uk)

## Document control

Dates	Approved: TBC	Starts: 01.08.2026	Equality impact assessment: 23.04.2026	Amendments: N/A	Next Review: 2026/2027
-------	------------------	-----------------------	---	--------------------	---------------------------

## Approving authority

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

## Consultation undertaken

Student Voice User Group (includes academic and professional services representatives from each College, and the Students' Association); selection of academic and professional services colleagues from Schools across the University

## Section responsible for policy maintenance & review

Student Analytics, Insights, and Modelling

## Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

Student Voice Policy ([new link to be added once approved](#))  
Student-Staff Liaison Committee Toolkit ([link to be added](#))  
[Student Voice Portal](#)  
[EUSA Student Voice](#)

## UK Quality Code

In line with the UK Quality Code 2024, particularly Principle 2 (Engaging students as partners) and Principle 5 (Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision)

## Policies superseded by this policy

Previous Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy (2021/2022)

## Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format please email [Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk).

## Keywords

SSLC; student voice; student representatives; feedback; closing the feedback loop



# Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy

---

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy outlines the expectations of Schools, Colleges, and the Students' Association in the operation of Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) and reporting of information arising from them. It aims to clarify how SSLCs fit into the University's student voice structure, alongside the Student Voice Charter, Framework, and Policy.
- 1.2. This policy sets out the minimum expectations which Schools and Colleges must follow. Schools and Colleges are encouraged to make enhancements based on emerging best practice, innovation, or a desire to experiment, and successful innovations should be shared as part of Committee reporting (see Section 7).
- 1.3. In addition to this policy, each SSLC must have its own Terms of Reference (see Section 5).

## 2. Principles

- 2.1. SSLCs are a formal mechanism for discussion and communication between student representatives and staff. They cover matters connected with improving learning, teaching, assessment and feedback, and the wider student experience.
- 2.2. SSLCs must:
  - Be student-centred
  - Promote and facilitate student leadership, for example by having a student chair or co-chair
  - Be a constructive environment based on two-way communication
  - Be enhancement-focused, with all members encouraged to propose and co-create actions or solutions to problems
  - Maintain transparency, escalating or deferring items that are out of its remit to other relevant committees or services
  - Be accountable and provide transparent and timely updates to students on actions, resolutions, and ongoing issues which require focus year on year (commonly referred to as [Closing the Feedback Loop](#))
- 2.3. Meeting organisers (usually the Chairs and/or Committee Secretary) are responsible for determining appropriate mechanisms to ensure all student representatives can participate in their SSLC. They should: ensure SSLCs are scheduled for when the majority of student members can attend, meet accessibility requirements wherever possible, and be open to adapting existing practices to ensure the SSLC is inclusive of all members.



# Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy

## 3. Timeline

- 3.1. For SSLCs to function most effectively and efficiently within the Academic Year and other student voice activities, and provide the greatest opportunity to enhance both the academic and wider student experience, they are expected to take place within an indicative timeline (Table 1).
- 3.2. It is acknowledged that there are courses, programmes, and Schools which may not be able to follow this precisely due to having non-standard academic years or that there may be exceptional cases where the timeline is not possible to follow. However, Schools and Colleges should always endeavour to maintain the flow of activities so relevant feedback and actions can be considered and escalated as required. Any changes to the timeline must be communicated to members of the Committee other relevant parties as soon as possible.

**Table 1: Indicative Timeline for Student Voice Activity**

Note: this timeline applies to Semester 1. In Semester 2, there is no student representative recruitment or training, and it also contains Flexible Learning Week, so the timeline may shift as determined by the School. College SSLCs will still take place in Week 10-11, which provides a guide for when Schools should complete Semester 2 SSLCs.

Week	Activity	Responsibility
W0-2	Recruiting student representatives	School teams, Programme Directors, EUSA
W2-3	Registering student representatives with EUSA	School teams
W3-5	Training student representatives	EUSA, with any additional School-specific training coordinated by Schools
W4-6	Mid-semester course or programme feedback opportunities (if offered) and student representative-coordinated feedback	Course Organisers, Programme Directors, student representatives
W5-8	Mid-semester feedback results shared with relevant staff and student representatives	Course Organisers, Programme Directors, School teams
	Review feedback and seek further clarification from students as needed	Student representatives, Course Organisers, (and/or Programme Directors and School teams if operating a centralised system)
	Escalate wider issues, issues which cannot be resolved at course or programme level, or those which would benefit from further discussion to the SSLC	Student representatives, Course Organisers, Programme Directors



# Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy

	School SSLCs (may be School-level or in Clusters; see Section 6)	School Representative, Director of Quality, SSLC Committee Secretary
W7-9	Acknowledgement and/or response to course-level feedback	Course Organisers and/or Programme Directors
	Add actions to the Student Feedback Action Log, in line with provided guidance	SSLC Chairs, Committee Secretary
	Share outcomes and actions of SSLC with relevant students and staff	SSLC Chairs, Committee Secretary
W10-11	College SSLC	CSSLC Chairs (Dean of Quality and a School Representative), Committee Secretary
W11-12	Share College SSLC minutes with CSSLC members and other relevant staff and students	Committee Secretary
	Add actions to the Student Feedback Action Log	College SSLC Chairs, Committee Secretary
After College SSLC	Share action updates with Committee members and other relevant staff and students	College SSLC Chairs, Committee Secretary

## 4. Membership

4.1. Recommended SSLC membership is as follows in Table 2. It is acknowledged that there are variations in role titles and responsibilities across the University so Schools and Colleges should substitute in equivalent roles in their SSLC Terms of Reference as appropriate.

**Table 2: Recommended SSLC Membership**

School/Cluster SSLC	College SSLC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EUSA School Representative(s), or delegate (<b>Co-Chair</b>)</li> <li>Director of Quality, or delegate (<b>Co-Chair</b>)</li> <li>EUSA Programme Representatives</li> <li>Director of Students</li> <li>At least one of: Director of Teaching, Director of UG/PG, Head of Department/Subject Area, Programme Directors for programmes within the cluster</li> <li>At least one member of Professional Services staff (this may include the Teaching Office, Academic/Student Administration, Student Experience/Development, Student Support,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EUSA School Representatives from each School within the College (<b>one of whom as Co-Chair</b>)</li> <li>Dean of Quality Assurance, or delegate (<b>Co-Chair</b>)</li> <li>Dean of Education</li> <li>Dean of Students</li> <li>Director of Academic/Student Administration</li> <li>A member of Professional Services staff, usually a member of the College Quality Assurance team (<b>Committee Secretary</b>)</li> </ul>



# Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy

Quality Assurance, or other) ( <b>Committee Secretary</b> )	
---	--

- 4.2. To demonstrate the principle of student-staff partnership, SSLCs are encouraged to adopt a co-chair model with a student and a member of staff. Where a student representative is comfortable doing so, they may wish to chair the SSLC alone with support and facilitation from a member of staff. The Students' Association will provide training on effective chairing of meetings for School and Programme Representatives who chair meetings.
- 4.3. The School Representative(s) and Director of Quality share responsibility for ensuring SSLCs in their School operate effectively. By default, it is recommended they co-chair SSLCs in the School. However, where the School holds multiple Cluster SSLCs and this is impractical, they are encouraged to delegate chairing to, for example, a Programme Representative and Programme Director (or equivalent) or another member of academic leadership.
- 4.4. Where the School Representative and Director of Quality do not co-chair SSLCs in the School, they must receive meeting notes and actions from each SSLC, ensure they are operating effectively, and identify urgent or recurring topics across the School for action or escalation as required.
- 4.5. For College SSLCs, Colleges will run a fair and transparent process to appoint or elect a School Representative to act as co-chair. If they wish, at the beginning of the academic year they may request that the Students' Association undertake this on their behalf.
- 4.6. All members should attend each meeting. Where a member cannot attend the meeting, they should endeavour to either: collaborate with other members and ask them to raise items on their behalf; send their comments to the Committee Secretary ahead of the meeting; or send a delegate on their behalf.
- 4.7. Where appropriate, the Committee may agree that other members of the student or staff body be added as permanent members. However, care should be taken to ensure staff membership does not exceed that of students.

## 5. Remit

- 5.1. SSLCs must have a written Terms of Reference based on the template provided, which sets out the remit and membership of the Committee and its position in relation to other School or College Committees or forums. This must be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate.
- 5.2. Regular agenda items for an SSLC should include:
  - Examples of good practice in courses, programmes, or Schools which have potential to be expanded
  - Matters relating to learning and teaching, as well as the wider student experience
  - Actions, issues, discussion points, or themes arising from student feedback, including mid- or end-of course feedback, feedback received by student



# Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy

---

representatives, and [University-level student surveys](#), particularly if unresolved or they are of significance beyond an individual course or programme

- [For College SSLCs] Actions, issues, or discussion points escalated from School-level SSLCs which the College has either responsibility or ownership over, or has an interest in
- Specific items requested by SSLC members (see Section 6.6)

5.3. Additional matters on the agenda for an SSLC may include, but are not limited to:

- Other matters which the School or College have ownership of, such as local policy, strategy, or guidance
- Matters which have arisen in other Committees or forums and may benefit from further consultation with student representatives
- School or College Annual Quality reports
- Consultation with student representatives on proposed changes to courses or programmes (see [Programme and Course Approval and Management Policy](#))
- Themes arising from External Examiner reports (see Section 61.1 in the [External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy](#))
- Internal Periodic Review preparation or outcome reports, as appropriate
- Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation outcome reports, as appropriate

5.4. Discussion should, where possible, be depersonalised, objective, and issue-based rather than directed at named individuals.

5.5. While all issues raised should be given due consideration, the Chairs should determine whether it is more appropriate for newly arising issues to be noted for follow up outside of the meeting.

## 6. Operation of SSLCs

6.1. As structures and systems vary within and between Schools and Colleges, the format of SSLCs may also be different to reflect this. Generally, SSLCs should be time-bound meetings but in rare circumstances some Schools may consider running an SSLC as an asynchronous process, for example if the attendees are predominantly distance-learning or part-time students.

6.2. Schools should hold SSLCs in Clusters; i.e., groupings which are the most meaningful and manageable. For smaller Schools, this may mean holding a single School-wide SSLC while for larger Schools this may mean clustering SSLCs by Department, Subject Area, Year of Study, Pre-Honours and Honours, or other local criteria.

6.3. Schools should condense SSLCs into as few Cluster SSLCs as possible, while maintaining the value of the meetings and not having them be so large that they do not allow for meaningful discussion. Schools should not hold formal SSLCs for each individual course or programme, unless specified in Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body requirements, to encourage identifying shared issues as a complement to specific course-level improvements, and to manage staff and student time commitments.



# Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy

---

- 6.4. At minimum, each SSLC should meet once per semester, ideally in enough time to escalate items to other committees or the College SSLC (which takes place in Week 10-11). Additional SSLCs or informal meetings may take place as needed and should, where possible, take place to allow escalation within the timeline shown in Table 1.
- 6.5. Meetings should be scheduled as far in advance as possible, ideally as soon as student representatives have been recruited. At the latest, they should be scheduled with at least 2 weeks' notice to attendees.
- 6.6. Each SSLC must have an agenda, based on the template provided. All members should be given equal opportunity to request agenda items to be added ahead of the meeting, either through an agenda-setting meeting or asynchronous process coordinated by the Chairs and/or Committee Secretary.
- 6.7. The agenda and any papers should be made available to all members at least one week before the SSLC meeting to allow further information gathering or consultation.
- 6.8. Schools are responsible for facilitating connections between student representatives and the students they represent. See [Guidance for Schools regarding communication between student representatives and students](#).
- 6.9. A member of the Committee should be appointed to produce a note of the meeting, often the Committee Secretary. This does not have to be a formal minute, and the key focus should be on recording the actions agreed by members.
- 6.10. The notes should be shared with members within 2 weeks of the meeting, with an opportunity to comment, request changes, and confirm the actions recorded are as agreed. The SSLC's Terms of Reference should set out the means of approving the notes of the meeting.
- 6.11. Once notes are approved, actions must be added to the [Student Feedback Action Log](#) within 2 weeks, in line with action logging guidance provided. A copy of any notes of the meeting must also be uploaded to any relevant School or College sites.



# Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy

---

## 7. Communication

- 7.1. Action progress should be updated regularly on the Student Feedback Action Log, and communicated to SSLC members as appropriate.
- 7.2. Within 2 weeks of the notes of the meeting being approved, relevant students and staff must be informed of the outcomes of the SSLC. This may include providing a summary of actions to School and College stakeholders for further cascading.
- 7.3. Action Owners should aim to acknowledge any actions assigned to them as soon as possible and provide regular updates on progress either directly in the Student Feedback Action Log or to the Committee Secretary or Chairs.
- 7.4. Ideally within the same semester, and at least before the next SSLC, the Committee Secretary should seek to summarise progress on actions and share this with Committee members and other key student and staff stakeholders. Actions which are not progressing, without a clear explanation as to why, should be escalated to a relevant senior member of staff (for example, the Head of School/College, Head of Service, or a member of the University Senior Leadership Team).
- 7.5. Closing the Feedback Loop with students is a core part of ensuring they have confidence that their feedback is both valued and being acted on. Students should be informed of action progress and also given clear explanations where an action cannot immediately progress (for example, due to constraints around professional or accreditation requirements, or University-level policy/regulation) so they know their feedback has been fully considered. This is a shared responsibility between student representatives and staff, and they are encouraged to collaborate on any student-facing communications. A [Closing the Feedback Loop Toolkit](#) is available to support this.
- 7.6. Each SSLC meeting should close with time for members to reflect on the meeting's operation, to highlight good practice and identify areas for improvement. Additional feedback from members may also be sought after the final meeting of the academic year. For Schools, these reflections and planned improvements should be noted in their Annual Quality Report, which accounts for activity related to, and effectiveness of, student voice mechanisms within the School.

**Last approved/amended: TBC**

**Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

**14 May 2026**

**Student Voice Policy**

**Description of paper**

1. The Student Voice Policy outlines the University of Edinburgh’s commitment, approach and external regulatory requirements to provide opportunities for students to inform and feedback on their student learning experience, and for the University to listen, act, and respond.
2. This supports Strategy 2030 by enhancing the quality of the student experience and by supporting user-friendly and efficient processes that encourage student participation and engagement in feedback across their course, programme and the wider institution.

Fit with remit:

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

**Action requested / recommendation**

3. To approve the interim update to the Student Voice Policy.

**Background and context**

4. The current Student Voice Policy was written in 2020/21 and was due for review in 2024/25. This was paused while the student voice baselining activity was undertaken.
5. The purpose of this paper is to provide an interim update to the policy to ensure that this is reflective of current practice at an institutional-level and changes in the external quality assurance landscape.
6. A more substantial review and update of the policy will be completed by the end of 2026/27.

7. Consultation on these interim changes has been undertaken with the Students' Association, Academic Quality and Standards, and the Vice Principal Students (Engagement).

### **Discussion**

8. Changes to note in the Student Voice Policy are:
  - a. Adding reference to the **Learning & Teaching Strategy 2030**, and how student voice is positioned within this;
  - b. The role of the **Student Partnership Agreement** and how this supports the delivery of student voice;
  - c. Adding reference to the **UK Quality Code for Higher Education Revision in 2024**, with extension to the **Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)**;
  - d. The sparqs **Student Learning Experience (SLE)** model and **Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership** are also now explicitly mentioned, with the aim of encouraging colleagues to use these external resources;
  - e. Adding the existing responsibilities of **Deans of Quality and Directors of Quality** to the 'Roles and Responsibilities' section.
9. It should also be noted to the committee that there is recognition that whilst this is an interim version of the policy with minor revisions, a longer-term overhaul that will involve a wider consultation activity with students and staff will be needed.
10. In adding these minor changes, a small selection of colleagues were involved in providing feedback to Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling (SAIM) team, EUSA, and the Deputy Vice Principal Students (Engagement).

### **Resource implications**

11. This does not have any significant resource implications, as the policy remains in place, subject to minor changes that reflect existing and emerging practice.

### **Risk management**

12. There is a small but manageable communications risk around making interim changes to the policy ahead of a thorough review over the next academic year., as this adds to the general sense of change across the University. However, it is felt that it is appropriate to make these changes now given they are minor and are largely intended to bring the policy into line with institutional changes and those in the external regulatory environment.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

13. This policy aligns with the SDG 4, as it considers the role of student voice and its mechanisms to enable equitable and inclusive access to opportunities for feedback on the student learning experience across the institution.

**Equality & diversity**

14. The policy aims to set out mechanisms by which all students can be given the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience.
15. It is acknowledged that further work must be undertaken to ensure students from marginalised or historically underrepresented backgrounds have equitable access to feedback opportunities, and this will form part of the review of the policy.

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

16. The new Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy is pending approval by SQAC, and the draft Student Voice Charter and Framework are also pending approval by Student Lifecycle Management Group. Should all be approved, the Student Voice team will ensure documents align and contain the relevant links.
17. Members of SAIM will prepare a communication on all four documents in consultation with the Student Voice User Group, which includes members from the three Colleges. This will be sent as soon as possible, with an offer for Schools to meet with the team over the summer to discuss how best to support them in implementing any changes to their current practice as required.

**Author**

*Connel Greenhorn  
Project Officer – Student Voice (Student Analytics, Insights, and Modelling / Registry Services)*

*Callum Paterson  
Design Lead – Student Voice (Student Analytics, Insights, and Modelling / Registry Services)*

*Marianne Brown  
Head of Academic Planning (Registry Services)*

*Date: 23/04/2026*

**Presenter**

*Callum Paterson  
Design Lead – Student Voice (Student Analytics, Insights, and Modelling / Registry Services)*

*Marianne Brown  
Head of Academic Planning (Registry Services)*

**Freedom of Information**

*Open*



# Student Voice Policy

## Purpose of Policy

The Student Voice Policy outlines the University of Edinburgh's strategic commitment and approach to engaging students as partners in their student learning experience, aligned with external regulatory expectations.

## Overview

The Student Voice Policy illustrates the importance of provide dialogic opportunities for students to feedback on their student learning experience. It is essential that all students have equitable opportunities to reflect on and evaluate their experiences at a Course, School and University-wide level. This policy sets out core principles of student voice at the University, followed by the responsibilities of our students and staff in providing and actioning feedback, supported by resources and developments at a sector-wide level.

## Scope: Mandatory Policy

This policy is University-wide and seeks to set out the principles and expectations of student voice across learning and teaching staff; professional services colleagues and the student body, covering undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research provision.

## Contact Officer

Academic Quality

academic.quality@ed.ac.uk

## Document control

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Approved:</b> 20.05.2021	<b>Starts:</b> 01.08.2021	<b>Equality impact assessment:</b> 23.04.2026	<b>Amendments:</b> 14.05.2026	<b>Next Review:</b> 2026/2027
<b>Approving authority</b>	Senate Quality Assurance Committee				
<b>Consultation undertaken</b>	Edinburgh University Students' Association; Deputy Vice Principal Students (Engagement); Academic Quality and Standards.				
<b>Section responsible for policy maintenance &amp; review</b>	Student Analytics, Insights & Modelling				
<b>Related policies, procedures, guidelines &amp; regulations</b>	<a href="#">Student Voice Portal</a> <a href="#">EUSA Student Voice</a> Student Staff Liaison Committee Policy (link to be added once approved) <a href="#">Dignity and Respect Policy</a> <a href="#">Data Protection Policy</a>				
<b>UK Quality Code</b>	In line with the UK Quality Code 2024, particularly Principle 2 (Engaging students as partners), Principle 4 (Using data to inform and evaluate quality), and Principle 5 (Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision)				
<b>Policies superseded by this policy</b>					
<b>Alternative format</b>	If you require this document in an alternative format please email <a href="mailto:Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk">Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk</a> .				
<b>Keywords</b>	Feedback; dialogue; surveys; experience				



# Student Voice Policy

---

## 1. Introduction

1.1 The University has a clear commitment to upholding excellence in learning, teaching and assessment, all whilst enhancing the student experience at all levels of study and across all degree programmes.

1.2 To maintain and enhance a high-quality student experience, it is essential that all students have a range of opportunities to reflect and provide feedback on their experiences of academic study and support services. The University will engage with students through a variety of mechanisms with a view to learning from and responding to their feedback individually, collectively, and through their elected student representatives.

1.3 The University is committed to working in partnership with students and this is articulated at the highest level in the [University's Strategy 2030](#). The University will work closely with the Students' Association to:

- Ensure that students are central to governance and decision making.
- Ensure that students are central to quality assurance and enhancement.
- Provide opportunities for students to become active participants in their learning.
- Foster collaboration between students and staff.

1.4 The University is also committed to engaging and empowering learners as outlined in our [Learning & Teaching Strategy 2030](#), whereby amplifying the student voice and providing platforms to influence and inform decision-making ensure student feedback is at the heart of improving the student experience.

1.5 The [Student Partnership Agreement](#), which states how the University and the Students' Association will work together to enhance the student experience on a rotating, annual basis, is a strategic document that captures what areas are jointly agreed priorities and what projects can be developed to support their delivery.

1.6 Throughout this policy, 'student experience' refers to and encompasses learning, teaching, assessment, and the wider student experiences of, for example, student support services. By its nature, experience is subjective and context specific.

1.7 The University recognises that students are not a homogenous group. All conversations with students should recognise that our student body is diverse and that students will have varied views on issues. When collecting feedback from students, all colleagues should ensure that conversations are inclusive and enable all students to participate so that the breadth of student voice can be captured.

## 2. Quality Assurance Agency & Scottish Funding Council Expectations

2.1 The UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024 is a sector-wide reference point, setting out the expectation that students are actively engaged, individually and collectively, in the quality of their student learning experience. This adopts a strategic approach to ensure that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) engage students in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their student learning experience.



# Student Voice Policy

2.2 The [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework](#) (TQEF) is a shared set of principles, mechanisms and outputs that require the University to demonstrate, and provide assurance, that academic standards and the quality of the student experience are aligned with sector standards. This includes student engagement and partnership, whereby students must be key partners in their learning experience, have the opportunity and access to offer student voice, and experience responsiveness to student feedback.

2.3 The [Student Learning Experience](#) (SLE) model and [Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership](#) are frameworks owned by Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs) and can be used by staff and student representatives to support the facilitation of effective and engaging dialogue on the student learning experience.

2.4 The University is committed to ensuring that student voice mechanisms are an essential part of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework. Student feedback is therefore an important counterpart to other quality measures such as summative assessment, career destinations, the professional accreditation of programmes, and the professional recognition of staff.

2.5 The Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) is a key part of the University's Quality Framework and ensures compliance with external quality assurance and enhancement standards. Schools and Colleges are required to report on student feedback and actions taken in response through their Annual Quality Reports and via Internal Periodic Reviews, which also includes reflection on the effectiveness of the school's approach to student voice activities.

## 3. Underlying principles for student voice activities

1. **Be enhancement-focused:** Ensuring each student has a voice, whether via representation or other feedback mechanisms, enables students to be co-creators of an improved educational experience.
2. **Include all students:** It is essential that student representation and feedback activities be inclusive and accessible to all.
3. **Celebrate and share positive practice as well as identify areas for improvement:** Representation and feedback should be valued by all as opportunities to celebrate strengths as well as to identify and share concerns, and student voice activities should enable both to be captured.
4. **Involve students in the co-creation of feedback mechanisms:** To ensure greater engagement by students, and open, honest and balanced feedback, students should, as far as possible, be given opportunities to collaborate in the design and delivery of feedback activities<sup>3</sup>. Students should be made aware of the opportunities they will have to give feedback.
5. **Adhere to ethical standards and be conducted with dignity and respect:** Feedback mechanisms must adhere to ethical standards, and feedback should be given and received in accordance with the [Dignity and Respect Policy](#). Students should be free to give honest feedback with no undue influence.
6. **Adhere to data protection regulation:** Any activities that involve the gathering and storing



# Student Voice Policy

of data must adhere to the [Data Protection Policy](#). This includes ensuring the use of compliant software (such as survey and polling tools). Where feedback results are shared, steps should be taken to protect respondent anonymity unless the student or students have consented to share their feedback without anonymity.

7. **Be transparent:** When feedback is collected from students, it should be made clear why it is being collected, what will be done with it, how it will be used and by whom. There should be clearly outlined escalation routes for when feedback cannot be responded to directly. When decisions are made, or changes are affected because of student feedback, this should be highlighted.
8. **Be considered and responded to:** Students should be made aware of the information gathered, the conclusions drawn and, where relevant, the actions taken and why. Feedback may not automatically lead to change or action but should always result in a response and explanation.

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

The table below sets out who is ultimately responsible for various elements of student voice activity, however specific activities may be delegated to others within Schools and Colleges.

Role	Responsibilities
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give open and constructive feedback</li> <li>• Ensure feedback is in line with the University's Dignity and Respect Policy</li> </ul>
Course Organisers/ Programme Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer at least one opportunity for students to provide feedback on their course each year</li> <li>• Ensure that all students have an opportunity to provide feedback</li> <li>• Engage with students in the design of feedback collection and explain how students can provide feedback on their course</li> <li>• Listen to student feedback and let students know how their feedback has or has not been acted on and why</li> </ul>
Heads of School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set out the school's approach to collecting course, programme and School level feedback, ensuring that the principles in this Policy are followed</li> <li>• Ensure that all students are offered appropriate ways of providing feedback at course, programme and School level</li> <li>• Ensure that students are engaged in the design of feedback processes</li> <li>• Ensure that School approaches to student feedback are reported and reflected on in the School's Annual Quality Report</li> </ul>
Deans of Quality and Directors of Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote, develop and review the effectiveness of student engagement in quality processes within the school, including working with student representatives and ensuring effective Student-Staff Liaison Committees</li> <li>• To advise School colleagues on effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from students on their learning experience, ensuring alignment with university requirements.</li> </ul>



# Student Voice Policy

Senate Quality Assurance Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that there are a range of appropriate ways for students to provide feedback</li> <li>• Review School and College Annual Quality Reports to ensure student voice activities are in line with the expectations in this Policy</li> </ul>
School and College Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide fora for sharing best practice and resources</li> <li>• Advise on areas for development</li> </ul>

## 5. How can students expect to be able to provide feedback?

This list is not exhaustive but indicates some of the key mechanisms used across the University.

Method	Description
Course feedback	All courses should offer at least one opportunity for students to provide feedback. This can be in the middle of the course, towards the end, or both.
Student representatives on committees, including Student–Staff Liaison Committee	All appropriate School, College and University committees include student members who are supported to enable meaningful student participation.
School-specific channels	Schools may offer Town Hall meetings or other opportunities to provide feedback on School-specific issues.
<a href="#">University-wide surveys</a>	Annual surveys offer an opportunity to provide feedback on a range of issues and more general feedback on how the University is doing. All feedback is anonymised and respondent anonymity is protected in published results.
<a href="#">Student Panel</a>	Participation enables students to provide feedback on specific questions and to shape service design and delivery.

## 6. Monitoring student voice activities

6.1 All Schools are expected to set out their approach to course, programme and School-level student voice activities. It is good practice for these approaches to be agreed with student representatives as part of routine partnership working and discussions in SSLCs. Schools should report on their approaches, their effectiveness, and planned improvements to student voice activities in their Annual Quality Report.

**Last approved/amended: TBC**



# Policy Title

## Senate Quality Assurance Committee

14 May 2026

### Internal Periodic Review: Forward Schedule 2026-2032

#### Description of paper

1. The paper proposes changes to the schedule for Internal Periodic Reviews. The paper does not contribute to Strategy 2030 outcomes; it relates to a regulatory requirement.

#### 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
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

#### Action requested / recommendation

2. For discussion and approval of the revised schedule.

#### Background and context

3. Existing requirements for institution-led reviews are that all aspects of provision are expected to be reviewed systematically and rigorously on a cycle of not more than six years, as set out in the Scottish Funding Council's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF).

#### Discussion

4. A number of changes are proposed to the IPR schedule, largely informed by the new structure within the College of Medicine and Veterinary medicine and the changes to their Schools and Deaneries.
5. CMVM now comprises of six schools; Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, Edinburgh Medical School, School of Genetics and Cancer, School of Population Health Sciences, School of Regeneration and Repair and School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences. R(D)SVS and EMS have undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision; the remaining 4 Schools have postgraduate research provision only.
6. Other Schools have requested changes to align with their own review activity or externally accredited activity. The Bayes Centre will move from a single programme review to a Centre-wide review as its provision has developed.
7. The specific changes are detailed below:

School	Proposed Change	Proposed Review Year	SFC approval required
Edinburgh Medical School - <a href="#">Clinical Education programme</a> (online delivery)	Postponement of the Clinical Education IPR (single programme) from the scheduled academic year 26/27 so that it aligns with the review of rest of the School's teaching portfolio.	2029/30	Yes – review of this provision would be postponed beyond the six-year cycle
School of Genetics and Cancer (postgraduate research provision)	Preference to move from College-wide PGR review to School-specific PGR reviews.  This will be the first review of this School.	2029/30	No
School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences (postgraduate research provision)	Preference to move from College-wide PGR review to School-specific PGR reviews.  This will be the first review of this School.	2030/31	No
School of Regeneration and Repair (postgraduate research provision)	Preference to move from College-wide PGR review to School-specific PGR reviews.  This will be the first review of this School.	2030/31	No
School of Population Health Sciences (postgraduate research provision)	Preference to move from College-wide PGR review to School-specific PGR reviews.  This will be the first review of this School.	2030/31	No
Edinburgh Medical School (postgraduate research provision)	Preference to move from College-wide PGR review to School-specific PGR reviews.  School preference is to have UG, PGT and PGR	2030/31	No

	reviews conducted separately and thematically.		
The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (postgraduate research provision)	<p>Preference to move from College-wide PGR review to School-specific PGR reviews.</p> <p>School preference is to have UG, PGT and PGR reviews conducted separately. These areas are taught and administered separately and combining reviews is felt to be disadvantageous.</p>	2029/30	No
School of Law (all provision)	School seeking to bring review forward from 2027/28 to 2026/27. This would align with their UG Curriculum Review activity and align with their plans to have proposed programme changes fully reaccredited by the Law Society at the same time.	2026/27	No
Bayes Centre	<p>The Centre has developed their offering from a single programme (as reviewed in 2021/22) to three interdisciplinary degree programmes.</p> <p>Therefore, the IPR will cover the Bayes Centre (Postgraduate provision) rather than a single programme.</p>	2027/28	No

8. The Clinical Education programme, now located within the Edinburgh Medical School, is the only programme which requires an approved extension from the SFC. The School Director of Quality for EMS has outlined the School's approach for assuring quality and oversight of the programme in the meantime in an accompanying paper (SQAC 25/26 5X).

9. The revised schedule presents some challenges in managing reviews due to limited resources within the Academic Quality and Standards team. There is also additional workload required for Committee members and College QA colleagues in reviewing a large number of IPR reports (final IPR reports, 14 week reports and annual action plans which are all submitted to the Committee for approval).
10. The SFC advises that it is for institutions to determine the size and composition of the 'grouping' of subject areas and programmes. AQS work to guide Schools, as needed, in how to organise their IPRs across the levels of provision.
11. The Forward IPR Schedule (see appendix) shows reviews scheduled between 2026/27 – 2031/32, with the changes proposed above included.

### **Resource implications**

12. Managing IPRs is expected to be met from within existing Academic Quality and Standards resources (see 9 above). Participation in IPRs by Schools and Centres is expected to be met from within existing resources.

### **Risk management**

13. There are no risks associated with the proposals in the paper. Failure to review provision within the required timeframe would constitute an institutional risk.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

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

### **Equality & diversity**

15. There are no specific Equality and Diversity issues resulting directly from this paper. The Internal Periodic Review is a useful mechanism to help Schools explore challenges and enhancement activity with input from both students and external expertise, and this may address EDI considerations at School-level.

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

16. College Deans of Quality are asked to communicate the areas and the outcome of the discussion to relevant College committees.

#### **Author**

*Sinéad Docherty*  
*Academic Quality and Standards*  
*Manager*  
*Registry Services*

#### **Presenter**

*Brian Connolly*

**Freedom of Information Open**

**Appendix I****Internal Periodic Review forward schedule to 2031/32 (provisional)****2026/27**

- Business School (undergraduate provision)
- Edinburgh Futures Institute (undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision)
- History, Classics and Archaeology (all undergraduate provision)
- Informatics (undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision)
- Law (undergraduate, postgraduate taught & postgraduate research provision)
- Mathematics (postgraduate research provision)
- Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (postgraduate taught & postgraduate research provision)

**2027/28**

- Bayes Centre (postgraduate taught provision)
- Biological Sciences (postgraduate research provision)
- Biological Sciences (undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision)
- Divinity (postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision)
- Health in Social Science (including Nursing undergraduate provision, postgraduate taught & postgraduate research provision)
- The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (postgraduate taught provision)
- The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (undergraduate provision)

**2028/29**

- Business (postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision)
- GeoSciences (undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision)
- Economics (undergraduate provision, postgraduate research and postgraduate taught provision)
- Edinburgh College of Art (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision)
- History, Classics and Archaeology (postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision)
- Literatures, Languages and Cultures (all undergraduate provision)
- Maths (undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision)
- Moray House School of Education and Sport (all undergraduate provision)
- Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (all undergraduate provision)
- Physics and Astronomy (postgraduate research provision)

**2029/30**

- Chemistry (postgraduate research provision)
- Engineering (postgraduate research provision)
- Genetics and Cancer (postgraduate research provision)
- Medical School (undergraduate provision, including Zhejiang)
- Medical School (postgraduate taught provision, including Zhejiang)
- Physics and Astronomy (undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision)
- Social and Political Science (all undergraduate provision)
- The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (postgraduate research provision)

**2030/31**

- Engineering (undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision)
- GeoSciences (postgraduate research provision)
- Literatures, Languages and Cultures (postgraduate taught & postgraduate research provision)
- Medical School (postgraduate research provision)
- Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences (postgraduate research provision)
- Population Health Sciences (postgraduate research provision)
- Regeneration and Repair (postgraduate research provision)
- Social and Political Science (postgraduate research provision)

**2031/32**

- Centre for Open Learning (undergraduate provision)
- Chemistry (undergraduate & postgraduate taught provision)
- Divinity (undergraduate provision)
- Informatics (postgraduate research provision)
- Moray House School of Education and Sport (postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision)
- Social and Political Science (postgraduate taught provision)

**May 2026**

## Senate Quality Assurance Committee

14<sup>th</sup> May 2026

### Postponement of Internal Periodic Review for the Clinical Education (postgraduate taught provision)

#### Description of paper

1. Proposed amendment to the [Internal Period Review \(IPR\) schedule](#) for the [postgraduate taught programme in Clinical Education](#) so that it aligns to the rest of the Edinburgh Medical School (EMS) taught portfolio. The paper does not specifically contribute to Strategy 2030 outcomes as it results from a restructuring of Schools within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine.

#### 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
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

#### Action requested / recommendation

2. Discuss and approve the postponement of the Clinical Education IPR from the scheduled academic year 26/27, to the academic year 29/30, so that it aligns with the rest of the School's teaching portfolio. Following SQAC approval, a request is to be made to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) for their agreement on the postponement.

#### Background and context

3. The SFC requires all tertiary sector institutions to periodically review and evaluate their provision, on a periodic cycle of not more than six years, in line with the [TQEF Guidance](#). The University meets this requirement via the [Internal Periodic Review \(IPR\)](#) process. The last IPR for [Clinical Education](#) occurred in academic year 2020/21 ([Past IPR schedule](#)). The programme was reviewed alongside the [Clinical Educator programme](#). The next review of Clinical Education is scheduled for 2026/27 ([IPR Forward Schedule](#)). In 2020/21 Clinical Education was the only Postgraduate taught programme in the Edinburgh Medical School, sitting alongside the Clinical Educator programme and undergraduate medical programme. The undergraduate medical programme was last reviewed in 2023/24.

4. Since 2020/21, the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine completed a 2-year strategic restructuring project to form six new Schools. A new Edinburgh Medical School (EMS) was launched in August 2025 including not only Clinical

Education and Medicine (undergraduate provision) but also a larger portfolio of Undergraduate, Postgraduate taught and Postgraduate research programmes that previously sat in separate Deaneries/Schools: Biomedical Sciences, Clinical Sciences and Molecular, Genetic and Population of Health Sciences. The next IPR for all other taught provision in the new EMS are scheduled for 2029/2030, with Clinical Education being an outlier.

5. The discussion outlines: 1) the argument for reviewing all taught provision within EMS in one academic year, rather than having an IPR for Clinical Education in 2026/27 and IPR(s) for the remaining provision in 2029/30; 2) the demonstrated high quality of the programme as evidenced by commendations from the previous IPR, action taken to address recommendations from the previous IPR, feedback from the external examiner, PTES results, and outcomes from the recent EMS PGT portfolio review; and 3) the additional quality assurance oversight that will be put in place beyond the 6 year cycle until the next review takes place.

## **Discussion**

6. The newly formed Edinburgh Medical School established a working group in October 2025 to review the postgraduate portfolio, of a total of 32 programmes. The aim of the review was to build a cohesive, high-quality, financially viable postgraduate portfolio that reflects the School's research strengths and workforce impact. Programmes were required to submit detailed reports, demonstrating that they meet the School's research strengths and workforce impact and that they deliver high-quality learning that enhances the student experience. Provisional outcomes are that this programme will be retained as a core platform for School faculty development, CPD and educational leadership. Outcomes from the review have been approved at College level, with approval awaited from the University's Senior Leadership Team (expected May 2026).

7. The Clinical Education programme is well established in the EMS, having been established since 2006. The programme was part of the initial online PGT IPR which was run at a College level, then reviewed individually in 20/21. Currently 190 students are enrolled in the programme, representing 4% of all students across the School's portfolio. The programme offers two patterns of delivery and exit awards at Certificate, Diploma and Masters. The current structure of the programme involves delivery of learning over 13 courses ranging from 20 to 60 credits ([programme structure](#)). It is proposed that the suite of Clinical Education programmes be included within the Edinburgh Medical School IPR in 2029/30.

8. The review team's [report](#) following the 2020/21 IPR noted that Clinical Education had effective management of the quality of the student learning experience, academic standards, and enhancement and good practice. Commendations noted the following key strengths and areas of positive practice for sharing more widely across the institution:

- delivering quality provision with high levels of student satisfaction and international external recognition.
- demonstrable and well-evidenced high levels of student satisfaction and student experience, and the loyalty engendered to the programme.
- leadership of the director, excellent team-building achievements in very challenging circumstances around a strategic vision of how they want to see Clinical Education moving forward and strong underpinning values.
- the work of the academic staff and administrative staff on the programme.
- success in creating and maintaining communities of online learning and practice, recognising the flexibility and student-centeredness of the programme’s approaches and the attention to the diverse needs of students across career stage, specialism and geographical location.
- the external profile of academic staff on the programme and how deeply connected and embedded they are within online clinical and medical education communities.
- the collegiality of staff within the programme and their expert contribution the University’s ongoing pivot to online learning, going above and beyond within a context where staff are very hard-pressed.

Recommendations, and current status regarding recommendations since the last IPR, are summarised below. These are also detailed in the [14-week response report](#) and [year-on response report](#).

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Status</b>
<p><u>VLE Upgrade</u> Action is taken by the University’s Information Services Group to ensure that the technological architecture is not at odds with the University’s Teaching strategy or pedagogical principles.</p>	<p><u>Completed</u> Learn Ultra was rolled out across the University in 2023/24, delivering a better user experience. Continual enhancements are introduced as required, to meet staff and student needs.</p>
<p><u>Extensions and Special Circumstance.</u> Attention is directed towards addressing the needs of online and professional programmes to address concerns regarding the extensions and special circumstances system.</p>	<p><u>Completed</u> The University’s new Exceptional Circumstances Policy came into effect for the 2024/25 academic year, replacing the previous Coursework Extensions and Special Circumstances policies.</p> <p>Online, part-time students can access Exceptional Circumstances (ESC) services for unexpected, short-term issues affecting assessments. Programme teams may offer 7-day extensions, compared to the standard 4-day extension. Students can additionally receive specialised guidance from Student Advisers.</p>
<p><u>Flexibility in the MSc Year</u></p>	<p><u>Completed</u> ARPC approved a change to the MSc year three</p>

<p>Attention be given by APRC to enable greater flexibility in the 3rd year of the MSc Clinical Education programme in relation to considering the approval of alternatives to the final 60-credit project.</p>	<p>pathway, and a new model was introduced for AY22/23. The MSc year now consists of either: three assessed courses, a quality improvement project, or a dissertation research project.</p>
<p><u>Workload Allocation Model (WAM)</u> Action is taken to address the culture and practice of overworking within the Group through the development of a WAM.</p> <p><u>Enhanced Business Model</u> Action is taken by College regarding its business planning models, with clearer information around funding streams and resourcing models.</p> <p><u>Sustainable Staffing Model</u> Action is taken to create a develop a sustainable staffing model and administrative structure incorporating a team who are clear on their roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p><u>Ongoing</u></p> <p>Progress towards completion of all 3 actions has been delayed due of College restructuring (see Background and Context) and School review of the postgraduate portfolio.</p> <p><u>Current Status</u> College and School are working towards a wide WAM model for all staff. A business group has been established in the new School, working towards enhanced business models to support and grow the programme. Moves towards a centralised administrative service, led by the Director of Professional Services will address this issue providing a clear structure.</p> <p>Completion date is anticipated in 2026/27 and will be reported in annual monitoring reports for review by SQAC.</p>

9. High PTES scores and EE commendations demonstrate the existing and ongoing quality of the programme. 2025 PTES scores for the programme are shown in Table 1. Overall satisfaction results were 87.5%. These results place Clinical Education programmes as a leader in satisfaction across the School. The result for assessment and feedback was equally one of the highest compared to other programmes in the School. Although community was rated at only 52% this result is representative of a wider pattern across the institution. As detailed in the programme’s annual quality report for 2024/25, the programme team have refreshed the induction week to better address challenges related to students’ sense of community. Additionally, on the community aspect, with the restructuring of EMS, students from the Clinical Education programme will be included in a School wide online welcome week including a larger cohort of online PGT students. Ongoing work at University level to enhance the cohort lead model will also help to improve community challenges.

The results for the 2026 PTES will be carefully considered as part of ongoing QA monitoring to ensure that areas with good results maintain ongoing quality and that there is improvement in areas where results are lower than expected.

College	School	Programme	Theme	2025
MVM	Edinburgh Medical School	Clinical Education	Teaching and Learning	87.5%
			Engagement	80.0%
			Community	52.8%
			Assessment and Feedback	91.7%
			Organisation and Management	83.3%
			Online Learning Resources	93.1%
			Support	78.9%
			Skills Development	81.3%
			Student Support Services	79.2%
			Careers Support	60.9%
			Overall Satisfaction	87.5%

Table 1: Clinical Education 2025 PTES

The external examiner’s report from 2024/25 contains a number of commendations, including:

- Assessment process, “The standard of feedback across the courses remains very high”, “The assessment processes are thorough, fair and carefully considered”.
- Board of Examiners meetings “Special circumstances, instances of academic misconduct and borderline performance are considered and evaluated in a way that ensures fairness and follows University regulations.”
- Academic Standards “The academic rigor of the courses within the programmes, and their associated assessment practices, is very high. The courses are relevant and current and appropriately reflect the degree aims and objectives. There is an impressive range of assessments, and these enable students to demonstrate application of knowledge, critical thought, reflective- reflexive analyses, and overall understanding. Across course submitted work, there is a range of student competency, including evidence of excellent and potentially publishable work”.

In terms of recommendations to enhance the student learning experience on the programme, the external examiners suggested gaining consistency and standardisation in the amount of structured feedback provided by markers to students, particularly in the longer pieces of assessed work such as the dissertation component. Progress towards meeting this recommendation will be monitored and evaluated under the QA structure at School level.

10. During the 3 years delay, SQAC would have oversight and visibility of the quality considerations through annual programme reports and the annual School QA report as key mechanisms. During this time, the School Director of Quality Assurance will ensure that annual programme reports from the programme are directly reviewed by SQAC and that the programme will be more visible in the annual School QA report.

10. As part of the restructure of the School to include a wider portfolio of programmes, a new Director of Quality Assurance was appointed in January 2026 (Dr Susan Morrow). A School QAE committee and QA structure has been established, featuring a network of Quality Leads for sub-discipline of taught postgraduate, postgraduate, undergraduate biomedical sciences, and undergraduate medicine provision.

During the 3 years delay, the School's QA structure will ensure strengthened quality monitoring through a continuous enhancement model and light-touch annual internal review rather than relying on routine annual monitoring alone. In practice this will involve quality checks, overseen by the DQA, focusing on specific areas including:

- Board of Examiners: QA attendance at Board of Examiners meetings (including pre-meetings) to check compliance with policy and regulations.
- Student Voice: A representative from the School's QA team will attend programme level SSLC meetings to check that students are engaged in dialogue about their learning and wider experience of the University, and that there is evidence of closing the feedback loop.
- Student Support: QA overnight of data from student surveys, course feedback and SSLC meeting minutes to check alignment with the student support framework.
- GenAI: Course organisers will be required to complete of course impact forms each Term reporting on the use and impact of GenAI in learning and teaching.
- Assessment and Feedback: Annual QA spot checks/audits of assessment and feedback practices to ensure alignment with policy.

Following quality checks, areas identified for enhancement will be communicated with the programme team and any required actions and timelines will be agreed and documented. Progress towards addressing actions will be monitored annually, or more frequently if required. Where required, areas of concern will be escalated to appropriate areas (e.g. Director of Teaching, Head of School).

**Resource implications**

11. By streamlining the IPR schedule so that all taught provision is reviewed in one academic year, it is anticipated that there will be a saving in resource requirement.

**Risk management**

12. During the 3 years delay, the School would have oversight and visibility of the quality considerations through the School's streamlined QA structure. SQAC will have oversight and visibility of programme quality consideration through School level QA reports.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

13. This paper does not contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is responding to a QA 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://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/internal-review>

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

15. Academic Quality and Standards will seek approval from the SFC to postpone the programme's IPR by 3 years.

**Author**

Dr Susan Morrow  
Edinburgh Medical School Director of Quality  
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine  
29<sup>th</sup> April 2026

**Presenter(s)**

Professor Matthew Bailey  
College Dean of Quality  
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Brian Connolly  
Head of Academic Quality  
Academic Quality and Standards  
Registry Services

**Freedom of Information Open**

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact [academic.quality@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academic.quality@ed.ac.uk) or Academic Quality and Standards, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL.

## Senate Quality Assurance Committee

14 May 2026

### Taught External Examiner Reports: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Thematic Analysis 2024/25

#### Description of paper

1. The paper provides analysis of the annual College reports of the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS). It covers undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes for academic year 2024/25.
2. Fit with remit:

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

#### Action requested / recommendation

3. The Committee to note the report and identify any University-level actions (assigning to specific areas as appropriate).

#### Background and context

4. The University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy states that Colleges and the University's Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) use information from External Examiner reports to identify common themes to help shape their strategic approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement, and to enhance the student experience.
5. The UK Quality Code 2024 guiding principles on Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision state, "Providers regularly monitor and review their provision to secure academic standards and enhance quality. Deliberate steps are taken to engage and involve students, staff and external expertise in monitoring and evaluation activity. The outcomes and impact of these activities are considered at provider level to drive reflection and enhancement across the provider." The University's mapping to the Quality Code states in response that Academic Response coordinators in Schools are responsible for responding to External Examiner reports and that the Quality Assurance Committee receives a thematic report from Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught external examiner reporting. The Committee identifies any institutional actions. To note, the

University's mapping to the UK Quality Code is under review to align to the 2024 principles and will come to SQAC in due course.

6. Taking on feedback from previous EERS theme papers, the approach for the 24/25 academic year has transitioned from independent AQS analysis of the EERS comments, towards analysis of the College EERS reports to provide a more informed approach of key University themes arising. It is anticipated that there is more value in this targeted analysis of the College EERS reports at an institutional level, relating to specific University priorities.

### **Discussion**

7. See attached paper.

### **Resource implications**

8. The paper is a report on activity therefore there are no resource implications associated with it. Any actions taken by Schools and Colleges as a result of External Examiner reports are expected to be met from within existing resources.

### **Risk management**

9. The paper is a report on activity and no risks are identified.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

10. This paper does not contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals as it is fulfilling external compliance within the quality framework.

### **Equality & diversity**

11. The paper is a report on activity and an equality impact assessment is not required. Academic Quality and Standards has not identified any major equality impacts in relation to this report.

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

12. The Committee should consider implementation and communication of any agreed action. College representatives should ensure that the outcomes of the Committee's discussions are available for consideration by the relevant College Committees.

### **Author**

*Meg Batty, Academic Quality and Standards Manager*  
07 May 2026

### **Presenter**

*Brian Connolly*

### **Freedom of Information**

The paper is **open**.

## 1. Introduction

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS), College of Science and Engineering (CSE) and College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) completed a report analysing the comments received within the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) for Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) assessments across academic year 24/25. This paper provides a summary of the institutional themes for UG and PGT cohorts highlighted across these College reports. Analysing the College reports, it is apparent that there are common themes identified from the EERS that are applicable to both PGT and UG and these align to institution strategies and strands of work such as the review of the Boards of Examiners and Assessment and Feedback. The College reports can be found in Appendix 1-5.

## 2. Overview of the number of Undergraduate External Examiner Reports

2.1. Table 1 shows the total number of undergraduate reports by College compared with the previous academic year. Note: the data capture point was 4 May 2026 for 2024/25 and 3 March for 2023/24 and reflects information available in Academic Quality and Standards' PowerBI dashboard.

	2024/25	2023/24
College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)	140	136
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)	62	62
College of Science and Engineering (CSE)	38	32
Total number of reports	240	230

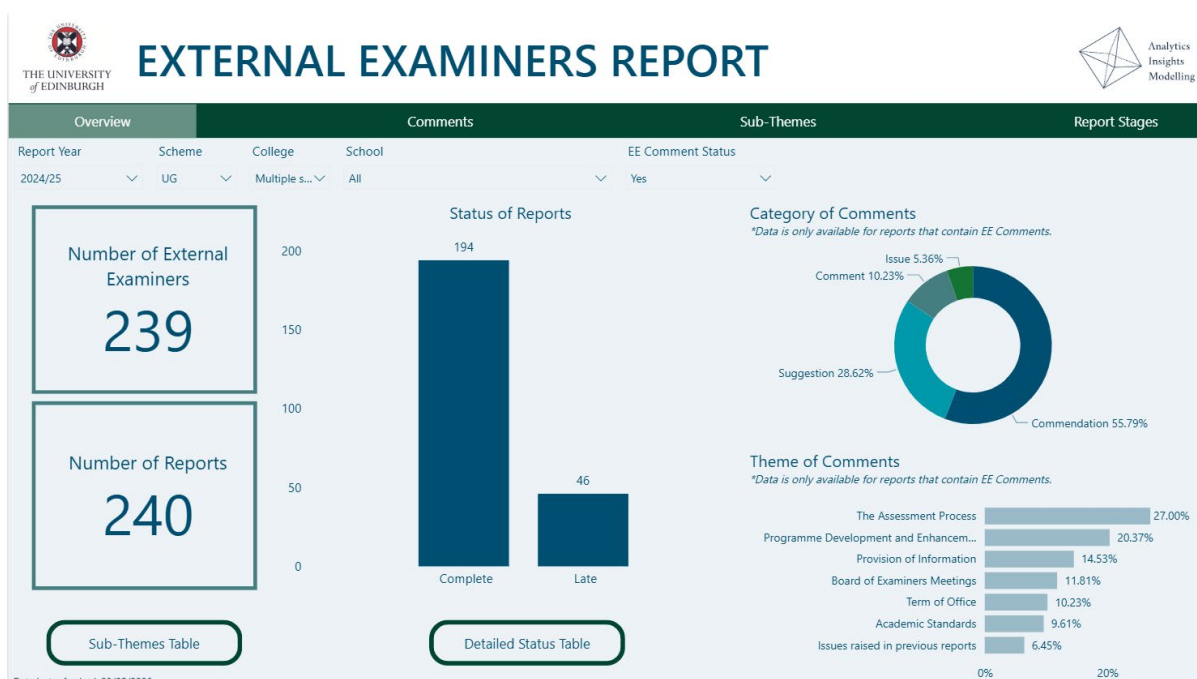
2.2. Table 2 shows the number and stage of undergraduate reports in each College compared with the previous year. Note: the data capture point was 4 May 2026 for 2024/25 and 3 March for 2023/24 and reflects information available in Academic Quality and Standards' PowerBI dashboard.

	Report Stage	2024/25	2023/24
<b>CAHSS</b>	Response Submitted (complete)	108	116
	Draft Response (in progress)	32	19
<b>CMVM</b>	Response Submitted (complete)	194	57
	Draft Response (in progress)	46	4

<b>CSE*</b>	Response Submitted (complete)	28	21
	Draft Response (in progress)	10	10

\*CSE continue to receive some External Examiner reports offline.

2.3. Figure 1 shows the undergraduate Power BI report overview. Note: the data capture point was 3 May 2026 for 2024/25 and 3 March for 2023/24 and reflects information available in Academic Quality and Standards' PowerBI dashboard.



### 3 Overview of the number of Postgraduate Taught External Examiner Reports

3.1 Table 1 shows the total number of postgraduate taught reports by College compared with the previous academic year. Note: the data capture point was 4 May 2026 for 2024/25 and 3 March for 2023/24 and reflects information available in Academic Quality and Standards' PowerBI dashboard.

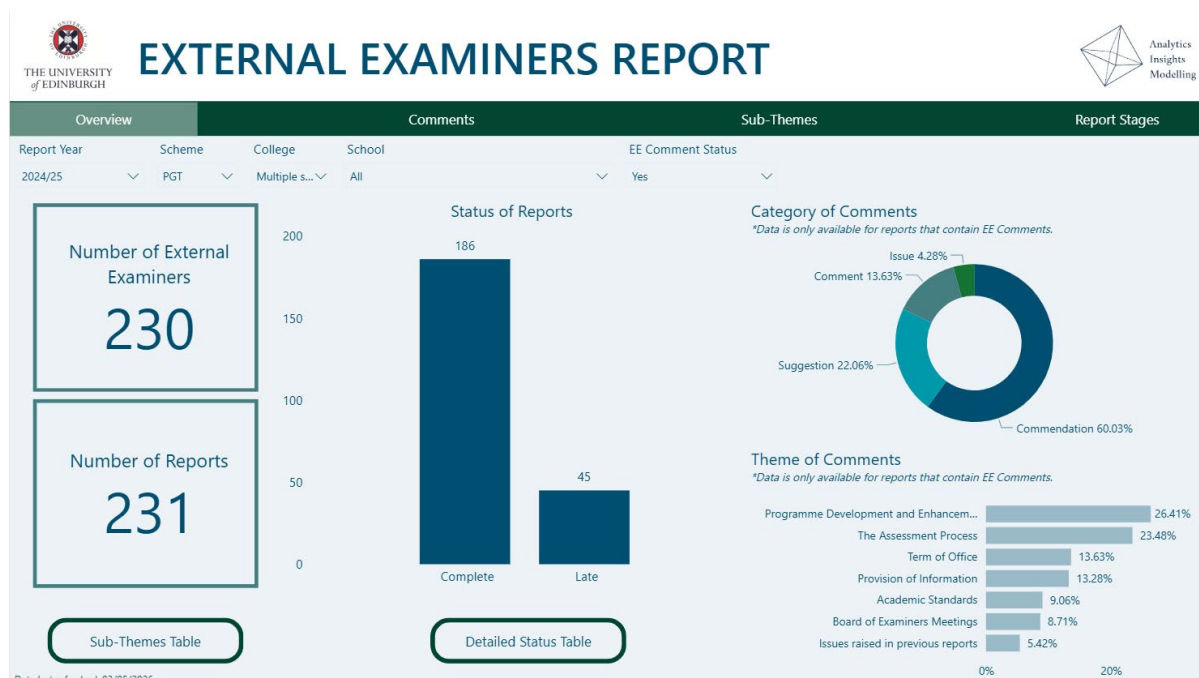
	2024/25	2023/24
College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)	140	152
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)	62	64
College of Science and Engineering (CSE)	38	28
Total number of reports	240	244

3.2 Table 3 shows the number and stage of postgraduate taught reports in each College compared with the previous year. Note: the data capture point was 4 May 2026 for 2024/25 and 3 March for 2023/24 and reflects information available in Academic Quality and Standards' PowerBI dashboard.

	Report Stage	2024/25	2023/24
<b>CAHSS</b>	Response Submitted (complete)	134	110
	Draft Response (in progress)	24	42
<b>CMVM</b>	Response Submitted (complete)	32	53
	Draft Response (in progress)	12	11
<b>CSE*</b>	Response Submitted (complete)	20	14
	Draft Response (in progress)	10	13

\*CSE continue to receive some External Examiner reports offline.

3.3 Figure 2 shows the postgraduate taught Power BI report overview. Note: the data capture point was 3 May 2026 for 2024/25 and 3 March for 2023/24 and reflects information available in Academic Quality and Standards' PowerBI dashboard.



### **3. University level themes from comments received within the External Examiner Reporting System for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught assessments across academic year 24/25**

#### **3.2 Academic Standards**

It was clear across the College reports that the external examiners found high academic standards were maintained across UG and PGT programmes and the academic standards were reported to be comparable, if not higher, than other UK institutions. This suggested that the Colleges were meeting the expected standards of academic excellence. Comments enforced that UG and PGT programmes were aligned with professional benchmarks, Scottish Credit and Qualification Frameworks and met the requirements of accreditation bodies. Examiners highlighted the relevance of course content, the strength of pedagogical approaches, and noted they effectively prepared students for professional practice or further study, offering comprehensive curricula and opportunities for students to develop key skills. Overall, the external examiners were confident that processes were in line with the University regulations.

#### **3.3 Assessment Approaches**

External examiners across the institution commended Schools for making assessments fair, rigorous and relevant to programme and course objectives. Generally, the breadth and innovation of assessment formats were praised, such as CMVM's use of podcasts and CSE's well-considered mix of written, practical, and reflective tasks across programmes. A small number of Schools received comments that PGT and UG courses were over reliant on single assessment formats, particularly exams or essays, or that courses were over assessed. It was recommended that the assessment load should be considered across the programme as well as for a single course to ensure assessment balance.

**Recommendation:** Where highlighted by examiners, the Committee encourage the Schools to consider assessment load or assessment format reliance within their programme reviews and ensure the feedback loop is closed with external examiners.

#### **2.3 Generative AI in assessments**

The opportunities and challenges presented by Generative AI (GenAI) in assessments were recognised by examiners. Whilst they acknowledged the potential benefits of GenAI, they also expressed concerns about its impact on academic integrity. Many Schools were praised for adapting their assessments to address the use of GenAI, demonstrating good practice and innovative approaches, including redesigning both PGT and UG assessments to responsibly use GenAI in evolving educational methods. However, the reports indicated inconsistency with how GenAI practices were being adopted, even within Schools, and it was highlighted that online assessments remained vulnerable to the risks associated with GenAI. Examiners across the Colleges suggested that standard parameters/declarations, including specific examples of acceptable and unacceptable use of GenAI, and clear guidelines on responsible use of GenAI in assessments should be developed. It was recommended that where GenAI was used as part of the assessment, a reflection on

its ethics and value as part of the assessment should be requested. Rather than simply reverting to in-person exam assessments to AI-proof the integrity of assessment offered, which may not have been conducive to learning or inclusive for all students, Schools were encouraged by examiners to be adaptive with their assessments.

**Recommendation:** The Committee encourage Schools to review their assessment methods in the context of GenAI through their standard programme review processes to ensure their validity and reliability in the face of emerging technologies like GenAI.

## 2.4 Feedback and Marking

Across the Colleges, the overall quality of feedback provided to students was frequently commended, with many noting that it was timely, granular, and useful. However, some examiners raised the variability in feedback consistency and volume, which needed further focus and enhancement, such as inconsistencies in annotation practices on scripts and aligning feedback to the marking criteria. To address these issues, examiners recommended greater standardisation of feedback and more actionable feedback for students. While many Schools were praised for refining their assessment criteria and marking rubrics, a small proportion were noted to still require further development to ensure consistency and enhancement across the Colleges. The examiners acknowledged that this would also support the consistency in feedback. Furthermore, with the institutional priority being a three-week turnaround time for feedback, variability in turnaround time for feedback was also highlighted across Colleges as an area for improvement. There were instances across the three Colleges where the examiners suggested that some markers were not utilising the full marking scale, particularly at the top end. Overall, while there were many positive aspects of feedback provision, there was still a need for Colleges to address these inconsistencies and work towards greater standardisation and consistency in feedback practices.

**Recommendation:** With the provision of rubrics or marking criteria for each assessment piece being an institutional priority, the Committee encourages Colleges to implement and refine the marking rubrics where necessary.

**Recommendation:** The Committee are aware that feedback time is under continuous reviews within Schools and encourages them to continue to address this where particular issues that contributed to delayed release of marks and feedback are pin pointed.

## 2.5 Moderation

Comments repeatedly praised the moderation processes in place across the institution for both UG and PGT, describing them as robust, transparent, and consistent. The external examiner reports across the three Colleges highlighted a delay in the provision of moderation documentation as an area for improvement, noting that this delay led to inconsistencies in moderation practices by making it challenging for examiners to review and verify the marking processes. Where this was highlighted, examiners also praised the responsiveness of professional services

and academic staff in resolving these issues. CSE and CAHSS noted missing reconciliation data and missing distribution data. Where specific issues were raised at the time, the Colleges noted that staff were receptive to feedback and guidance, implementing positive changes working with the examiner. Despite these concerns, the number of comments regarding moderation decreased compared to previous years, suggesting a positive impact from the university's strategic aim. While some areas, such as providing information for examiners and documenting moderation processes, still required development, the overall trend was towards improved moderation practices with increased transparency and consistency. Overall, the reports indicated progress in moderation practices, with a focus on continued improvement and standardisation across the university.

## 2.5 Board of Examiners' Meetings

The organisation and conduct of Board of Examiner (BoE) meetings across the institution were broadly commended, with BoEs being well-organised, chaired strongly, featuring clear documentation, fair decision-making processes, and operation in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discussions across UG and PGT boards were commented to be thorough, meaningful and in line with University regulations. The efficiency and inclusivity of online meetings were also praised, and the support offered to external examiners by professional services was highly appreciated. Examiners in CAHSS and CSE, expressed a preference for in-person or fully online meetings to support engagement, a theme that has persisted since the COVID-19 pandemic. Some examiners note confusion regarding decision trees and concerns on overly discounting of marks in the context of ECs. These are key priorities for the University and have been developed in conjunction with Colleges and progressed through APRC for the use of boards in the next academic year. Some concerns were raised from both UG and PGT boards regarding the timing and late or incomplete assessment samples, inconsistent assessment packs, and difficulties navigating online platforms. It was recommended that there is a standardised approach to what documentation and information is provided to examiners and when it is recommended.

**Recommendation:** The Committee encourage the relevant teaching offices to review their provision and timing of information provided to examiners in the context of the feedback received.

Meg Batty  
Academic Quality and Standards  
07 May 2025

**College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**External Examiner Reporting System – Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Reports**  
**Academic Year 2024-25**

**UG**

Overall, EEs were very complementary about the quality of the curricula delivered in CAHSS at UG level, with only a couple of schools receiving encouragement to diversify their curriculum to address climate, decolonisation and UN goals. These schools also received praise for their curricula.

**ASSESSMENT APPROACHES**

EEs are expressing concerns about the impact of GenAI across the board, but also commend various schools for making assessments more relevant and authentic, making them GenAI-proof in the process. We are also encouraged to move away from blanket bans to engage with the reality of GenAI. The dissertation was flagged as especially vulnerable and suggestions for how to make this more practically oriented that we could pursue.

All schools were commended for variety of assessments except for one school where EEs expressed concern about both the high volume of assessment and an over-reliance on exams. They were encouraged to modernise and diversify their assessment strategy. Two schools who were either exam-or essay-reliant were encouraged to diversify assessment although they also received praise.

One school was identified as over-assessing. An EE was concerned at the lack of consistency between exam length and weighting in another school.

**MARKING AND FEEDBACK**

EEs in three schools encouraged markers to use the whole of the 0-100 scale, especially at the top end.

EEs were encouraging of schools further refining assessment criteria and this was generally viewed as a work in progress. EEs congratulated staff on the quality of feedback given, especially where it made use of subheadings and included encouraging/rewarding comments. One school was complimented for its use of assessment criteria and rubrics.

Three schools were picked up for providing too much feedback (all of which seemed like specific courses or markers). This was flagged for lack of consistency, poor use of time, and concern that key learning points for students were lost in the verbiage.

**MODERATION**

EEs were generally content with moderation practices, but in two schools, concerns were raised that moderation was not happening consistently. In other schools there were examples of missing moderation forms. EEs want to see grade distribution on the moderation form and where new forms have removed this, it was commented on. In one school a concern about marks being changed on sampled scripts only was flagged.

**BOE PROCESSES**

Administrative support was appreciated across the board. However, EEs also complained about receiving assessment samples very late, sometimes the day before a BoE, incomplete and inconsistent assessment

packs, difficulty navigating around Learn and accessing all relevant information, difficulties with using their visitor UUN. It appeared that a lot was left to admin teams to compensate for this and concerns were expressed that they did not have the capacity to provide all this additional support. A standardised approach to what is provided and when is recommended.

The decision tree in one school was criticised as over-complicated and that errors in application were found. EEs in three schools also seemed baffled by the decision-making process, believing UoE assessment regulations to be the complicating factor, with concerns about the clarity of decision-making.

EEs in several schools expressed concern about the discounting of marks in the context of ECs being too generous, leading to grade inflation and inequities between students who had or had not submitted ECs and being out of step with the rest of the sector.

Asynchronous boards, where they are being used, are largely poorly received by EEs who feel marginalised and confused. Nonetheless the opportunity to see all the marks in advance and in one place is viewed as helpful, and seen together, the comments suggest that a hybrid model with all information made available in advance with the opportunity to interrogate the information, accompanied by a synchronous meetings would allow schools to get the most benefit from their EEs and reassure EEs that QA processes are being properly followed. See excel spreadsheet for details.

In two schools, EEs are invited to visit in person and to meet with students. This is hugely valued and an EE in a third school expressed a wish for in-person visits/meetings.

EEs in two schools complained about there being too many boards. There were no complaints from EEs in schools who have reduced the number of boards.

## PGT

Overall, external examiners are satisfied with academic standards in CAHSS, noting the high standard of teaching and assessment delivered and judging us favourably against equivalent institutions. Several points made about the integration of decolonialisation in the curriculum, but also encouragement in places to more explicitly build in anti-racist and anti-oppressive approaches to teaching and assessment (it appears that schools are not being judged by the same criteria in this regard though). Some EEs are also commending or recommending inter-cross disciplinary curricula and alongside comments about authentic and applied assessments, indicates a more established shift away from traditional pedagogy to the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century graduates. Colleagues were praised for being open and responsive to critique. However, there were several gaps in the response from schools and some comments about previous recommendations not being acted on.

## ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

### AI CONCERNS

Praise for standard statements of permitted use and requirement for self-declaration, but also some odd gaps in provision of this information. Praise for courses where assessments have been diversified to make them more AI-proof (esp. viva-style assessments) or explicitly AI-integrated. Courses with essay-based assessments challenged to be more attentive to risks of AI-based cheating and to diversify.

### ASSESSMENT DESIGN

Imbalance in assessment volume between courses was noted in two schools. Two schools were praised responding to advice to reduce over-assessment whilst another was identified as having an ongoing need to address this.

Several schools were praised for the diversity of assessment, and others encouraged to engage more actively with this process.

Concern about high numbers of late submissions and cause(s) of this – bunching suggested EFI or too lenient. The volume of extensions and ECs is judged to be out of kilter with the sector.

---

## ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Some schools were commended for good quality assessment information for students but these and other schools were also advised to provide standardised information and rubrics. Ambiguity about how marks have been arrived at was noted.

## MARKING AND FEEDBACK

Overall the quality of feedback was praised in most schools. Feedforward was commended in some schools and recommended in another as an expected component of feedback. Inconsistent feedback between markers was noted in some schools, and between marks and grade descriptors. over-long feedback was also noted in some cases, and schools encouraged to standardise expectations to manage workload and student expectations.

Where feedback templates, marking criteria and rubrics are being used, these are uniformly praised, but in almost every school there were comments suggesting these are not yet being universally applied. The extended common marking scheme was judged inadequate.

An inconsistent set of concerns were raised about the marking range. EEs variously comments on the distinction level being set too low, thus constraining the real marking range to a 25 marks; or being awarded too generously such that too many students were getting Distinctions, although these were comments about the number of students achieving high marks rather than concerns about overly-generous marking of specific cases. In other cases, EEs commended the high number of Distinctions stating that it reflected excellent work. Schools were also criticised and praised for using the top end of the scale 80+).

---

## MODERATION

Whilst some schools were praised for rigorous and clear moderation processes, there were several comments relating to over-moderation and inconsistent practices, including ineffective/inconsistent reporting of moderation.

The Dissertation mark reconciliation process was widely commended, but approaches to resolving very divergent marks were queried and one EE suggested a clear threshold was needed for when to involve a third marker needs to be brought in. Clarity of the process of reconciliation was also encouraged. EEs widely highlighted the need to combine final set of comments for the student.

Misuse of scaling was raised in one subject area and will be followed up.

## BOE PROCESSES

Overall, BoEs are commended for rigour and standards with universal praise for administrative staff. Whilst EEs in one school felt well-supported with dates and information, there were frequent comments about the need for better communication and consultation around scheduling of boards, and more time to review samples. Exam board communication was noted as very poor in one school.

The hybrid format is experienced as unhelpful, mainly due to problems with sound and being able to view spreadsheets on shared screens. EEs asked for boards to be entirely online or in-person, with a strong wish for at least one meeting per year to be in-person.

The limitations in contributing effectively on a purely remote basis were flagged in a number of schools, (remote seemed to refer variously to online and asynchronous) with a request for a solid asynchronous process to be accompanied by a synchronous meeting.

Access to online systems, inc. Learn and OneDrive, difficult, with security steps an apparent obstacle. Teams was noted as easier to interact with.

Poor attendance by academics was noted at one exam board.

---

## EXAM BOARD DECISIONS

One EE commented that word count penalties were not being applied

Very inconsistent grade distributions between courses was linked to size of assessments and workload distribution (inc. high numbers of late penalties) in one school.

---

## EC

Concerns about grade inflation due to excessive discounting of marks, concerns raised that excessive discounting of marks may be leading to over-exposure to GenAI risks. One EE also raised concerns about the administrative burden of the current system of EC mitigation at BoEs.

# College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

## UG External Examiner Reports 2024/25

### 1 Introduction

This overview report reviews comments made by external examiners in relation to CMVM UG provision in 2024-25.

Free text comments were generated via BI Suite on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026. The commentary in this paper is arranged alphabetically by theme.

All actions in reports across the College were flagged for the school to address with nothing escalated for action by the College or the University.

Common themes in External Examiner comments are extracted and identified at the end of this paper. Themes from previous years are also included for ease of tracking development against themes across academic years.

The academic year covered by this report covers 2024/25 and programmes were under the previous College structure. The new structure was in place from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025, during the reporting period.

### 2 Edinburgh Medical School, MBChB and HCP-MBChB

#### Academic Standards

Examiners were satisfied with academic standards, noting that standards were high and were comparable with institutions they had knowledge of. Standard setting processes were reported to be clear and examiners commended appropriate OSCE station design and the consistency and fairness of marking of these clinical exams.

#### Boards of Examiners

Examiners reported that boards were conducted fairly and transparently. Decisions were made with due consideration and care to students whilst maintaining a robust assessment process. There was noted to be good discussion of fails, borderlines, distinctions and students with special circumstances.

Examiners reported that Boards of Examiners were well organised and chaired and attendance was strong. Examiners confirmed they had opportunities to contribute to discussions.

#### Issues raised in previous reports

Very few comments were provided against this theme, with most noting no issues to report or not relevant as Examiner was new in role.

#### Programme Development and Enhancement

Examiners offered a number of commendations including clarity of expectations for students, regular formative assessments, the peer reviewed assessment in year 5 and the clinical portfolio.

There was only one suggestion provided for further improvement. This noted that while the Examiner supported the general approach taken towards generative-AI, they suggested further consideration of the ethics essay in this context.

### Provision of information

Examiners were satisfied with the provision of information to support the assessment process, with communication and organisation of the assessment process noted to be excellent. Provision of dates, examination papers and assessment for moderation were reported to be timely. A number of the assessment team were commended by name.

One examiner noted receiving exam papers with only one week's notice, but recognised that this had been an admin error which the response acknowledged and apologised for.

### Term of Office

There was one comment about induction. The examiner confirmed induction was effective, with group and individual induction meetings provided.

One Examiner was at the end of their tenure. They noted their pleasure at being an examiner on this programme and thanked staff for their support throughout their tenure. Commendations from their time as an examiner included excellent communication, appropriate assessment and fair assessment, robust approach to decision making at BoEs and excellent pastoral support.

### The Assessment Process

Examiners were satisfied with the management of the assessment process, including the operation of clinical examinations.

Examiners noted robust and fair processes were in place for marking and moderation. Feedback was reported to be timely, granular and useful, including areas where students performed well and areas for improvement. Processes in place for the consideration of progression and award decisions were consistently applied.

Examiners reported good assessment design, with particular assessments commended including the peer marked reflection piece in Year 5 and the clinical portfolio.

One examiner provided two suggestions to support OSCE exams, to encourage blueprinting and to enhance revision opportunities. The team noted that the OSCE processes were under review and both suggestions would be incorporated for future years.

### **3 Deanery of Clinical Sciences, BSc Oral Health Science**

There are only two External Examiners appointed to the BSc Oral Health Sciences Programme, so there are fewer comments compared with other areas. This programme is closing and teach-out is taking place.

Examiners were satisfied with the assessment process, which was reported to be robust and fair. There was a good variety of assessments which were reported to be appropriate for this level of study. Marking and moderation were reported to be robust and feedback comprehensive and constructive. The Board of Examiners had been well run with all members able to participate.

Board of Examiner arrangements had been well communicated and information required to undertake their roles had been provided in a timely fashion. There were a number of comments noting that a permanent member of staff had left the teaching team and this was impacting workload on the wider team over the assessment period. The response to these comments noted that work had taken place to review and assure processes and they would be seeking additional support for the following assessment period.

There were no comments against the induction or term of office themes.

Good practice noted included the recording of oral examinations and support given to anxious students during oral exams.

#### **4 Deanery of Biomedical Sciences**

##### Academic Standards

Academic standards were reported to be high and student performance strong. Examiners confirmed that standards compared well with equivalent Programmes at other UK institutions with which they were familiar, with a couple of comments noting that standards were higher. Assessment criteria and marking schemes were reported to be appropriately applied.

There were a number of commendations around the quality of course content and overall programme design and delivery, including core learning and transferable skills and well thought out practicals.

Suggestions included noting some mixed practice of annotation on exam scripts impacting ability to review marking against assessment criteria. Where annotation did take place, it was clear how marks had been allocated. There were some comments on use of the marking scale, with one examiner encouraging markers to make use of full mark scale, while another examiner noted improvement in use of the full distribution of marks and another noted that the highest marks had been utilised for outstanding work. This suggests there may be some mix in marking scale utilisation.

##### Board of Examiners

Examiners reported that Boards of Examiners were well organised and had been well chaired. Hybrid meetings had worked well and all participants were given the opportunity to participate. Examiners confirmed that regulations and procedures were adhered to and that they agreed with decisions made.

Decision making was reported to be fair, transparent and consistent. Space was given for adequate discussion about cases as appropriate with student best interests at heart. Full and fair discussion took place for any cases of borderline marks and Special Circumstances.

##### Issues raised in previous reports

Most examiners reported that issues raised in previous reports had been fully considered with issues addressed to their satisfaction. Where issues were raised these were fully addressed in responses with plans to implement recommendations noted.

Staff were noted to be open to feedback and were responsive to suggestions made. Some examiners noted progress against feedback given and made further suggestions.

##### Programme Development and Enhancement

Examiners offered a range of suggestions for the development of specific courses and assessments and in teaching and learning generally. Other suggestions included further work to improve the consistency of feedback practices across all markers and courses.

Suggestions were made around the addition of formative feedback opportunities in project work, some suggestions for additional content in individual courses, suggestions around approaches to group work, and suggestions around developing a consistent approach to

assessment in relation to AI, and around consistency in feedback on exam scripts. Examiners also highlighted some issues with student attendance and noted the challenging HE environment, encouraging senior leaders to support staff health and wellbeing.

Suggestions were responded to comprehensively with recommendations taken into consideration where appropriate and a rationale provided where a suggestion would not be taken forward.

Externals provided a high number of commendations. These included the introduction of the feedback template, a diverse range of well-designed assessment methods that develop transferrable skills and incorporate opportunities for formative feedback, provision of constructive feedback to students and constructive engagement with feedback provided by students.

There were a number of comments featuring issues related to AI, both commending work to teach appropriate use of this technology and to adapt assessment to mitigate against risks from AI.

### Provision of information

Most examiners confirmed that they had received all materials required in good time for them to undertake their role effectively, noting the helpfulness of staff and ease of accessing materials. Where any issues were raised these were addressed or noted how they would be addressed for the following year. There were a few comments requesting some additional guidance on accessing materials on online platforms. A number of staff were commended by name.

### Term of Office

Examiners new in their roles were satisfied with the induction they had received, noting both support from staff and effective materials provided.

All examiners at the end of their tenure reported that they had enjoyed their time as external examiners on the Biomedical Sciences Programmes. Programmes were noted to have developed over time and examiners valued seeing their recommendations implemented. Communication from academics and professional services staff was commended with individual staff named and student engagement commended.

### The Assessment Process

Examiners commended the variety of assessment methods which were noted to be well designed and at the appropriate level, assessing learning outcomes across the programme. A number of specific assessments were highlighted as novel or good practice. Where examiners made suggestions for changes, for example, around the use of exams or consideration of AI challenges, course organisers were receptive to further discussions and ongoing enhancement. There were some comments suggesting a reduction in assessment components in courses.

Assessment processes were reported to be clear and transparent. Marking was reported to be rigorous and fair and there were several comments about marking consistency. There were a couple of comments suggesting more consistency in use of annotation on exam scripts to make clear how marks were awarded. In general, examiners were satisfied with moderation practices, noting robustness and transparency of processes, although some comments noted some inconsistencies in moderation around clarity of reconciliation of marks where markers differed.

In general, feedback was reported to be of a high standard with externals noting it to be detailed, personalised and framed to enable progress and improvement in their work. However, there were some comments that noted variability of feedback quality amongst markers, including some varied practice around annotations on scripts. Where such comments were made the teams committed to improvement. Examiners welcomed the introduction of the marking and feedback template.

Where examiners provided feedback to improve elements of the assessment process these were well received and either taken on board or a comprehensive rationale for existing practices provided.

## **5 Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies BVM&S and Global Academy**

### Academic Standards

Examiners confirmed that academic standards were high and comparable to equivalent programmes in other UK institutions they were familiar with. Examiners confirmed that the programme met professional body benchmarks for day one competency requirements.

### Boards of Examiners

Examiners were satisfied that decisions made at BoEs had been fair and transparent with careful consideration given to all aspects, including borderline marks and special circumstances. Examiners noted that decisions were made in line with university regulations and with the best interests of students in mind.

### Issues raised in previous reports

Examiners confirmed issues raised in previous reports had been resolved and noted that teams were very responsive in dealing with issues raised. Examiners welcomed seeing the implementation of suggestions provided.

### Programme Development and Enhancement

Examiners offered a range of suggestions for the development of specific courses, including some suggestions around the organisation of content, some suggestions to feed in to the team's ongoing work around the challenges raised by Gen-AI, and to enhance support for student preparation for OSPREs. Suggestions were well received with plans to undertake further enhancements in line with comments, as well as reports on progress already made.

A number of commendations were provided including the use of creative assessments such as podcasts, well-integrated assessment questions that develop holistic learning, the 'request for student support' system and the provision of dedicated neurodiversity support. There were also positive comments about the diversity of assessment methods and commendations on feedback practices, including group feedback ahead of exams.

### Provision of information

In general, Examiners were satisfied that they had received all materials required to undertake their role effectively. Examiners noted being happy with the BoE dates which were generally announced well in advance. Satisfaction with the timeliness of the provision of information was mixed, with a number being very satisfied and others reporting some issues with very tight deadlines. Examiners appreciated the organisation of materials for review and confirmed opportunities to review draft examination papers.

Where examiners noted any dissatisfaction with turnaround times or information provided, responses acknowledged this and noted that these would be addressed.

There were a number of commendations for the approachability and responsiveness of team the in general as well as thanks to specific team members.

### Term of Office

Examiners were satisfied with the induction into their roles, noting comprehensive information was provided and staff very responsive to any queries. Where there were any issues, for example in accessing systems, these were resolved effectively.

Examiners at the end of their tenure reported enjoying their time as examiners for the programme and confirmed the quality of programmes and engagement of teams. Any issues reported over the course of their tenures had been addressed and specific highlights of programme design and assessment processes noted.

### The Assessment Process

Examiners commended the range of assessment methods which were noted to be at the appropriate level and assessed a variety of skills. Where suggestions were provided to amend a particular assessment, for example, to review a question bank, these received due consideration.

In general, marking was reported to be fair and consistent. Most examiners were satisfied that moderation was in place and was appropriate with clear records kept to demonstrate this. Where instances of inconsistency between markers was raised, responses noted how improvements would be made for the following year and training provided.

Most examiners noted feedback to be detailed, useful and appropriate, citing examples of excellent feedback practices. There were some comments noting variability around feedback volume amongst some markers, with some markers providing more and some less. Responses acknowledged this variety which would inform examiner training.

## **6 Summary and common themes**

The College can be reassured by the confirmation that academic standards of our UG Programmes are commensurate with UK Higher Education expectations. External Examiners were satisfied with the conduct of exam boards and agreed with marks awarded. Examiners commented where improvements had been made to programmes from previous years and welcomed developments made as a result of previous recommendations. Where examiners made specific suggestions regarding further developments these were appropriately addressed in responses.

Examiners were satisfied with communication with teaching and administrative staff and almost all examiners were satisfied with the administration of the assessment process. A number of staff were commended by name. Where issues arose, examiners confirmed these had been addressed or responses to comments confirmed they would be addressed.

Overall, the reports demonstrate the considerable amount of work done by staff to maintain and enhance the quality of our UG Programmes.

In line with normal University practice, response coordinators responded to the reports, with issues and suggestions being addressed. Actions to address the points highlighted by the examiners will be taken forward by Schools.

Some common themes across CMVM UG provision emerge from reports as follows:

## **2024/25**

For further development

- Some comments highlighting lack of consistency across individual markers in relation to feedback practices.
- Some requests that teams ensure provision of all necessary information to enable Examiners to undertake their roles in a timely manner (including BoE dates and draft papers for review and comment). It is noted that this continued to be much less of a theme than in previous years.
- Some requests to ensure documented moderation processes were available for all courses to ensure clarity on final marks arrived at where any reconciliation had taken place. Again, there were fewer comments than in previous years on this theme with good practices in moderation and improvements to the transparency of moderation practices also reported.
- As with the previous year, comments around generative AI had increased. Some comments highlighted potential risks to assessment integrity, suggesting review of particular assessments, with others suggesting continued work around enabling students to engage with AI in an appropriate way.

Good practice

- High quality of programmes and strong student performance.
- Good variety of assessment methods, including some innovative assessment methods in all areas.
- Suggestions and issues highlighted by examiners are well received and given due consideration.
- Fairness of marking and rigorous and transparent assessment practices.
- Well managed Boards of Examiners ensuring consistent decision making, with appropriate consideration of borderlines, fails and extenuating circumstances.
- Some exemplary feedback practices were reported in all areas.
- Programmes that enable students to develop transferrable skills (research, analytical, reflective, critical etc.) and prepare them for employment.
- Professional programmes meet Professional Body required standards

## **7 CMVM Themes from previous years**

For ease in tracking development against themes arising from CMVM UG External Examiner comments, themes from the previous three years are included below. It is noted that some areas for development such as provision of information for examiners and documentation of moderation processes continue to be highlighted as areas for further development, however as noted above there were less comments directed to improvement in these areas than in previous years. It is also noted that examiners also highlighted good practice and improvements in these areas. In relation to current institutional priorities there were some comments around lack of consistency across individual markers when providing feedback, so this remains an area for development.

It is also noted that there have been some improvements. For example, comments received over the past two years indicated greater satisfaction with External Examiner induction. It is

reassuring that many of the areas highlighted as areas of good practice such as the standard of programmes and the rigour of the assessment process have been maintained.

### **Themes from 2023/24**

For further development

- Some comments highlighting lack of consistency across individual markers in relation to feedback practices.
- Some requests that teams ensure provision of all necessary information to enable Examiners to undertake their roles in a timely manner (including BoE dates and draft papers for review and comment).
- Some comments around ensuring assessment criteria and marking schemes were clear for Examiners across all courses and some comments around ensuring marking and feedback clearly aligned with marking schemes across all courses. There were less comments about this than in previous years and good practice in these areas were also highlighted suggesting comments relate to particular programmes or courses rather than to Deaneries or Schools.
- Some requests to ensure documented moderation processes were available for all courses. Again, there were fewer comments than in previous years on this theme with good practices in moderation and improvements to the transparency of moderation practices also reported.
- Some comments highlighting issues in relation to Artificial Intelligence and how this might impact assessment, but also how to enable students to engage with AI in a positive way.

Good practice

- High quality of programmes and strong student performance.
- Good variety of assessment methods, including some innovative assessment methods in all areas.
- Suggestions and issues highlighted by examiners are well received and given due consideration.
- Fairness of marking and rigorous and transparent assessment practices.
- Well managed Boards of Examiners ensuring consistent decision making. There were a number of comments reporting the effectiveness of hybrid meetings.
- Some exemplary feedback practices were reported in all areas.
- Programmes that enable students to develop transferrable skills (research, analytical, reflective, critical etc.) and prepare them for employment.
- Professional programmes meet Professional Body required standards

### **Themes from 2022/23**

For further development

- Some requests that teams ensure provision of all necessary information to enable Examiners to undertake their roles in a timely manner (including BoE dates and draft papers for review and comment).
- Some comments around ensuring assessment criteria and marking schemes were clear for Examiners across all courses and some comments around ensuring marking and feedback clearly aligned with marking schemes across all courses.

- Some requests to ensure documented moderation processes were available for all courses.

#### Good practice

- High quality of programmes and strong student performance.
- Good variety of assessment methods, including some innovative assessment methods in all areas.
- Suggestions and issues highlighted by examiners are well received and given due consideration.
- Fairness of marking and rigorous and transparent assessment practices
- Well managed Boards of Examiners ensuring consistent decision making. There were a number of comments reporting the effectiveness of hybrid meetings.
- Some exemplary feedback practices were reported in all areas.
- Programmes that enable students to develop transferrable skills (research, analytical, reflective, critical etc.) and prepare them for employment.
- Professional programmes meet Professional Body required standards

#### Themes from 2021/22

##### For further development

- Some requests that teams ensure provision of all necessary information to enable Examiners to undertake their roles in a timely manner (including BoE dates and draft papers for review and comment). It is noted that this continued to be much less of a theme than in previous years.
- Some comments around ensuring assessment criteria and marking schemes were clear for Examiners across all courses and some comments around ensuring marking and feedback clearly aligned with marking schemes across all courses. Again there were less comments about this than in previous years and good practice in these areas were also highlighted suggesting comments relate to particular programmes or courses rather than to Deaneries or Schools.
- Some requests to ensure documented moderation processes were available for all courses. Again there were less comments than in previous years on this theme with good practices in moderation and improvements to the transparency of moderation practices also reported.
- There were some comments noting marks bunching around particular grades and some comments about a high number of distinction grades awarded.

##### Good practice

- High quality of programmes and strong student performance.
- Good variety of assessment methods, including some innovative assessment methods in all areas.
- Suggestions and issues highlighted by examiners are well received and given due consideration.
- Fairness of marking and rigorous and transparent assessment practices
- Well managed Boards of Examiners ensuring consistent decision making. There were a number of comments reporting the effectiveness of using MS Teams for remote Boards of Examiners. Support from staff to enable examiners to access and use the system was welcomed.
- Some exemplary feedback practices were reported in all areas.

- Programmes that enable students to develop transferrable skills (research, analytical, reflective, critical etc.) and prepare them for employment.
- Professional programmes meet Professional Body required standards
- Responses of teams in dealing with pandemic related challenges were commended across the College.

Victoria Bennett, Academic Administrator (QA&QE)

April 2026

## **College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine**

### **PGT External Examiner Reports 2024/25**

#### **Introduction**

This overview report reviews comments made by External Examiners in relation to CMVM PGT provision in academic year 2024/25.

Free text comments were generated via BI Suite on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026. Comments reported on below are arranged by theme alphabetically. It is noted that all actions were flagged for resolution at School level with no issues raised for action at the College or Institutional level.

Common themes in External Examiner comments are extracted and identified at the end of this paper. Themes from previous years are also included for ease of tracking development against themes across academic years.

The academic year covered by this report covers 2024/25 and programmes were under the previous College structure. The new structure was in place from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025, during the reporting period.

#### **1 Medical Education**

##### General

There are two PGT programmes within Medical Education, the MSc Clinical Education and the PG Cert Simulation. There are therefore fewer comments compared with other areas as there are only comments from two external examiners.

Examiners reported academic standards to be high. There was a good range of assessment methods and these were well aligned to programme aims and objectives

Examiners reported that the assessment process and determination of awards were carefully considered, fair and transparent. Marking was reported to be fair with the full range of marks utilised and moderation maintained at a high standard. The quality of feedback was reported to be excellent with specific advice provided to enable students to improve.

Boards of Examiners were reported to be thorough and consistent and examiners were satisfied with the provision of information required to undertake their role effectively. Appropriate consideration was given to borderline marks, extenuating circumstances and academic misconduct.

Where suggestions were provided for further development, these were well received and acted on, for example, the team planned a project to consider how students interacted with their feedback.

Both examiners were in their third year of tenure, so there were no comments in relation to induction or term of office.

#### **2 Deanery of Biomedical Sciences**

##### Academic Standards

Examiners were satisfied with academic standards and confirmed that standards were equivalent to, or exceeded, standards in institutions with which they were familiar.

Programmes were noted to be aligned with relevant benchmarks and provided excellent training for students.

#### Board of Examiners

Examiners were satisfied with Board of Examiner arrangements, noting satisfaction with arrangements made for their participation. Boards were reported to be well organised and chaired. Examiners confirmed they were able to contribute fully in Boards and their comments well received and considered.

Examiners reported that decision making was fair and transparent and due consideration was given to borderline marks, students with special circumstances and cases of academic misconduct.

#### Issues raised in previous reports

Examiners confirmed that issues raised in previous reports, or by their predecessor had been appropriately addressed. Examiners welcomed seeing their suggestions put into practice.

#### Programme Development and Enhancement

A number of suggestions were made for the further enhancement of specific courses and programmes. All suggestions were well received and would be considered and actioned by programme directors. Suggestions for specific courses included incorporating additional content or skills development to enhance programmes, consideration of the co-creation of rubrics with students, enhanced guidance on methods to support dissertation writing, and suggestions around provision of guidance on ethical and responsible AI use.

Programmes and courses were reported to be well designed and a number of commendations related to the programmes were provided. Commendations included the substantial time in laboratories to gain research experience and skills, course content and assessments that prepare students for career development, dedication of teams to reflect on and review programmes, good alignment between learning outcomes and assessment methods, and a diversity of assessment methods.

#### Provision of information

Examiners were satisfied that they had received access to materials required to undertake their role effectively and in a timely manner. Teams were reported to be responsive and helpful when any queries were raised.

#### Term of Office

Examiners new in their roles confirmed that they had been provided with an effective induction.

There were no Examiners at the end of their tenure.

#### The Assessment Process

Examiners reported a good variety of assessment methods.

Marking was reported to be fair and consistent. Examiners were satisfied with the moderation of marking, noting processes to be robust and transparent.

Feedback was noted to be consistent with marks awarded and to be detailed and useful with comments that would help students to improve their performance.

### **3 Deanery of Clinical Sciences**

There were a number of reports and responses yet to be submitted. This may be related to the new School structures coming into effect mid-reporting cycle impacting EERS access. Administrators continue to follow up on missing reports.

#### Academic Standards

Examiners were satisfied with the academic standards of programmes and student performance. Programme design was academically and clinically appropriate.

#### Board of Examiners

Examiners were satisfied with Boards of Examiner arrangements. Boards were noted to be well chaired with all members given the opportunity to participate fully.

Examiners were satisfied that Boards followed University regulations and decision making was consistent. Due consideration was given to borderline marks and cases where students had special circumstances.

#### Issues raised in previous reports

There was only one comment under this theme. The examiner was satisfied with progress made against items raised in previous reports, commenting on improvements such as improvements in student collaborative working and improved feedback turnaround times.

#### Programme Development and Enhancement

Examiners offered some suggestions and comments to further enhance programmes including updating some guidance documents, clarity of marking criteria, updating SLICC forms to remove repetition and enhancement of support to prepare for oral presentations.

Examiners offered a number of commendations on programmes. This included responsiveness of teams to address student, the variety of assessment methods, opportunities for self-directed learning through the SLICC, and examples of excellent feedback practices.

#### Provision of information

Examiner satisfaction with the provision of information necessary to their role was mixed. Some were very satisfied with timeliness and organisation of materials, with others less so, noting some delays in receiving materials or invites.

#### Term of Office

There were very few comments under this theme as most examiners were mid-tenure. One comment on induction noted receipt of all relevant materials and one outgoing examiner was content with all processes experienced.

#### The Assessment Process

Examiners were satisfied that marking was fair and consistent. Where examiners highlighted issues or made suggestions to enhance marking or moderation practices these were well received.

In general, examiners were satisfied with feedback provided to students, with some comments noting feedback was extensive with comments around what had been done well and what could be improved. There were also comments noting improvement in feedback

practices from previous years in terms of volume and detail supporting understanding of marks awarded.

#### **4 Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences**

##### Academic Standards

Examiners confirmed academic standards were appropriate and commensurate with other programmes that they were familiar and reflected benchmark statements.

##### Board of Examiners

All examiners were satisfied with Boards of Examiner arrangements, which were reported to be well organised with examiners reporting they were able to participate fully. Decisions were reported to be well considered and outcomes robust, fair and equitable.

##### Issues raised in previous reports

Examiners were satisfied that issues raised in previous reports had been addressed or were aware of plans to address these. One examiner made additional suggestions for further enhancement which were fully responded to, with another examiner highlighting the high level of responsiveness to feedback provided by the programme team.

##### Programme Development and Enhancement

Examiners suggestions for further enhancement of programmes included 'AI proofing' of some assessments and reduced use of asynchronous discussion boards as student engagement with these had reduced.

Examiners were satisfied with programme design and content and made a number of commendations. These included, linking research to practical case examples, careful design of assessments including scaffolding to support student learning, alignment of formative and summative assessments and imaginative methods of seeking student feedback.

##### Provision of information

Examiners were satisfied with the provision of information to enable them to undertake their roles, including samples of work and updates on changes made based on examiner and student feedback. Staff teams were noted to be responsive to queries.

##### Term of Office

There was one examiner new in role and they confirmed that they had received an effective induction.

Two examiners were at the end of their tenure. These examiners had enjoyed their time associated with the programmes and highlighted strengths, noting having enjoyed observing programmes grow and develop. One examiner noted the team to have been very responsive to their feedback and reported that some student dissertations were of publishable quality. The other examiner suggested potentially appointing a second examiner to the programme as the workload had grown throughout their tenure with less attention able to be paid to individual modules than at the start.

##### The Assessment Process

Examiners reported a wide variety of assessment methods designed at the appropriate level.

Examiners were satisfied with assessment processes, noting these were conducted to a high standard. Marking was reported to be fair and consistent and moderation was noted to be robust. Where any issues had been identified, these were resolved in a timely manner.

In general, feedback was reported to be comprehensive and constructive and there was good 'feed forward' suggestions. Some inconsistencies in feedback volume were highlighted for enhancement.

## **5 Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Science**

### Academic Standards

Examiners were satisfied with academic standards and confirmed that standards were equivalent to, or exceeded, standards in institutions with which they were familiar. Programmes were reported to be well designed, were at the appropriate level and aligned with relevant benchmarks and professional bodies.

### Boards of Examiners

All examiners were satisfied with Boards of Examiner arrangements, which were reported to be well organised and effective. Examiners welcomed the opportunity to participate either online or in-person, with examiners confirming that they were able to participate fully in either format. Boards were noted to be very well chaired and professionally run, with good adherence to university regulations and policies and robust discussion and decisions made.

### Issues raised in previous reports

Examiners confirmed that issues raised in previous reports had been addressed. Examiners welcomed seeing their recommendations in practice and noted that staff were responsive to considering recommendations made. There were a few comments where examiners reported improved consistency of feedback practices over recent years.

### Programme Development and Enhancement

Examiners provided some suggestions for the enhancement of specific programmes or courses. All comments were well received and programme teams welcomed suggested enhancements. These included some additional stats content, consideration of AI impacts on assessment, potential for live-streaming some lectures rather than closed caption, and the suggested addition of a tutorial on how to write a research proposal based on student feedback in course evaluations.

Examiners offered a high number of commendations including the responsiveness of teams to suggested enhancements and continual monitoring and enhancement of programmes, the quality and organisation of materials, range of assessment methods, alignment of formative and summative assessments, and high-quality assessment feedback provided to students.

### Provision of information

Most examiners were satisfied with the provision of information around assessment processes and the Board of Examiners meetings. Where examiners had not been satisfied with timescales, suggestions were provided with some responses outstanding.

### Term of Office

Examiners reported having received an effective induction and were satisfied with the ongoing support and communications with staff.

Examiners at the end of their period of tenure had enjoyed their time as examiners on programmes at the School. Examiners confirmed opportunities to fully participate in Boards and that teams were responsive to feedback provided. Examiners commented on the commitment and dedication of staff and enjoyed seeing programmes develop over the period of their tenure.

### The Assessment Process

Examiners were satisfied with the range, applied nature and variety of assessment methods, noting a good range of formative and summative assessments.

In general, marking was reported to be consistent and fair. Examiners confirmed internal moderation had taken place and was robust. It was noted that moderation processes improved year-on-year.

Most examiners reported feedback to be comprehensive and constructive, with one examiner noting improvements each year. Some inconsistencies between markers were noted, but it was also highlighted that experienced staff were working to support newer staff to develop their feedback practices. Examiners welcomed the use of marking rubrics.

## **6 Summary**

The College can be reassured by the confirmation that the academic standards of our PGT programmes are commensurate with UK Higher Education expectations. External Examiners were satisfied with the conduct of exam boards, highlighting the effectiveness of Boards and agreed with marks awarded. Examiners commented where improvements had been made to programmes from previous years and welcomed developments made as a result of previous recommendations. Where examiners made specific suggestions regarding further development these were appropriately addressed in responses, with some responses from some areas still to be submitted.

Examiners were satisfied with communication with teaching and administrative staff and most were satisfied with the administration of the assessment process. Where issues arose examiners and response coordinators confirmed these had been or would be addressed, with some responses outstanding.

In line with normal University practice, response coordinators responded to the reports, with issues and suggestions being addressed. Actions to address the points highlighted by the examiners will be taken forward by Schools and Deaneries. No issues were flagged for escalation to the College or Institution for action.

Overall, the reports demonstrate the considerable amount of work done by staff to maintain and enhance the quality of our PGT Programmes.

Some common themes across CMVM PGT provision emerge from reports as follows:

### **2024/25**

For further development:

- Ensure consistency, quality and usefulness of marking and feedback across all courses and markers.
- There were some requests for additional information to support examiners in their roles or for materials to be sent more timeously. However, these were isolated comments rather than a general theme across any individual School/Deanery.

- It is notable that Examiners in reports this year continued to comment on the challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how assessments might be reviewed in light of the wide availability of these tools.

Good practice:

- High quality of programmes and course materials.
- Fair and consistent marking with practices to support marking consistency highlighted.
- Examples of excellent feedback practices in all areas, including comments on recent improvements.
- Good variety of assessment methods
- Suggestions and issues highlighted by examiners were well received and given due consideration.
- Demonstrable commitment to continued development and enhancement of programmes.
- Boards of Examiners conducted in a fair and transparent manner with due consideration given for each student. Examiners confirmed the effectiveness of Boards of Examiners.

## **7 CMVM Themes from previous years**

For ease in tracking development against themes arising from CMVM PGT External Examiner comments, themes from the previous three years are included below. It is noted that some areas for development such as provision of information for Examiners continue to be highlighted as areas for further development, however, it is also noted that many Examiners highlighted good practice and improvements in these areas.

It is reassuring that many of the areas highlighted as areas of good practice such as the standard of programmes and the rigour of the assessment process have been maintained.

### **Themes from 2023/24**

For further development:

- Ensure consistency, quality and usefulness of marking and feedback across all courses and markers including mapping terminology to marking criteria.
- There were some requests for additional information to support examiners in their roles or for materials to be sent more timeously. However, these were isolated comments rather than a general theme across any individual School/Deanery.
- It is notable that Examiners in reports this year were starting to comment on the challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how assessments might be reviewed in light of the recent wide availability of these tools.

Good practice:

- High quality of programmes and course materials.
- Fair and consistent marking with practices to support marking consistency highlighted.
- Examples of excellent feedback practices in all areas.
- Good variety of assessment methods, with specific methods commended.
- Suggestions and issues highlighted by examiners were well received and given due consideration.

- Demonstrable commitment to continued development and enhancement of programmes.
- Boards of Examiners conducted in a fair and transparent manner with due consideration given for each student. Examiners confirmed the effectiveness of both virtual and in-person Boards of Examiners.

### **Themes from 2022/23**

For further development:

- Ensure consistency, quality and usefulness of marking and feedback across all courses and markers including mapping terminology to marking criteria.
- There were some requests for additional information to support examiners in their roles or for materials to be sent more timeously. However these were isolated comments rather than a general theme across any individual School/Deanery.

Good practice:

- High quality of programmes and course materials.
- Fair and consistent marking with practices to support marking consistency highlighted.
- Examples of excellent feedback practices in all areas.
- Good variety of assessment methods, including methods developing applied skills with a number of comments noting support for employability and opportunities to integrate theory with practice.
- Suggestions and issues highlighted by examiners were well received and given due consideration.
- Demonstrable commitment to continued development and enhancement of programmes.
- Boards of Examiners conducted in a fair and transparent manner with due consideration given for each student. A high number of comments confirmed the effectiveness of virtual Boards of Examiners.

### **Themes from 2021/22**

For further development:

- Ensure consistency, quality and usefulness of feedback across all courses and markers including mapping terminology to marking criteria.
- There were some requests for additional information to support examiners in their roles or for materials to be sent more timeously. However these were isolated comments rather than a general theme across any individual School/Deanery.

Good practice:

- High quality of programmes and course materials.
- Fair and consistent marking with practices to support marking consistency highlighted.
- Examples of excellent feedback practices in all areas.
- Good variety of assessment methods, including methods developing applied skills with a number of comments noting support for employability and opportunities to integrate theory with practice.
- Suggestions and issues highlighted by examiners were well received and given due consideration.

- Demonstrable commitment to continued development and enhancement of programmes.
- Boards of Examiners conducted in a fair and transparent manner with due consideration given for each student. A high number of comments confirmed the effectiveness of virtual Boards of Examiners.

Victoria Bennett, Academic Administrator (QA&QE)

April 2026

College of Science and Engineering  
College Quality Assurance Committee  
28<sup>th</sup> October 2025

## External Examiner Data – Undergraduate Reports Academic Year 2024-25

### Description of Paper

This paper provides a summary of the return rate and comments received within the External Examiner reports for Undergraduate programmes and courses for the academic year 2024-2025. The summary aims to highlight key trends and areas for improvement identified in the reports.

### Action Requested/Recommendation

This paper is intended for informational purposes only. Any actions resulting from this paper will be considered as appropriate.

### Background and Context

External Examiners are required to complete an end-of-year report via the External Examiners Reporting System (EERS) or, if necessary, via an offline version. Annual reports for Undergraduate programmes are due by 31<sup>st</sup> July. The structured questions facilitate thematic analysis of the responses, enabling the identification of common themes and issues across programmes.

## College-Wide Data and Themes

### Report Return Rates

The table below illustrates the number of External Examiner reports allocated, the reports submitted, and the Academic Responses provided to completed reports via EERS.

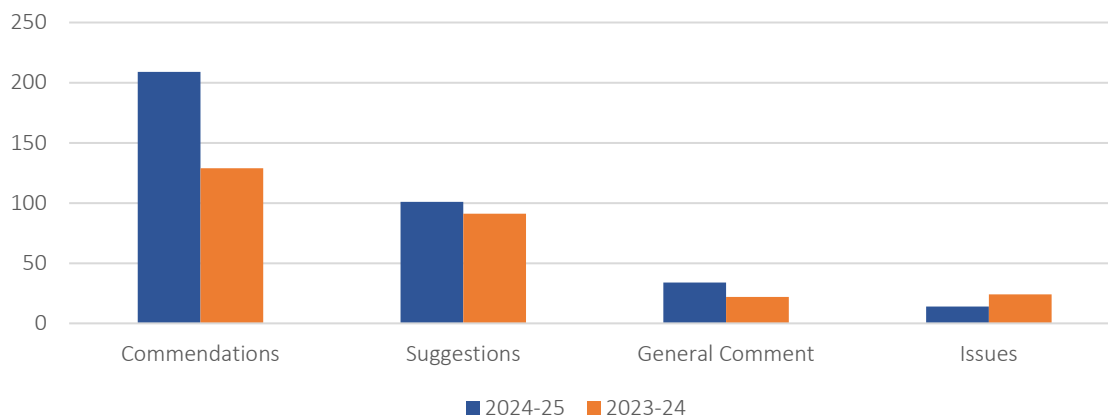
<b>REPORT RETURN RATE: 95%</b>			
School	Total Number of External Examiner Reports allocated/expected	External Examiner Reports Submitted	Academic Responses submitted to completed reports via EERS (response return rate)
Biological Sciences	9	9/9	2 (22%)
Chemistry	4	4/4	4 (100%)
Engineering	6	5/6	5 (100%)
GeoSciences	9	9/9	6 (67%)
Informatics	4	4/4	4 (100%)
Mathematics	4	4/4	4 (100%)
Physics and Astronomy	5	4/5	0 (0%)

*\*Table includes offline report submissions. Data accurate as of 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025.*

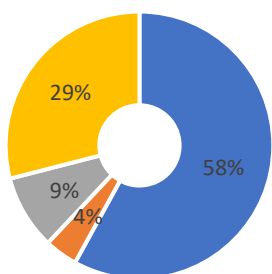
The return rate for Undergraduate (UG) reports has shown a consistent increase over the past five years, rising from 76% in 2020/21 to 81% in 2021/22, 87% in both 2022/23 and 2023/24, and now reaching 95% in 2024/25. This upward trend highlights a positive shift in engagement with the Quality Assurance process and reflects the dedicated efforts of both academic and professional services staff in ensuring timely report submissions.

The academic response rate to completed reports within EERS currently stands at 64%. This marks an improvement over previous UG and PGT return rates and represents a positive step in closing the feedback loop with External Examiners. While there remains room for improvement, it is acknowledged that the timing within the academic cycle—particularly around periods of leave and the summer break—can present challenges.

### Examiners' Comments by Category

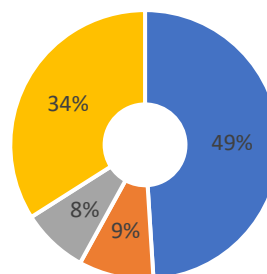


2024-25

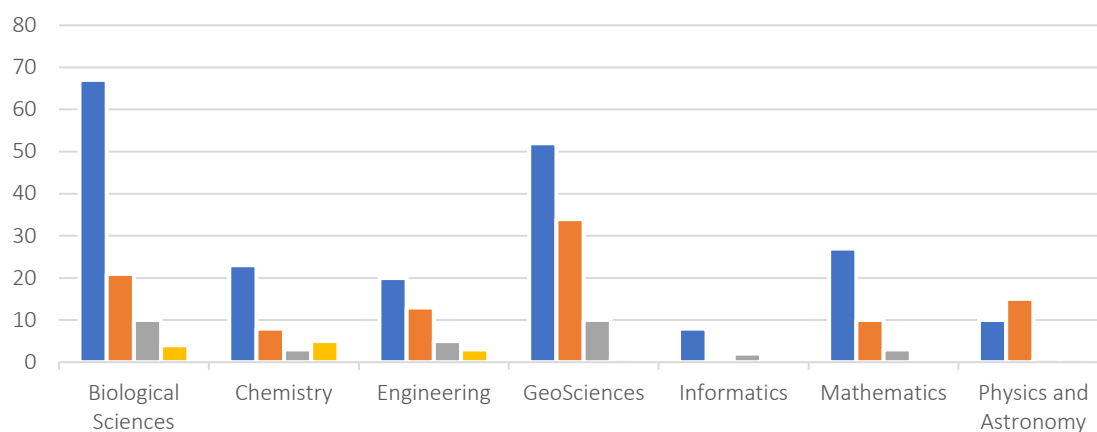


■ Commendations ■ Issues  
■ General Comments ■ Suggestions

2023-24

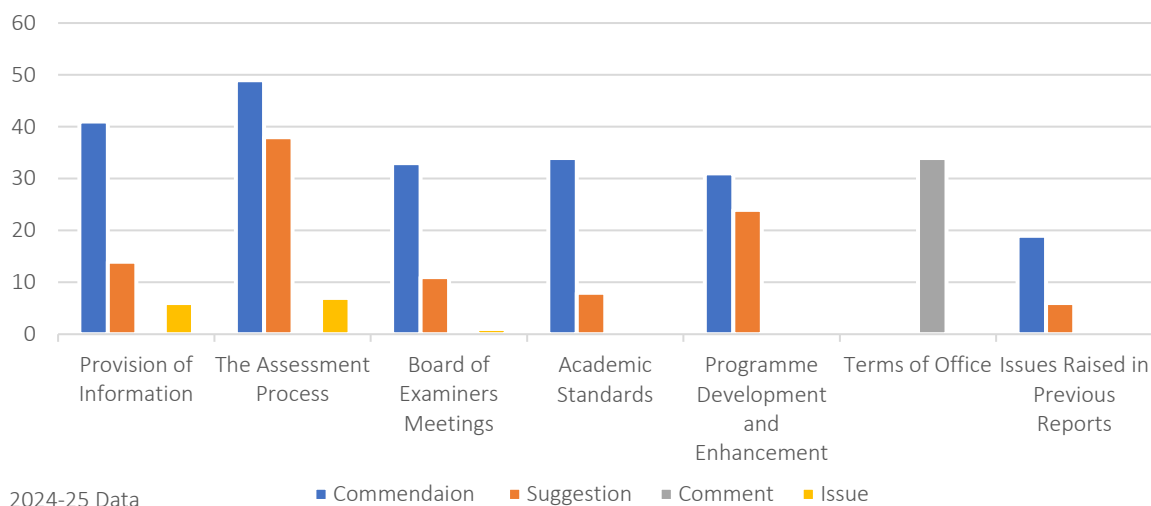


■ Commendations ■ Issues  
■ General Comments ■ Suggestions



2024-25 Data

■ Commendaion ■ Suggestion ■ Comment ■ Issue



- A total of 207 commendations, 101 suggestions, 34 general comments, and 14 issues were recorded within EERS this year. By comparison, the previous year recorded 129 commendations, 91 suggestions, 22 general comments, and 24 issues. This reflects a notable increase in commendations and a significant reduction in issues raised, both are positive developments for Schools across the College. The rise in commendations suggests growing recognition of good practice.
- Overall engagement also improved, with 356 total comments recorded compared to 266 the previous year—an approximate increase of 34%. It is worth noting that the report return rate also rose from 87% to 95%, which would naturally result in a higher volume of comments. Nevertheless, the number of commendations, for example, increased at a rate that exceeded the proportional rise in report submissions.
- Suggestions primarily focused on the assessment process, as well as programme development and enhancement, as indicated in the table above. These suggestions were largely aimed at improving specific aspects of individual programmes or courses. Broader themes are addressed in the ‘Thematic Reporting Areas’ section below. Issues raised were related to the provision of information and the assessment process; however, these were specific to individual cases and were reported to Schools within the respective reports, as appropriate.

### Thematic Reporting Areas

#### Provision of Information

External Examiners commended the provision of information across the College, highlighting improvements in organisation, accessibility, and timeliness. Many praised the structured access to course materials—including draft examination papers, assessed work samples, and supporting documentation—often made available via Learn and SharePoint. The responsiveness of professional services and academic staff was frequently noted, with particular appreciation for clear communication, early scheduling of meetings, and prompt handling of queries. While some feedback pointed to occasional delays or inconsistencies in access, these were generally resolved efficiently and did not detract from the overall positive experience. The induction process for new External Examiners was also described as excellent, with helpful guidance and support throughout. This feedback reflects continued progress in ensuring External Examiners are well-informed and able to contribute effectively to quality assurance processes.

#### The Assessment Process

External Examiners across the College recognised the assessment processes as rigorous, fair, and well-aligned with programme and course learning outcomes, as well as the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. They praised the breadth and authenticity of assessment types—including essays, presentations, lab reports,

fieldwork, and synoptic exams—noting that these methods effectively challenged students and supported diverse learning styles. Innovative approaches, such as ungraded assessments and the integration of real-world tasks, were highlighted positively. Moderation procedures were generally regarded as robust; however, suggestions were made to enhance consistency and transparency, particularly in the marking and feedback of project work. Concerns were raised regarding the volume of assessments in some modules, the impact of generative AI on online formats, and the clarity of marking criteria. Feedback quality was frequently commended, though variability across courses was noted, with calls for greater standardisation and more actionable guidance. Overall, the assessment process was viewed as a strength, with staff commended for their commitment to maintaining high standards and supporting student success.

### Board of Examiners' Meetings

External Examiners across the College reported that Board of Examiners meetings were well-organised, professionally conducted, and operated in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Both in-person and virtual formats were used, with many praising the efficiency and inclusivity of online meetings, while others emphasised the value of in-person engagement for fostering deeper discussion and connection with staff and students. Examiners commended the thorough preparation, clear documentation, and fair decision-making processes, particularly in handling borderline cases and applying mitigation measures. However, several comments raised concerns about the clarity and consistency of special circumstances procedures, with suggestions to streamline processes and improve transparency around severity and impact. Issues with software systems, data presentation formats, and the timing of information delivery were also noted. Overall, the Boards were recognised for their commitment to fairness, student support, and continuous improvement, with recommendations to enhance communication, data handling, and opportunities for direct engagement.

### Academic Standards

External Examiners consistently praised the high academic standards maintained across the College, noting that degree programmes are rigorous, well-structured, and aligned with professional benchmarks and qualification frameworks. Courses were described as challenging and intellectually stimulating, with assessments that effectively tested students' understanding, problem-solving abilities, and practical skills. Examiners highlighted the comparability of academic standards with other leading UK institutions. The diversity of assessment methods was commended, although calls were made for greater consistency in marking practices, particularly for dissertations and project work, alongside clearer and more standardised rubrics across modules. Suggestions were made to retain niche programmes of international relevance and also to ensure parity between coursework and exam-based assessments. Discussions surrounding the use of AI tools in academic work were noted as thoughtful and proactive by some Examiners, reflecting a commitment to academic integrity while adapting to evolving educational practices.

### Issues Raised in Previous Reports

Responses from External Examiners regarding issues raised in previous reports were mixed. Several Examiners expressed satisfaction that their comments had been acknowledged and acted upon, noting improvements in areas such as assessment timing, moderation processes, and feedback mechanisms. Others, however, reported uncertainty about whether their suggestions had been addressed, often due to a lack of follow-up or access to previous reports. This lack of clarity led to some frustration, particularly among newly appointed Examiners who were not provided with prior reports during their induction. A few Examiners highlighted ongoing issues that remain under review, such as project marking moderation and assessment load. These findings underscore the need for more consistent communication and structured feedback loops to ensure that all Examiner input is acknowledged and transparently addressed. Improving access to historical reports and providing updates on actions taken would help foster a more engaged and transparent quality assurance process with External Examiners across the College.

### Programme Development and Enhancement

External Examiners commended the thoughtful and innovative approaches to programme development across the College, highlighting strong alignment with industry needs, academic standards, and student support.

Programmes were praised for their diverse assessment methods, integration of real-world applications, and responsiveness to emerging trends such as AI and interdisciplinary learning. Examiners noted the value of authentic assessments, fieldwork, and collaborative projects in enhancing student engagement and employability. Several Schools were recognised for fostering inclusive learning environments and building academic communities through retreats, workshops, and social initiatives. However, areas for improvement were identified, including the need for more consistent use of rubrics, structured feedback, and clearer processes for resolving marking discrepancies. Concerns were raised about assessment overload, variability in marking turnaround times, and the impact of AI on academic integrity. Recommendations included standardising feedback practices, reviewing assessment balance across programmes, and developing clear guidance on ethical AI use. Overall, the feedback reflects a strong commitment to continuous enhancement and innovation in programme design and delivery.

### Terms of Office

External Examiners reflected positively on their terms of office, describing the experience as rewarding, insightful, and professionally enriching. Many expressed appreciation for the dedication and responsiveness of academic and administrative staff, particularly in navigating challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, industrial action, and the evolving impact of AI on assessment. Online and hybrid meetings were generally well-received, though some Examiners recommended a return to more in-person engagement to foster deeper connections with staff and students. Induction processes were praised for their clarity and support; however, a few Examiners noted gaps in onboarding and access to systems, suggesting improvements in communication and technical setup. Final-year Examiners commended the professionalism and fairness of the Board of Examiners, highlighting the thoughtful handling of borderline cases and special circumstances. Overall, the feedback underscores the value of the External Examiner role and the importance of continued support, transparency, and adaptability in maintaining academic standards and enhancing the student experience.

### Summary

External Examiners provided broadly positive feedback across the College, commending the clarity and accessibility of information, the professionalism of staff, and the consistently high academic standards. Assessment and feedback were highlighted as key strengths, with Examiners praising the diversity and authenticity of assessment methods, as well as their fairness and alignment with learning outcomes.

Recurring themes also offered valuable insights for enhancement. Suggestions included ensuring more consistent use of rubrics, providing structured and timely feedback, and clarifying processes for resolving marking discrepancies—all of which align closely with the College's current Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities. Examiners also noted opportunities to address assessment overload, improve consistency in marking turnaround times, and consider the evolving impact of AI on academic integrity.

Board of Examiners meetings were widely regarded as well-organised and fair, with strong preparation and effective handling of borderline cases and mitigation. As with previous years, some Examiners expressed a preference for increased in-person engagement to foster deeper connections. This has been a repeated theme in reports since the COVID period and a move to more online engagement.

Overall, the report reflects a strong commitment to academic quality and continuous improvement, with clear opportunities to align institutional priorities with the valuable insights provided by External Examiners.

If readers wish to explore individual comments related to themes for their School, they can access the EERS system via the following link: [External Examiner Reporting](#)

---

### Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications associated with the paper, discounting any potential actions resulting from wider discussion. Should any actions be identified, resource implications will be assessed.

### Risk management

No risks are identified. Regular monitoring will be in place to ensure any emerging risks are promptly addressed.

### Equality & diversity

An equality assessment is not required for this paper. However, any future actions stemming from this paper will be evaluated for their impact on equality and diversity.

### **Author**

*Scott Harrison, Quality and Curriculum Administrator  
Student Administration, College of Science and Engineering  
9<sup>th</sup> October, 2025*

College of Science and Engineering  
College Quality Assurance Committee  
3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025

## External Examiner Data – Postgraduate Taught Reports Academic Year 2024-25

### Description of Paper

This paper provides a summary of the return rate and the comments received within External Examiner reports for Postgraduate Taught programmes and courses for the 2024–2025 academic year. The purpose of this summary is to highlight key trends and identify areas for improvement noted within the reports.

### Action Requested/Recommendation

This paper is intended for informational purposes only. Any actions resulting from this paper will be considered as appropriate.

### Background and Context

External Examiners are required to complete an end-of-year report via the External Examiners Reporting System (EERS) or, where necessary, using an offline version. Annual reports for Postgraduate Taught programmes must be submitted by 30 November. The structured questions within the reporting template support thematic analysis of responses, enabling the identification of recurring themes and issues across programmes.

---

### College-Wide Data and Themes

#### Report Return Rates

The table below provides an overview of the number of External Examiner reports allocated, the reports submitted, and the Academic Responses recorded via EERS. Please note that Academic Responses submitted offline are not included in these figures.

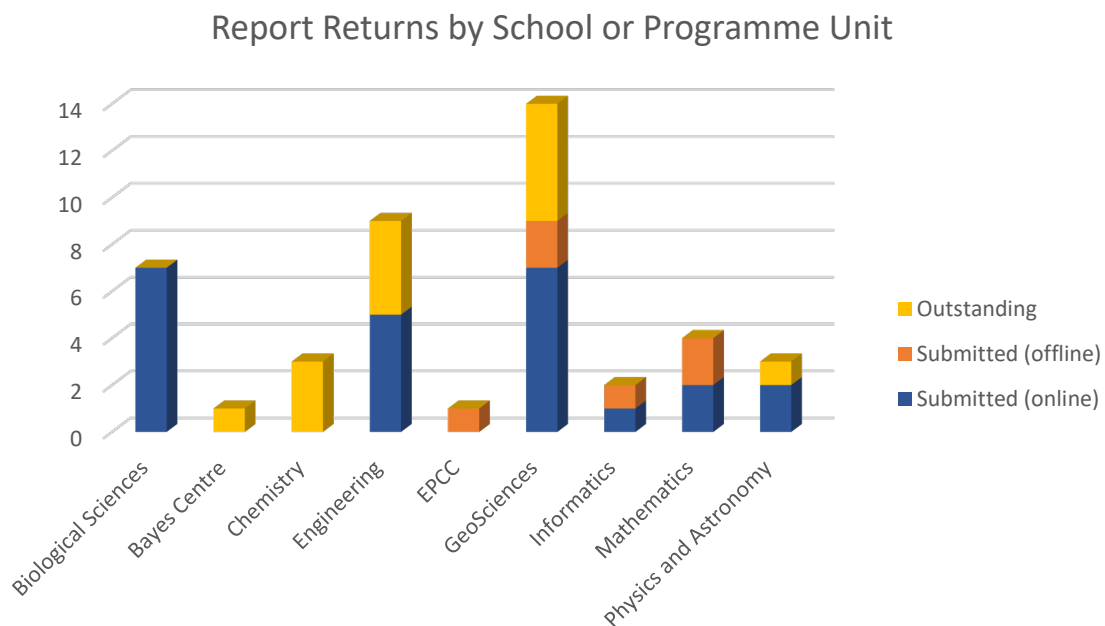
REPORT RETURN RATE: 68%			
School/Programme Units	Total Number of External Examiner Reports Allocated/Expected	External Examiner Reports Submitted	Academic Responses Submitted to Completed Reports via EERS
Biological Sciences	7	7/7	6 (86%)
Bayes Centre	1	0/1	0 (0%)
Chemistry	3	0/3	0 (0%)
Engineering	9	5/9	1 (25%)
EPCC	1	1/1 (1 offline)	0 (100%)
GeoSciences	14	9/14 (2 offline)	6 (86%)
Informatics	2	2/2 (1 offline)	1 (100%)
Mathematics	4	4/4 (2 offline)	2 (100%)
Physics and Astronomy	3	2/3	0 (0%)
Total	44	30/44	68%

*\* Data accurate as of 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026.*

The return rate for Postgraduate Taught (PGT) programmes has continued to decline, in contrast to the upward trend observed in Undergraduate (UG) reporting. UG return rates increased from 76% in 2020/21 to 81% in 2021/22, rising further to 87% in both 2022/23 and 2023/24, before reaching 95% in 2024/25. Conversely, PGT return rates fell from 84% in 2021/22 to 78% in 2022/23, then to 76% in 2023/24, and have now decreased to 68% in 2024/25 with 14 reports outstanding across Schools.

While several Schools and Programme Units have achieved full (100%) submission, others continue to show gaps in reporting. Notably, offline submissions account for 20% of completed reports, suggesting potential challenges with using the EERS system for online reporting. Offline versions of annual reports have arisen due to issues with Multi-Factor Authentication and, most commonly, expired credentials resulting from late submissions. However, there are still cases where examiners choose to bypass EERS entirely, which can create additional difficulties for both College and School reporting. The widening disparity between UG and PGT return rates may indicate differences in engagement, or administrative pressures affecting PGT reporting processes.

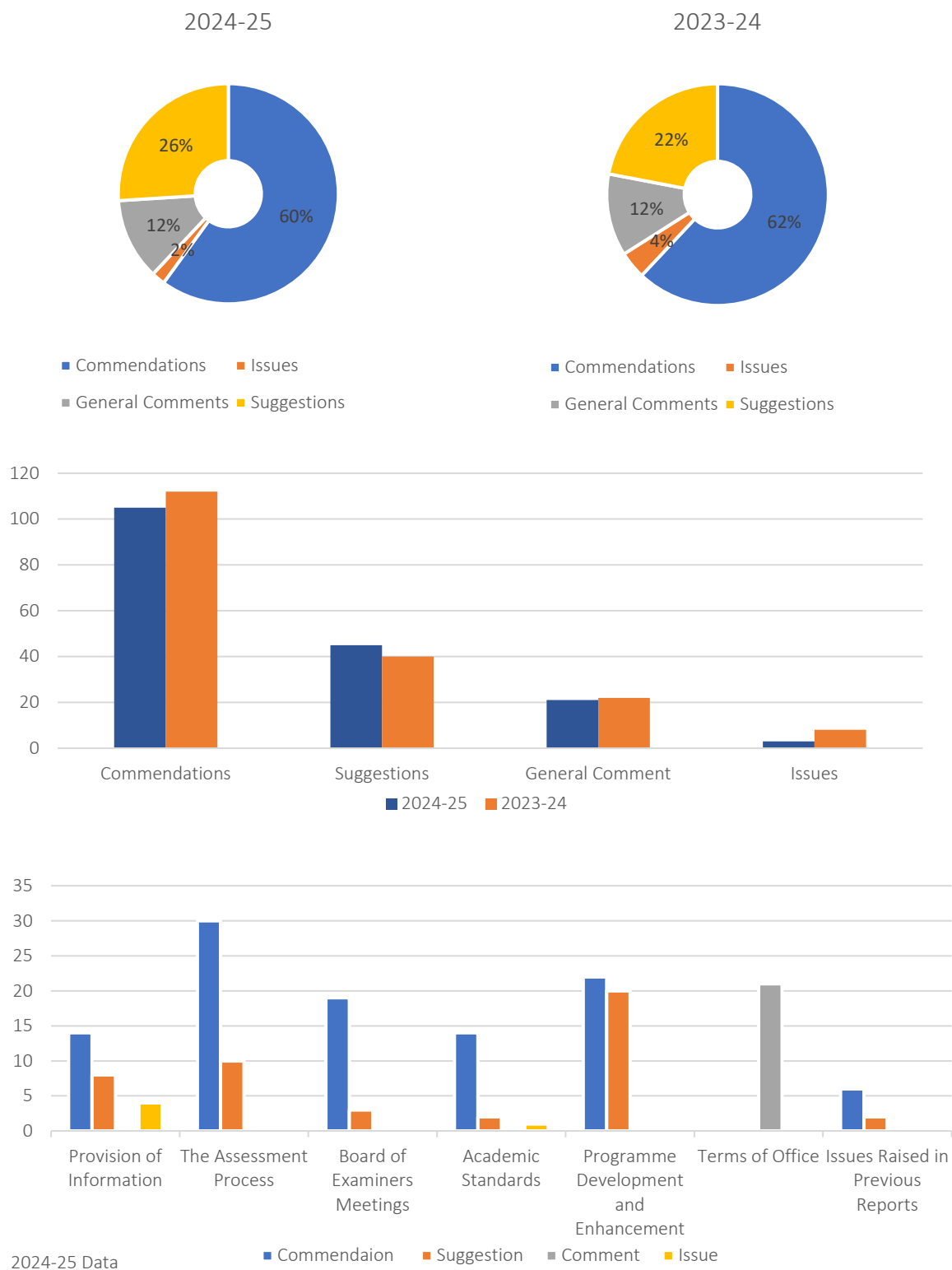
It should also be noted that manual data collection was required to produce the figures presented in this report, due to inconsistencies within the EERS system and variation in reporting approaches across Schools. This process involved removing submissions entered under the wrong academic year, as these cannot be included and create complications for future reporting. For example, some examiners have already submitted reports for 2025–26, which will need to be removed centrally. Other recurring issues include examiners who are no longer in post or reports linked to programmes that no longer run. In one instance, an examiner continued to submit reports for a programme that has been confirmed as inactive. These issues highlight the need for a broader discussion on resolving system inconsistencies and improving engagement and communication regarding expectations for examiners completing reports.



The academic response rate to completed reports within EERS currently stands at 67%. It is important to note, however, that this figure excludes offline reports, as these cannot be reliably tracked within the College. This limitation should be taken into account when interpreting the data.

Even with this caveat, the previous reporting cycle recorded a response rate of 47%, indicating a notable improvement in the PGT academic response rate and representing a positive step toward strengthening the feedback loop with External Examiners. While further progress is still required, it is recognised that the timing of reporting within the academic cycle—particularly in the lead-up to the festive period—can create additional pressures. However, it should be noted that the Academic Response is an important aspect of the External Examiners process and should be completed. It reinforces that the work undertaken by examiners is important and valued, and it also helps to close the feedback loop by responding directly to the suggestions and commendations highlighted in annual reports.

In the section below, comments by category have been recorded. Please note that these figures do not include offline submissions. Reports submitted in the incorrect reporting year or too early in the reporting cycle have also been excluded.



- A total of 105 commendations, 45 suggestions, 21 general comments, and 3 issues were recorded within EERS for the 2024–25 academic year. By comparison, the 2023–24 reporting cycle recorded 112

commendations, 40 suggestions, 22 general comments, and 8 issues. This reflects a broadly consistent level of feedback across the College; however, it should be noted that reports submitted offline or under incorrect reporting years are not included in these figures and may have increased the totals had they been captured appropriately.

- Overall engagement decreased marginally, with 174 total comments recorded compared with 182 in the previous year — a reduction of approximately 4%. It is also important to note that the report return rate declined from 76% to 68%, which would naturally contribute to a lower overall volume of comments. Given this reduced return rate, the level of engagement evidenced within the comments submitted appears relatively consistent.
- Suggestions primarily focused on programme development and enhancement, as well as the assessment process, as indicated in the table above. These suggestions were largely aimed at improving specific aspects of individual programmes or courses. Broader themes are addressed in the *Thematic Reporting Areas* section below. Issues raised related to the provision of information and academic standards; however, these were specific to individual cases and were reported to the relevant Schools within the respective reports, as appropriate.

### Thematic Reporting Areas

This section outlines the thematic reporting areas addressed in External Examiner Reports. For each thematic area, a corresponding commendation, suggestion, issue or comment has been included to highlight specific aspects that Examiners have commented on.

#### Provision of Information

Most External Examiners reported receiving adequate and timely information to support their roles, including access to assessed work, examination board arrangements, and relevant documentation. Positive feedback highlighted efficient communication, well-organised online platforms, and noticeable improvements on previous years in providing sufficient time for review. Several examiners also commended specific staff members and teams for their professionalism and responsiveness, noting that such practices contributed significantly to the smooth operation of assessment processes.

However, some areas for improvement were identified. Suggestions included sharing borderline dissertations and provisional marks earlier, providing clearer timelines for draft examination papers, and ensuring programme handbooks are distributed at the start of the academic year. Concerns were raised regarding delays caused by late marking and insufficient communication about curriculum changes, such as programme changes or closures. Recommendations emphasised the need for improved advance notice and greater transparency in decision-making processes. Overall, while the provision of information was deemed satisfactory, further refinements in these areas would enhance efficiency and contribute to increased examiner satisfaction.

*Commendation – ‘I received adequate and timely information about the courses and how to fulfil my role and about arrangements for the Board of Examiners meetings. I had a good amount of time to do this work, so very much appreciate the improvement over last year.’ School of GeoSciences*

*Issue – ‘As discussed at the meeting. It would be helpful to see borderline dissertations prior to consideration at the board. This didn't happen, but I have subsequently been given access to the dissertations and I am happy with the decisions taken.’ School of Informatics*

#### The Assessment Process

External Examiners across the College recognised the assessment processes as rigorous, fair, and well aligned with programme and course learning outcomes, as well as the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. Examiners commended the breadth and relevance of assessment methods, noting a well-considered mix of written, practical, and reflective tasks across programmes. Innovative approaches—such as case studies,

portfolios, and creative projects—were highlighted for their effectiveness in developing both academic and transferable skills.

Internal moderation was generally viewed as robust, with clear evidence of double marking and appropriate reconciliation of discrepancies. However, some examiners recommended more explicit documentation of moderation processes, particularly in instances where significant mark variations had occurred. Feedback to students was widely praised for its detail, constructiveness, and strong feedforward practices that support ongoing improvement.

Areas identified for enhancement included reducing over-reliance on reflective assessments in certain programmes, ensuring a more balanced weighting of examination questions, and providing External Examiners with earlier access to marked dissertations. Additional suggestions included expanding the use of standardised marking rubrics, offering clearer timelines for assessment submissions, and improving transparency around moderation in borderline cases. Concerns about academic integrity—particularly regarding the use of AI tools and instances of self-plagiarism—were also raised. Recommendations included greater use of oral examinations to help verify the originality of student work. The assessment process was regarded as fair, rigorous, and appropriately aligned with intended learning outcomes. However, improvements in consistency, communication, and workload management would further strengthen its effectiveness.

Commendation – *‘The School has very detailed policies about the degree classification and follows these transparently and fairly.’* School of Mathematics

Suggestion – *‘The marking was consistent. It would be good to see greater use of standardised marking rubrics in PropaGate such that students can see more clearly which elements of the assignment were strongest or weakest and how this influences their marks.’* School of Biological Sciences

### Board of Examiner Meetings

Meetings were widely praised for being well organised, fair, and transparent, with clear adherence to University regulations and procedures. Examiners welcomed hybrid formats, combining online and in-person participation, which was regarded as both effective and inclusive. IT arrangements for remote access were reported to function smoothly, enabling full engagement. Discussions were described as thorough, particularly in relation to individual course results, borderline cases, and special circumstances. Many examiners also commended the professionalism of staff and the clarity of documentation, noting improvements in summary sheets and decision-making processes.

Suggestions for enhancement included incorporating student feedback into course-level discussions, providing historical performance data to support trend analysis, and introducing algorithmic or flowchart-based guidance for borderline decisions to promote greater consistency. Concerns were raised regarding the late submission of special-circumstance requests and occasional technical issues, such as missing reconciliation data or incorrect mark entries, leading to recommendations for targeted process reviews. The Board of Examiners process is viewed as rigorous and collegial, with strong engagement from academic staff, though refinements in procedural efficiency, and consistency would further strengthen its effectiveness.

Commendation – *‘Well run, kept to time, but with space for conversation. All of us (SRUC and external examiners) work in the HE sector and it is interesting and informative talking about issues that concern us all, e.g., using rubrics, AI coversheets, in-person assessments and learning from good practice in our respective institutions.’* School of GeoSciences

Suggestion – *‘The student voice could be included in the discussion of each course, in addition to the performance of students and the mark distribution. For example, a slide could be inserted in the presentation of each course, summarising positive feedback and constructive feedback given by students in evaluation surveys, and actions by members of staff to address the feedback.’* School of Engineering

### Academic Standards

External Examiners consistently praised high academic standards maintained across the College, noting that degree programmes are rigorous, well structured, and aligned with professional benchmarks and qualification frameworks. Academic standards were widely regarded as strong and comparable to—if not exceeding—those at other UK institutions. Examiners highlighted the relevance and currency of course content, the strength of pedagogical approaches, and robust assessment processes aligned with postgraduate expectations. Programmes were commended for effectively preparing students for professional practice or further study, offering comprehensive curricula and opportunities for students to develop key skills such as research communication and critical thinking.

Areas for improvement included closer scrutiny and clearer documentation of moderation processes at the pass–fail boundary to ensure consistency and fairness. Suggestions were made for more explicit guidance on the use of AI in assessments, and maintaining transparency in benchmarking practices. Academic standards remain strong; however, further refinements in moderation practices, clarity on emerging issues such as AI, and continued evolution of course design will help to sustain excellence.

*Commendation – ‘The standards are often higher than what I have seen elsewhere. In general, my view is that standards are dropping with time across many UK institutions, for many reasons. The School of Physics and Astronomy at Edinburgh are a brilliant counter example to this, demonstrating that it is possible to simultaneously retain high standards, excellent outcomes, and outstanding student feedback.’* School of Physics and Astronomy

*Suggestion – ‘I think there is some generosity around the pass-fail boundary, hence my suggestions for more independent moderation and evidence of scrutiny there.’* School of GeoSciences

### Issues Raised in Previous Reports

Schools have generally demonstrated strong and sustained progress in addressing concerns identified in previous reports. Examiners noted that many earlier recommendations have been acted upon effectively, including substantial restructuring of several MSc programmes, revisions to teaching content that have led to greater diversity in student work, and clearer processes for dissertation time-management and feedback. Improvements to assessment design—such as refined grading distributions and weighting structures—also indicate a considered response to prior feedback. Furthermore, Schools have taken proactive steps to mitigate risks associated with generative AI, reflecting a responsible and forward-looking approach to academic standards.

Some areas however require continued attention to ensure full alignment with earlier recommendations. Several examiners reported limited access to module- and programme-level reviews noting enhanced transparency and more systematic communication of these processes would help demonstrate how concerns are being addressed. Examiners also suggested the introduction of more detailed AI declarations in coursework to support academic integrity procedures and facilitate appropriate investigation where necessary. While most previous recommendations have now been satisfactorily addressed, ongoing focus on ethical AI use, student engagement, and consistent assessment practice will be important to sustaining positive progress.

*Commendation – ‘I had previously pointed out that some courses that don't use an exam as the main assessment component have a rather narrow range of grades (low standard deviation). This year, various changes to the assessments or their weighting have resulted in a wider range of grades (increased standard deviation). These better reflect the range of students' abilities and are more in line with the grade distributions of courses that are assessed by exams.’* School of Mathematics

*Suggestion – ‘Given the increased use of Generative AI for students in all aspects of their work, it would be useful for the AI declarations attached to coursework to be more granular than generic statements about which models*

*students have used. For example, coursework declarations could ask for more detail to be given for each section. This should hopefully make students more conscious of where they are using Gen-AI, but also make academic misconduct investigations easier.'* School of Biological Sciences

### Programme Development and Enhancement

Programmes were widely praised for their strong structure, high-quality teaching, and innovative practices. Commendations highlighted the use of diverse assessment methods, the effective integration of theoretical and practical learning, and the provision of excellent feedback mechanisms. Creative modules were recognised as examples of good practice, alongside approaches such as peer review, flexible assessment options, and proactive support for students identified as being at academic risk. Many programmes were also noted for preparing students effectively for careers and further research, offering valuable opportunities for industry engagement and interdisciplinary learning.

Key recommendations focused on enhancing hands-on experiences, increasing industry involvement through guest lectures and collaborative projects, and ensuring dissertation topics remain closely aligned with programme themes. Several examiners raised concerns regarding generative AI, recommending clearer guidelines and declarations to uphold academic integrity. Additional suggestions included improving student feedback response rates through tools such as QR codes, providing assignment checklists to support clarity of expectations, and maintaining rigorous moderation processes. Overall, programmes are performing strongly, but continued development in response to technological advancements, evolving student expectations, and emerging industry trends will further strengthen their relevance and impact.

*Commendation – 'A large number of MSc programmes in UK universities have a short lifespan because they offer overly specialised courses of limited depth to capitalise on evolving demand trends. By contrast, this programme combines courses that offer both strong foundations on key theoretical concepts and a broad knowledge of cutting-edge applications, which are built on fundamental ideas. This design choice evidences the department's commitment to education and explains the longevity of this programme.'* School of Engineering

*Suggestion – 'As with all programmes, there are now challenges around the use of ChatGPT and similar Generative AI LLMs by students. Assessment methods, in particular for project-based courses without exams, have to be adapted to this new situation. There is still some work to do, not just by the School of Mathematics in Edinburgh but by the whole sector, to develop methods and guidelines that work well in this new environment.'* School of Mathematics

### Terms of Office

Most examiners reported positive experiences, noting that induction was either not applicable due to prior experience or effective when provided. Strong support from administrative teams and well-organised processes—particularly during examination boards—were frequently commended. Examiners highlighted the professionalism, fairness, and attention to detail demonstrated in the management of assessments and student outcomes. Many also expressed appreciation for the quality of teaching, innovative assessment practices, and the responsiveness of staff to feedback, all of which contributed to maintaining high standards and delivering positive student experiences.

Suggestions for enhancement included sharing lecturers' verbal reports in written form prior to meetings, improving clarity regarding External Examiners' term dates, and ensuring that responses to examiners are provided before final examination sign-off. Other recommendations included preparing main and resit examinations concurrently to avoid delays, as well as continuing efforts to enhance transparency and engagement. The feedback reflects strong satisfaction with current practices, accompanied by constructive suggestions aimed at preserving quality and further improving efficiency.

Comment – *‘I am very impressed with the programme and how it has evolved in the last few years in terms of accreditation and diversification of the student community (Home and Overseas students from different world regions). The academics are all enthusiastic and committed.’* School of Engineering

Comment – *‘As this is my final report, I would like to thank everyone at the School of Physics and Astronomy for our time working together. It was a very valuable and enjoyable experience for me and I hope I was able to fulfil the role as external adequately.’* School of Physics and Astronomy

### Summary

External Examiners provided highly positive feedback on PGT programmes, highlighting strong academic standards, rigorous and well-aligned assessment processes, and innovative assessment methods that effectively support the development of students’ academic and transferable skills. Feedback mechanisms, Board of Examiners operations, and administrative support were consistently praised for their quality, fairness, and efficiency.

Overall, the PGT programmes and examiner comments demonstrate a strong foundation of quality and innovation, coupled with a clear commitment to continuous enhancement. Key priorities for the coming period include improving the timeliness and transparency of information sharing, addressing emerging challenges associated with generative AI, strengthening student engagement, and evolving programmes to reflect industry trends and technological developments.

If readers wish to explore individual comments related to themes within their School, they can access the EERS system via the following link: [External Examiner Reporting](#)

---

### Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications associated with this paper, excluding any potential actions arising from wider discussion. Should any actions be identified, associated resource implications will be assessed accordingly.

### Risk management

No risks have been identified. Regular monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that any emerging risks are promptly detected and addressed.

### Equality & diversity

An equality impact assessment is not required for this paper. However, any future actions stemming from the recommendations or discussions within this paper will be evaluated for their impact on equality and diversity.

### **Author**

*Scott Harrison, Quality and Curriculum Administrator  
Student Administration, College of Science and Engineering*

### **Date**

*10 February 2026*

**Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

**14 May 2026**

**Professional Services Review and  
Student Support Thematic Review**

**Description of paper**

1. Progress update on the review of the Professional Services review process and the current Student Support Thematic Review.

**Fit with remit**

<b>Quality Assurance Committee</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.	<b>Y</b>
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.	<b>Y</b>

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. For information.

**Background and context**

3. At the meeting on 30 September 2025 the Committee agreed to suspend the [Student Support Service Annual Review \(SSSAR\)](#) pending the outcome of a review of the University's approach to student facing services review in order to ensure closer alignment with the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#), and peers across the sector. The suspension of the SSSAR process will allow Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) the time and space to conduct a consultation on options for an enhanced Professional Services Review process.
4. To ensure that student facing professional services continue to be reviewed during the intervening period, the Committee also agreed to proceed with a [Student Support Thematic Review](#) with initial consultations with student groups taking place during 2025-26 and main review taking place in 2026-27. The Thematic Review will focus on how our student facing services support our LGBTQ+ students and is being led by Fiona McClement (the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead and Chair of the EDI Committee) and Syjli Ramjutham (Vice President Welfare, Students' Association).
5. Learning from the Thematic Review will inform the recommendations of the Professional Services process review. Both reviews will report back to SQAC by end of 2026-27 with any approved new arrangements implemented at the start of 2027-28.

**Discussion****6. Professional Services Review**

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) requires all tertiary sector institutions to periodically review and evaluate their professional services contributing to the student experience on a periodic cycle of not more than six years in line with the [TQEF Guidance](#). The University of Edinburgh meets the requirement via the [Student Support Service Annual Review \(SSSAR\)](#) and the periodic [Student Support Thematic Review](#). The SSSAR process has previously been commended by both internal and external reviewers for successfully highlighting good practice and sharing insights across services. However, feedback from reviewers has also occasionally noted a tendency for service reflections to be driven by a service (as opposed to student user) perspective and the need for impact analysis to determine actions. Effective student engagement and an emphasis on impact evaluation are key underlying principles of the TQEF.

7. The key sector reference points are the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland's [Focus On project for 2021-22: Professional Services Review](#) and the [thematic analysis of learning from the Enhancement Led Institutional Review \(ELIR\) method](#) (published in September 2022). However, some of the information presented in these reports is now out of date as institutions have developed their practices. Therefore, AQS is conducting benchmarking exercise to understand the current approaches taken by institutions across the Scottish sector and to inform options for consultation with key stakeholders across the University during semester one, 2026-27.
8. Our benchmarking to date points to two approaches to professional services review within Scotland:
  - Integrated - where professional services are represented or considered to varying extents in the academic review of a subject area, our Internal Periodic Review (IPR);
  - Targeted - where an institution focuses review activity on one or more specific professional service (akin to an IPR of a service), or themes (akin to our Thematic Review process but on a more regular or cyclical basis), or a combination of both.
9. We will present a detailed analysis of our benchmarking to SQAC in September along with a set of proposals for wider consultation with key stakeholders across the University during semester one, 2026-27.

**10. Student Support Thematic Review**

The VP Welfare has undertaken initial consultations with student groups to understand the scope of the review and inform the planning for the main review activities which will take place across the academic year 2026-27. The remaining places on the review team are currently being recruited to and an initial meeting of the team will be held prior to the start of the 2026-27 academic year.

At the September meeting of SQAC we will present a detailed report on the initial student groups, review team membership and plans for further student and staff consultation sessions.

### **Resource implications**

11. The coordination of the reviews and implementation of a revised Professional Services Review process will be taken forward as part of the core business of AQS.

### **Risk management**

12. There is an institutional risk in relation to compliance if the University's processes are not aligned with external requirements. The University's Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite states it is risk averse to compliance risks.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

13. The paper does not contribute to the climate emergency and sustainable development goals. It is fulfilling an external regulatory requirement.

### **Equality & diversity**

14. No equality impacts have been identified by AQS in relation to the proposed changes.

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

15. AQS will communicate and implement any changes, and evaluate the impact of these as part of its core business.

### **Authors**

Brian Connolly and Meg Batty,  
Academic Quality and Standards  
May 2026

### **Presenter**

Brian Connolly,  
Academic Quality and Standards

### **Freedom of Information**

The paper is open.

**If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact [academic.quality@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academic.quality@ed.ac.uk) or Academic Quality and Standards, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL.**

**Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

**14 May 2026**

**Scotland’s Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)**

**Description of paper**

1. Progress update on University activities in relation to Scotland’s Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP).
2. This paper does not contribute to the Strategy 2030 outcomes. It is a regulatory requirement.

**Fit with remit**

<b>Quality Assurance Committee</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University’s quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.	<b>Y</b>
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.	<b>Y</b>

**Action requested / recommendation**

3. For information.

**Background and context**

4. [Scotland’s Tertiary Enhancement Programme](#) (STEP) is a key delivery mechanism of the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#). STEP is jointly managed by QAA Scotland and the College Development Network (CDN) and is designed to enable Scotland’s colleges and universities to work together to improve and enhance learning, teaching, the student experience, and staff development across tertiary provision.
5. At the heart of STEP are collaborative enhancement projects that will produce outcomes and outputs of value to the entire tertiary sector. Each project involves at least one college and at least one university, and students working in partnership with staff. The topic for the first cycle of STEP (2024-2028) is Supporting Diverse Learner Journeys.
6. The University of Edinburgh is co-lead, with Edinburgh College, of the Supporting Access, Progression and Successful Outcomes (SAPSO) project in partnership with the following institutions: University of Glasgow; University of Dundee; Glasgow Caledonian University; University of the Highlands and Islands; City of Glasgow College; Dumfries and Galloway College; Dundee and Angus College; Forth Valley College; Glasgow Clyde College; Glasgow Kelvin College; New College Lanarkshire; South Lanarkshire College; West College Scotland; West Lothian College.

### Discussion

7. The SAPSO project seeks to understand how institutions support different groups at key stages in the student life-cycle. The aim of the project is to identify exemplars of good practice and establish an ongoing shared website resource for the sector where colleagues seeking to address similar issues can seek help and share their experiences. This aligns with the aim of our Student Success Task Group, to establish a new systematic approach to monitoring student data at University level and take action to support students when issues are identified.
8. There are two strands to the project:
  - **Sharing Practice:** understanding how institutions use data to ensure that all student groups are supported to succeed.
  - **Student Interviews:** gathering student testimonials to provide insight into the issues driving the project.
9. **Sharing Practice** – we are leading this work strand of the project and have invited each college and university to share their approach to monitoring student data at an institutional level: how they identify particular issues (e.g. a progression or awarding gap etc) in relation to a particular student groups (e.g. disabled students or widening participation students or black and minority ethnic students etc) and examples of successful interventions once an issue has been identified. Responses are being gathered via a standard template and will be collated and shared with the sector as a key output of the project. These institutional responses will also help to inform the work of our Student Success Task Group, with key benchmarking data and examples of successful interventions that could be piloted at the University to address issues such as awarding gaps.
10. **Student Interviews** - each institution participating in the project is being invited to hold a focus group with students to hear about their lived experience - the challenges they face and the support they value. These interviews will be filmed by a team of media students from Edinburgh College with the aim of including them in the shared website resource to provide insight into the issues driving the project. The project team has chosen to focus on disabled students in the first instance but the intention is to apply the same approach to all student groups in due course. Our focus group was hosted by the Students' Association on 27 March 2026 and a Student Association representative will present the findings at the STEP Conference in Glasgow on 27 May 2026, where a film of all the focus groups conducted to date will also be screened.
11. We will continue to monitor the progress of both the STEP project Supporting Access, Progression and Successful Outcomes and our own Student Success Task Group to ensure that each is informed by the work of the other.

12. The VP Education also participated in the STEP project this year led by sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland) focusing on *Strategies to Support Student Engagement and Partnership Within an Increasingly Time-Poor and Cash-Poor Student Population*. As part of the project, the Students' Association hosted a workshop for students and staff on 7 April 2026 which was attended by the Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement), VP Education, Academic Engagement & Policy Coordinator (Students' Association); and the Head of Academic Quality (Academic Quality and Standards).

### **Resource implications**

13. The coordination of STEP activities will be taken forward as part of the core business of AQS.

### **Risk management**

14. There is an institutional risk in relation to compliance if the University's processes are not aligned with external requirements. The University's Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite states it is risk averse to compliance risks.

### **Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

15. The paper does not contribute to the climate emergency and sustainable development goals. It is fulfilling an external regulatory requirement.

### **Equality & diversity**

16. Equality and diversity will be considered as part of individual activities/projects.

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

17. AQS will communicate and implement any changes, and evaluate the impact of these as part of its core business.

### **Author**

Brian Connolly, Academic Quality and Standards  
May 2026

### **Presenter**

Brian Connolly, Academic Quality and Standards

### **Freedom of Information**

The paper is open.

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact [academic.quality@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academic.quality@ed.ac.uk) or Academic Quality and Standards, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL.

**Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

**14 May 2026**

**Scotland's Rural College Accreditation Committee  
Annual Report 2024/25**

**Description of paper**

1. This paper summaries the key areas of discussion from the Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation Committee meeting of Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2026.

**Fit with remit**

<b>Quality Assurance Committee</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.	<b>Y</b>
Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business.	<b>Y</b>
In relation to academic collaborations with partner institutions: maintain oversight of development, approval, monitoring and review / renewal processes; receive annual reports on activity and identify any areas where action is required to maintain academic standards and the quality of the student experience.	<b>Y</b>

**Action requested / recommendation**

2. This paper is for **information**.

**Background and context**

3. The Convenor of Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) convenes the annual accreditation meeting, with Academic Quality and Standards responsible for co-ordinating the process.
4. In April 2026 the Accreditation Committee met to review and affirmed continued accreditation of the following SRUC programmes:
  - BSc Environmental Management
  - PhD Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies (and with Placement)

**Discussion**

5. See attached paper.

**Resource implications**

6. Accrediting SRUC degree programmes has resource implications for members of staff within Academic Quality and Standards and wider Registry Services.

**Risk management**

7. In order to preserve the University's reputation, it is essential to ensure that degrees accredited by the University of Edinburgh meet the same high standards of academic quality and student experience that we would expect from our own

programmes. The annual SRUC Accreditation Committee provides a framework to ensure that the accredited programmes continue to meet these expectations.

**Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals**

8. N/A

**Equality & diversity**

9. As this paper reports on past activity, there are no Equality and Diversity considerations and an EqIA is not necessary at this time.

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

10. As the paper is an update to provide information, there are no actions.

**Author**

Patrick Jack  
Academic Quality and Standards  
Manager  
Academic Quality and Standards  
April 2026

**Presenter**

Professor Tina Harrison  
Convener, Scotland's Rural College  
(SRUC) Accreditation Committee

**Freedom of Information: *Open***

**If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact [academic.quality@ed.ac.uk](mailto:academic.quality@ed.ac.uk) or Academic Quality and Standards, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL.**

The University of Edinburgh  
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) Accreditation  
Committee held on Monday 27 April 2026 at 11am via Microsoft Teams**

**Present:**

Professor Tina Harrison <b>(Convener)</b>	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement), University of Edinburgh
Professor Matthew Bailey	Dean of Quality Assurance, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, University of Edinburgh
Dr Kyrsten Black	Registrar, SRUC
Audrey Channing	Quality Assurance Lead, SRUC
Brian Connolly	Head of Academic Quality, Academic Quality and Standards, University of Edinburgh
Sinéad Docherty	Academic Quality and Standards Manager, Academic Quality and Standards, University of Edinburgh
Professor James Hopgood	Dean of Quality and Enhancement, College of Science and Engineering, University of Edinburgh
Dr Andrew Innes	Senior Lecturer and Programme Lead, SRUC
Professor Jamie Pearce	Dean of Postgraduate Research, College of Science and Engineering, University of Edinburgh
Cath Seeds	Senior Lecturer and Section Lead, SRUC
Professor Eileen Wall	Head of Research & Professor of Integrative Livestock Genetics, SRUC
Kirsty Young	Acting Registrar, SRUC

**1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Convenor welcomed all attendees, particularly those colleagues who were new members to the Committee.

Apologies were noted from Professor Jamie Newbold and Mhairi MacDonald (SRUC), and from Patrick Jack (University of Edinburgh).

**2. Membership of the Accreditation Committee 2025-26**

The membership for 2025-26 was noted as an accurate record by the Committee.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22 April 2025**

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting as a full and accurate record.

**4. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising raised for discussion.

**For Information**

**5. Memorandum of Agreement**

The Committee noted the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). The Convener highlighted that the MoA has not been subject to any changes during the past academic year.

**6. Students' Association Update 2024-25**

The Convener noted the SRUC Students' Association (SRUCSA) Annual Report, highlighting its positive aspects such as strong partnership working around student support between SRUC and SRUCSA, student representation models which are reflective of structural changes within SRUC, and enhanced success in engaging tutors effectively during the recruitment of class representatives.

The representation of PGR students within SRUC was queried, noting the small but growing cohort of PGR students. It was noted that effort is being made to encourage the PGR community across SRUC to take active ownership of their feedback mechanisms and PGR student representation. It was noted that, due to the small number of PGR students being spread across different areas, it has been challenging to take this forward collectively. However, it is anticipated that there will be more PGR content included within the 2025-26 SRUCSA annual report.

The Elmwood Protests, aimed at preventing the Animal Care programme and the Elmwood Campus Building being closed, were noted and a member queried how these protests have intersected with student voice. It was noted that protests are one platform for students to use their voice, however there are student representatives present on SRUC's Academic Board and other

senior committees. The Convener noted that strong student voice mechanisms can be an effective tool in encouraging institutions to pause and reflect on proposed courses of action.

The Convener concluded the discussion of this item by recording the Committee's formal thanks to the SRUCSA Co-President of Education and Quality, Mhairi MacDonald, and her colleagues for compiling such a comprehensive report. It was highlighted that the Committee looks forward to learning more around PGR student activity and representation within the 2025-26 SRUCSA annual report, recognising this is a planned growth area of activity.

### **For Discussion**

## **7. Annual Report 2024-25**

The Committee considered the Annual Report 2024-25. The Committee noted the excellent quality of the report and the comprehensive accompanying documentation, and commended the SRUC team responsible for compiling the report, notably SRUC's Quality Assurance Lead.

### **Taught Degree Awarding Powers (TDAP)**

The Committee noted that SRUC attained TDAP in October 2024. SRUC have used TDAP to launch a new PG Cert Learning and Teaching in Tertiary Education for SRUC teaching staff.

### **Subject-Based School Model**

SRUC colleagues highlighted that the College has undertaken structural change, transitioning from a geography-based faculty model to a subject-based school model. The Committee noted that this new model is being well embedded across SRUC.

### **Institution-Led Quality Reviews (ILQR)**

The Committee noted that some programmes participated in routine ILQRs during 2024-25. The Animal Science and Management (ASM) ILQR commended programmes for the integration of industry partnerships, research expertise, and innovative teaching practices. Applied Animal Science and Animal Welfare Science were praised for their employability focus, authentic learning approaches, and improvements in assessment and feedback. It was further noted that some areas for action were surfaced during this review activity, such as strengthening cross-campus collaboration and enhancing partnerships in marketing.

### **External Review**

Members were informed that as part of SRUC's comprehensive quality review process, SRUC was reviewed by the QAA in April 2024 via its Quality

Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR). The QESR identified assessment feedback times and consistency as ongoing priorities for SRUC.

The Education Scotland Annual Engagement Report (2024) identified the need for more effective strategies to increase recruitment and retention of learners from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The Landex review, held in May 2025, noted SRUC's progress from the previous cycle, including the development of an MIS Data Dashboard, strengthened staff onboarding and mentoring, and expanded Industry Lead Groups. The 2025 review focused on curriculum flexibility, Artificial Intelligence (AI) leadership, and data-driven decision-making. The focus of the next Landex review will be student voice, which is a topic that has been selected by SRUC itself.

Members noted that annual monitoring activity feeds into how SRUC is working towards recommendations from external reviews.

### **PhD Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies**

The Committee noted that the intake to the PhD programme during 2024/25 was 13 full-time students, of which 69% were Home students and 31% International students. 2024/25 marked the second cohort commencing the PhD programme and SRUC colleagues have begun preparations for the first iteration of Year 3 of the programme, including vivas. All 2024/25 students had positive 10-week progression reviews, and all of the 2023/24 cohort passed their first year review.

PGR provision at SRUC has been subject to ILQR during 2025-26, during which it was recorded that PGR student community is an area for development. SRUC colleagues noted the ambition to form a coherent community on the PhD programme and enhancing PGR programme structure to enable PhD students to become more involved in academic life via teaching and representation. Effort is being undertaken at SRUC to upskill and enhance the confidence of academic staff with supervisory responsibility of PhD students, particularly around interdisciplinary study and adjustments. It was noted that a new Head of the Doctoral College has been appointed and is expected to commence this role in June 2026.

A member queried how SRUC is planning for the future of the PhD programme. It was noted that SRUC are utilising expertise from colleagues within the Doctoral College to help shape future planning. SRUC have policies and regulations in place to support the efficient running of the PhD programme, and colleagues are now working on how best to operationalise this. This is supported by internal training provision within SRUC with regard to progression committees and supervision, which will support the drive for consistency. The value of the non-examining chair role in providing expertise and due diligence across these areas was noted. The Convener emphasised the University of Edinburgh's willingness to work collaboratively with SRUC colleagues in order to support these processes.

SRUC colleagues noted the exceptional support received from University of Edinburgh colleagues, within Schools and centrally, and formally recorded a note of thanks to these colleagues for making this dialogue a positive experience.

The Committee noted that SRUC will continue to focus on achieving Research Degree Awarding Powers in the medium term.

### **BSc Environmental Management**

The Committee was reminded of SRUC's intention to replace this programme via the launch of a new programme under TDAP. The first intake onto the new SRUC-owned degree programme will take place in 2027/28. In advance of the launch of the new programme, there will be no further recruitment onto the University of Edinburgh-accredited BSc Environmental Management programme. It was noted that new students who wish to join the BSc programme at Year 3 will join the University of Edinburgh-accredited programme in order to keep the cohorts distinguished from one another.

### **Student Voice**

The Committee was informed that significant steps have been put in place at an institutional level within SRUC to better gather the student voice. The Student Voice Advisory Group was established in 2024/25 and reports directly to the SRUC Academic Board. It brings together survey data, Speak Week findings, and My Voice submissions to shape institutional priorities such as feedback timeliness and belonging. This ensures student evidence directly informs senior decision-making and strengthens accountability for acting on their feedback.

2025 National Student Survey (NSS) results show an overall improvement in student satisfaction and engagement across SRUC. Participation increased to 74%, exceeding target levels and representing a 5% rise on 2024 results. Student Voice remains relatively low in NSS scoring despite year-on-year improvements.

The uplift in student survey completion at SRUC was queried. Members were informed that SRUC has allocated staff resource to operate a team to work across its campuses in order to engage with students across a number of days on site to encourage them to complete the surveys. If students do not respond to survey requests, they receive follow up communications via text message. While NSS participation has increased, it was noted that this was not the case with other tertiary surveys. SRUC have issued a request to the SFC to amend relevant survey dates so that they align with the NSS in order to increase participation across the board. It was noted that SRUC's good practice in this area will be shared with the University of Edinburgh's Student Voice Group.

## **Student Support Services**

In relation to the governance and accountability of student services, the Committee was informed that three Boards of Service (Administration & Support; Assurance & Enhancement; Systems & Processes) were established in September 2024 to oversee and evaluate provision across the student journey. Cross-membership of Chairs ensures alignment, and each Board contributes to the annual quality cycle. The first Quality Dialogues are scheduled for 2025/26 and a full report of this activity will be included within next year's annual report.

It was noted that SRUC has successfully overseen the transition to a singular student support services team.

## **For Approval**

### **8. Accreditation of BSc Environmental Management and PhD in Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies (and with Placement)**

The Committee affirmed continued accreditation of the following SRUC programmes:

- BSc Environmental Management
- PhD Agriculture, Rural and Environmental Studies (and with Placement)

### **9. Any Other Business**

The Committee was informed that the report of this meeting will be submitted to the next meeting of the University of Edinburgh Senate Quality Assurance Committee in May 2026 for information.

### **10. Date of Next Meeting: TBC.**

**Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

**14 May 2026**

**Committee Membership 2026/27**

**Description of paper:**

1. This paper invites the Committee to note the membership of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee for 2026/27.

**Fit with remit**

<b>Quality Assurance Committee</b>	
Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.	<b>X</b>
In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University's quality framework.	<b>X</b>
Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business.	<b>X</b>
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.	<b>X</b>

**Action requested / recommendation:**

2. The Committee is invited to note the membership and terms of reference and to advise of any further updates not already identified.

**Background and context:**

3. The membership of the three Senate Standing Committees: Senate Education Committee (SEC), Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), and Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC), are presented to Senate annually for approval.
4. Senate Standing Committees formally report to Senate annually, in addition to providing updates on upcoming 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 (Careers Service, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Registry Services) via committee membership. Therefore, some committee roles are ex officio to ensure that committee members have the appropriate knowledge, expertise, and accountability, to fulfil the committee remit, given their substantive roles and the responsibilities they carry in these positions.
5. The type of Standing Committee member and how and why they are appointed is as follows:

Type of member	How and why they are appointed
Ex-officio	By virtue of their position. For example, the College Deans of Quality are ex officio members of Quality Assurance Committee; Edinburgh University Students' Association Vice-President Education is an ex officio member of Education Committee.
Nominated	Nominated by Colleges with responsibility for and expertise in a particular, relevant area. For example, the Colleges shall each nominate two senior members of staff within the College with responsibility for learning and teaching.
Senate member	Elected by Senate to represent Senate Elected Members on standing committees. Elected academic staff members, Senate Assessors, and the Academic Staff Member of Court are eligible.
Co-opted members	Chosen by the convener for their expertise in a particular area, expected to serve for a time-limited period.
External member	Appointed from outwith the University due to their relevant skills, experience and external viewpoint. Only SQAC currently has an external member.

Source: [Senate Standing Committee members' guidance](#)

## Discussion

6. The membership for the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) will be presented to Senate for approval at its 19 May meeting. Changes to membership are marked in tracked changes and highlighted in yellow.
7. Members are asked to please confirm if there are any further amendments to membership. Any changes to membership will be presented to Senate at the next Ordinary meeting for noting.
8. All changes to membership will take place from 1 August 2026 unless otherwise stated.
9. The Committee term of reference remains unchanged and is published on the Academic Quality and Standards webpage:  
<https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/quality-assurance/terms-reference>

## Resource implications

10. There are workload implications for staff and students who become new members of Senate Standing Committees.

## Risk management

11. Appropriate membership of the Standing Committees supports effective academic governance and assists the University in managing risk associated with its academic activities.

## Equality & diversity

12. The composition of the Senate Standing Committees is largely determined according to defined role-holders (i.e. those with roles relevant to the work of the committee and therefore close relevant experience) or as nominees of particular stakeholders such as a College or the Students' Association and determined by the roles or positions held by those nominated. The membership is therefore largely set by appointment or election to relevant roles. Ensuring that appointment processes support a diverse staff body is part of the broader responsibility of the University and its employees in recruitment.

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

13. Details of the Senate Standing Committees' Membership and Terms of Reference are communicated via the [Academic Quality and Standards webpage](#).

**Author**

Academic Quality and Standards  
April 2026

**Presenter**

Brian Connolly  
Academic Quality and Standards  
May 2026

**Freedom of Information:** Open

**Appendix: Senate Quality Assurance Committee**

Role on SQAC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)	Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)		Ex Officio
An external member from within the Scottish Higher Education sector with experience in quality assurance	Dean for Quality Assurance & Enhancement, University of Aberdeen	Professor Steven Tucker	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2029	No
College Deans of Quality (or equivalent)	Dean of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (CMVM)	TBC		No
	Dean of Quality and Enhancement (CSE)	Professor James Hopgood		Academic
	Dean of Quality Assurance and Assessment (CAHSS)	TBC		Ex Officio
1 x member of staff from each College with experience of and an interest in quality assurance at School level (nominated by their College)	School representative of CMVM (Director of Quality)	Dr Jill MacKay	November 2025 – July 2028	No
	School representative of CSE (Head of Student Services)	Faten Adam	1 August 2024- 31 July 2027	No
	School representative of CAHSS	Dr Anne Desler TBC		No
3 x elected member of Senate	Representative of Senate (CAHSS)	TBC – election to be held	1 August 2025 - 31 July 2026	Academic
	Representative of Senate (CSE)	TBC – election to be held	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2026	Academic
	Representative of Senate (CMVM)	TBC – election to be held	1 August 2024 - 31 July 2026	Academic
1 x Edinburgh University Students' Association sabbatical officer	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Joana Mends	Ex Officio	Ex Officio

Role on SQAC	Position	Name	Term	Member of Senate
1 x member of the Edinburgh University Students' Association permanent staff	Academic Engagement Coordinator, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Heather Innes		No
1 x member of staff from the Institute for Academic development	<i>As the Academic Development team are now within Academic Quality and Standards, following consideration of the team's roles and responsibilities and committee remits, it has been agreed with the Head of Academic Development that an appropriate member of the Academic Development team will attend meetings for relevant agenda items. The Academic Quality and Standards member of staff will ensure that the Head of Academic Development is kept informed of committee agendas and business relevant to the Academic Development team.</i>			
1 x member of staff from the Doctoral College	Representative of Doctoral College	Professor Laura Bradley		Ex Officio
1 x member of staff from Academic Quality and Standards	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services	Brian Connolly		No
Up to 3 co-options chosen by the Convener	Co-opted member (Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling)	Marianne Brown	1 August 2024 – 31 July 2027	No
	Co-opted member TBC			No
	Co-opted member (Director of Students, Edinburgh futures Institute)	Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar	1 August 2025- 31 July 2028	No
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Sinéad Docherty		No

## Senate Quality Assurance Committee

14 May 2026

### Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review and Review of progress toward External Effectiveness Review Recommendations

#### Description of paper

1. This paper informs the Senate Quality Assurance Committee of the plans for the internal review of Senate and its Standing Committees' effectiveness for 2025/26. Senate will be invited to approve the plans at its 19 May meeting.
2. This paper informs the Senate Quality Assurance Committee of the plans to review the progress towards the recommendations of the External Effectiveness Review undertaken in 2022/23, ahead of the next external review expected to take place in 2027/28.

#### Fit with remit

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.	X
---	---

#### Action requested / recommendation

3. The Senate Quality Assurance Committee is invited to note the plans for the internal effectiveness review and is asked to engage with opportunities to provide feedback on Senate and the Senate Quality Assurance Committee's effectiveness.
4. The Committee is invited to note the plans to review the progress toward the recommendations of the external effectiveness review.

#### Background and context

5. The Scottish Code of Good Higher Education Governance 2023 (64) states: *"The governing body is expected to review its own effectiveness each year and to undertake an externally facilitated evaluation of its own effectiveness and that of its committees, including size and composition of membership, at least every five years. As part of these processes or separately, the effectiveness of the academic board (also known as Senate, Senatus Academicus or academic council) is expected to be reviewed similarly. These reviews should be reported upon appropriately within the institution and outside. Externally facilitated reviews should be held following any period of exceptional change or upheaval (allowing suitable time to see the effects of changes made), the usual timetable for externally facilitated review being brought forward, if necessary in these circumstances."*

6. Prior to 2024/25, an annual internal effectiveness review survey of Senate members was undertaken. This survey had low engagement with approximately 16% of the membership responding to the survey.
7. The internal effectiveness process for Senate Standing Committees has also involved a self-reflective survey of members undertaken over the summer. The Committees have typically had a higher response rate than Senate, though are not consistently high. A survey of Senate Standing Committees is not a requirement for internal effectiveness activities.
8. In 2024/25, a post-meeting survey was introduced for Senate. This survey is circulated to Senate members after each ordinary meeting an analysis of the feedback and meeting metrics are published on the [Senate Members' Portal](#) alongside points of learning.
9. At its 1 October 2025 meeting, Senate received the [final report of the Senate External Review Task and Finish Group](#) (Paper S 25/26 1J) which provided an update on the completion of recommendations arising from the external review.

## **Discussion**

### **Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate Standing Committees**

10. The plan for the internal effectiveness review for the Senate Standing Committees is to undertake a survey of Committee members focussed on the Committee's effectiveness. The survey will include targeted questions on actions taken in response to the external review recommendations. These will be on the following topics:
  - a. Recruitment and Induction
  - b. Senate Standing Committees and their relationship to Senate
11. The outcome of the survey will be reported to Senate alongside the annual report from the Standing Committees to Senate. These will be presented to the first Ordinary Senate meeting of 2026/27. The outcomes will also be reported back to each Standing Committee.
12. Senate will receive a paper at its 19 May meeting inviting it to approve the plans for the internal effectiveness of Senate and its Standing Committees. The Committee will receive an update on the internal effectiveness review following Senate's 19 May meeting.

### **Resource implications**

13. There are no additional resource implications as a result of the plans for internal effectiveness and these activities are undertaken as part of the annual review and enhancement activities for Senate and its Committees by Academic Quality and Standards.
14. If any actions are proposed, either in terms of the internal effectiveness review processes themselves or as a result of the review, the resource implications of these will be considered ahead of being recommended.

15. The review of progress toward external review recommendations has modest resource implications for Academic Quality and Standards. This is considered a priority to review progress and consider effectiveness of actions ahead of the next external review of Senate expected to take place in 2027-28.

**Risk management**

16. The annual effectiveness review process assists the University in ensuring that its academic governance arrangements are effective.

17. The review of progress toward external review recommendations ensures that the University is making progress toward the agreed recommendations ahead of the next external review.

**Equality & diversity**

18. Equality and diversity implications of committee work are considered on an ongoing basis. Consideration will be given to ensuring that enhanced internal effectiveness review processes are equitable and inclusive.

19. The University Lead for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is progressing actions in response to the EDI-focussed recommendations arising from the external review of Senate. A survey on the effectiveness of these actions will be undertaken as part of annual effectiveness activities in the future.

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

20. Senate will also receive the annual report of Senate Standing Committees and this will include the results of the survey of Senate Committee members. This report will be presented to the first Ordinary meeting in 2026/27. The outcomes will also be reported back to each Standing Committee.

**Author**

Olivia Hayes  
Head of Committees and Governance  
Academic Quality and Standards  
April 2026

**Presenter**

Brian Connolly  
Head of Academic Quality  
Academic Quality and Standards  
April 2026

**Freedom of Information**

Open