

The University of Edinburgh**Senate Quality Assurance Committee****Thursday 8 October 2026, 13:30 – 16:30****Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and Microsoft Teams****A G E N D A**

1.	Welcome and Apologies	
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting To approve: May 2026	SQAC 26/27 1A
3.	Matters Arising - Convener's communications - NRAA update - UK Quality Code	Verbal Update
SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS		
4.	University of Edinburgh Students' Association Vice President Education Priorities 2026/27 To comment.	SQAC 26/27 1B
5.	School Annual Quality Reports 2025/26: Sub Group Report To discuss and approve recommended actions.	SQAC 26/27 1C
6.	Internal Periodic Review Themes 2025/26 To discuss and approve.	SQAC 26/27 1D
7.	English Language Skills Short Life Working Group To discuss and approve.	SQAC 26/27 1E
8.	Student Success - Awarding Gap Task Group Update To note.	SQAC 26/27 1F
9.	Boards of Studies for Professional Services Groups and Short Courses Approval Process To discuss and approve.	SQAC 26/27 1G
ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING		
10.	Committee Administration: To note: - Committee Membership 2026/27 - Internal Effectiveness	SQAC 26/27 1H SQAC 26/27 1I

11.	Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses* The Committee is invited to approve the IPR reports and responses published on the Committee SharePoint. *Please note that reviewing of reports and responses has been assigned to the relevant Dean of Quality due to volume of reading.	SQAC 26/27 1J
12.	Any Other Business	
13.	Date of next meeting Thursday 10 December 2026, venue TBC and Microsoft Teams	

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Thursday 14th May 2026, 14:00-17:00

Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and Microsoft Teams

1. Attendance

Present:	Position:
Professor Tina Harrison	Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) (Convener)
Faten Adam	School Representative of CSE
Professor Matthew Bailey	Dean of Quality, CMVM
Dr Michael Barany	Senate Representative
Marianne Brown	Head of Academic Planning, Registry Services (co-opted)
Professor Laura Bradley	Doctoral College Representative (CAHSS, PGR)
Brian Connolly	Head of Academic Quality, Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
Dr Anne Desler	School Representative of CAHSS
Professor Ramon Grima	Director of Quality, School of Biological Sciences, CSE (co-opted)
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
In attendance:	
Callum Paterson	Design Lead, Student Voice, Registry Services
Apologies:	
Professor Cathy Bovill	Head of Academic Development, Academic Quality and Standards
Katya Amott	Vice President (Education), Students' Association

2. Welcome

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

3. Minutes of previous meeting (SQAC 25/26 5A)

The Convener informed members that no comments were received in advance of the meeting.

One member noted that the term Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) had been included in the minutes when referring to the discussion around degree outcomes. This term is considered to be outdated, although it was confirmed to the Committee that the external reporting requirements and systems still use this term and this is why it was included in the Degree Awards Analysis paper.

The Committee approved the minutes of the April 2026 Meeting.

4. Matters Arising

External Examiners Policy

Variations to the External Examiners (EE) Policy, which is owned by SQAC, are being considered by the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) in the context of mitigating the impact of the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB). APRC will make a recommendation to SQAC for approval of the variations. SQAC will then consider the business electronically after the APRC meeting.

The Committee were informed that the three variations which require a change to the EE Policy are:

- Removal of the requirement to consult EEs when setting examination papers
- Changes to moderation of marking; removal of the requirement for EEs to review all assessments
- Changes to the operation of Boards of Examiners for taught courses and programmes, relating to the quorum requirement and EE involvement.

A member raised a process question relating to the role of Senate in the decision-making and scrutiny of the business. It was clarified by the Convener of APRC that the Senate motion related to significant policy and process changes within the Boards of Examiners project and these policy mitigations are not within that workstream.

Committee Priorities

Committee members were advised that Committee Priorities have not been included as an agenda item for this meeting because a paper is being taken to Senate to propose disbanding the priorities. If the item is not approved, colleagues in Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) who support Senate and its Committees will draft proposals and present those to the first

meeting of academic year 2026/27. The annual report for Senate and the results of the internal effectiveness review is expected to inform the proposed priorities, if required.

The Convener highlighted the relationship between the Committee's standing agenda items and priorities, both of which often correlate to University strategy and external requirements, such as the upcoming National Review of Awarding Agreements.

A Senate elected representative noted their concern that the outcome of the proposed motion to disband priorities is being implemented without Senate agreement.

National Review of Awarding Arrangements

The Convener informed the Committee that the National Review is looking across the sector and the University of Edinburgh expects to be informed whether it will be included in the sample pool within the next week. The review will consider the scale and size of institutions, devolved activities and areas of variability.

The University of Edinburgh has already established a task group that is considering the recommendations made to the University of Glasgow following their targeted review. The task group is working through identifying any actions that the University of Edinburgh should take.

The Convener advised members that the reviewers are coming from the pool who have already undertaken QAA training. It was highlighted that more colleagues, in general, are needed to make themselves available for activities such as reviews and accreditation panels.

QAA Institution Liaison Meeting

Members were informed that the next Institution Liaison Meeting (ILM) will take place next week with QAA. At this meeting the University will present on and account for progress against the QESR 2023 recommendations.

5. Student Voice Framework

Student Voice Policy (SQAC 25/26 5C)

The Design Lead for Student Voice was in attendance to speak to this paper. Members were advised that the policy update is an interim revision in order to reflect the new quality code and framework. There is ongoing activity to understand Student Voice practices across the institution and this will be reflected in the next update of the Student Voice policy review, as will aspects such as course evaluation.

Members agreed that the updated policy improved upon the previous version. There was discussion of the best approach to course evaluation as this can be inconsistent and variable across Schools. Members were advised that centralisation will be considered but reverting back to this approach may not be welcomed by those Schools who wanted a locally-managed approach in the first instance. It was suggested that a central system could be offered on an opt-in basis to Schools who want to do so. However, there are workload implications of that

approach and a risk to the good practice and tools developed in Schools in recent years if the process reverted back to University-level activity.

The Design Lead informed the Committee that a full consultation and revision of the Student Voice policy will be undertaken in 2026/27. An interim update will be brought to the Committee to allow members to discuss and inform the full review. It was requested that a tracked changes version of the 2026/27 policy review be brought to the Committee to better clarify the proposed amendments. There was also a comment that some colleagues in CMVM felt that the revised policy undermined some of the recent Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) work.

The Committee approved the interim revision to the Student Voice policy.

Action: Design Lead, Student Voice to continue with policy review in 2026/27 and bring a tracked changes version for further approval within the next academic year.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Policy (SQAC 25/26 5B)

The Committee considered the revised SSLC Policy, noting that significant changes had been made throughout the document. It was reported that further work would be undertaken with Schools over the summer to support implementation and to better understand local approaches. The introduction of the action log was highlighted as a key element of the revised policy.

During discussion it was emphasised that not every programme needs its own SSLC; these can be clustered in a way that is appropriate to Schools and works at a level which is reflective of the student experience. Members were aware that some Schools have local practices leading to variation in approaches and the need for greater consistency and oversight, which is why central policy and guidance is required. Members noted that some programmes and degree structures have unique characteristics which may require different or flexible approaches. It was emphasised that the policy should not prohibit existing good practice and that clear communication and supporting guidance would be important to help colleagues understand how the policy should operate in practice.

The action log mechanism generated discussion within the meeting. A member noted that it has been interpreted differently across Schools and, in some cases, viewed as an administrative requirement rather than a useful tool. The intended purpose of the action log, namely to capture key themes, support closure of the feedback loop, identify shared issues, and provide a broader institutional picture, was not always clearly understood. Members noted that many entries currently recorded are local issues or consist of individual comments rather than substantive actions and suggested that further clarity should be provided regarding the types and level of actions that should be recorded.

It was noted that while action logs have been presented as a mechanism for closing the feedback loop, students may be unlikely to refer back to them and actions can often take considerable time to progress and resolve. There was also a query raised about the timeline of actions and meeting notes being available within two weeks, with a concern that this timeline may prove challenging. The Design Lead for the Student Voice work confirmed that the relevant task group is considering the guidance on which roles should support this work.

It was acknowledged that the action log would provide useful evidence from a quality assurance perspective, including for QAA review activity and Internal Periodic Reviews. It was also confirmed that students, EUSA representatives and student representatives had contributed to the development of the policy, and that engagement with students would continue as implementation progressed.

It was questioned whether the SSLC policy should be a standalone policy or whether it should sit within the Student Voice policy. Whilst some members suggested that a single, consolidated policy might be preferable, it was agreed that such a policy would be too long to be practical and maintaining that policy would be challenging. It was agreed that separate policies which refer to each other is the most effective way to manage and present the information.

The Committee approved the revised SSLC policy and the supplementary guidance that is to be provided to Schools.

6. Internal Periodic Review Schedule

Internal Periodic Review (IPR) Forward Schedule 2026-32 (SQAC 25/26 5D)

The Head of Academic Quality highlighted the key changes detailed in the forward schedule. These include the Bayes Centre moving to a Centre-based review rather than a programme-based review due to developments in their provision. The School of Law has requested to bring forward their IPR to align with ongoing activities within the School. Finally, the new Schools within the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine restructure have been included in the revised schedule.

There was some discussion of the supports and structures that must be embedded within the Bayes Centre to ensure that it works within the QA framework. The CAHSS Dean of Quality highlighted that the Centre for Open Learning and the Edinburgh Futures Institute are two areas within CAHSS that are not Schools but have embedded roles, committees and structures to ensure that the appropriate governance is in place.

Action: CSE and AQS colleagues to consider the Bayes Centre structure and ensure the correct processes are in place.

Postponement of Internal Periodic Review for the Clinical Education PGT programme (SQAC 25/26 5E)

The Dean of Quality for CMVM outlined the reasons for requesting the postponement of the Clinical Education IPR. The programme now sits within the Edinburgh Medical School which is next due its IPR in 2029/30. The School and College propose that the Clinical Education programme be considered within that review, and detailed how the QA oversight would be managed in the meantime through existing and enhanced review and reporting. It was reported to the Committee that Clinical Education have addressed all recommendations from their

previous IPR apart from the resource to delivery ratios. It is expected that the move into the Edinburgh Medical School will help with this.

It was explained to the Committee that bringing the Edinburgh Medical School IPR forward into 2026/27 is not feasible due to current workload capacity and the need to allow the new structure and strategy to settle before the next internal review. Therefore, the College is seeking support from the Committee for a postponement. This must be formally requested from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) as the review of the Clinical Education programme would fall outside of the mandated six-year review cycle.

The Committee were supportive of the postponement and approved the next step of requesting approval from the SFC. The Committee were also supportive of the amended forward schedule for all reviews and approved the revisions. The Dean of Quality for CAHSS did highlight that there are issues with multiple CAHSS Schools being clustered in certain years and noted the associated workload concerns.

Action: Convener and AQS to submit formal postponement request of the Clinical Education IPR to the Scottish Funding Council.

7. Taught External Examiner Reports: UG and PGT Thematic Analysis 2024/25 (SQAC 25/26 5F)

The Committee considered the annual thematic analysis of UG and PGT External Examiner (EE) reports. The report is presented annually and provides an overview of themes emerging from EE feedback. While the analysis was recognised as a valuable quality assurance mechanism, it was acknowledged that snapshot nature of the analysis can present challenges and the focus on the College perspective should be enhanced to better capture the institutional perspective. It was agreed that this change in perspective will make future reports more valuable.

The Committee agreed that the individual College reports, which informed this thematic report, are useful and beneficial at College level. The College focus lends itself to action at that level and has a clear place within the QA reporting process in College structures. Members supported the development of a standard reporting template to enable more consistent analysis across Colleges. It was suggested that future templates should include explicit sections outlining actions arising from external examiner feedback and demonstrating how those actions align with institutional priorities and strategic objectives. It was also noted that EE reporting system duplicates entries and this must be resolved to improve future reports.

Action: AQS and College colleagues to work together to develop a standard template for the College EE reports.

The Convener highlighted that the institutional report must draw out focus on cross-University themes, priorities and areas requiring strategic attention. It was noted that inconsistent practices in Generative AI and moderation were raised through the analysis and the EE commentary should inform the ongoing institutional work in these areas. The Committee were in agreement that more timely responses to EE reports are needed within the University to more effectively address issues that have been identified.

Action: Committee Secretary to include discussion of External Examiners Report on the December meeting agenda and the Committee to set objectives for institutional level report at that time.

8. Professional Services Review and Student Support Thematic Review Update (SQAC 25/26 5G)

In relation to the required review of Professional Services, which was previously managed through the Student Support Services Annual Review process, the Committee was informed that benchmarking activity is being undertaken to understand the different approaches within the sector. Two key approaches are targeted reviews by area or theme, or integrating professional services into existing Internal Periodic Review processes. AQS will bring a paper to SQAC in 2026/27 detailing the benchmarking activity and proposed way forward.

In relation to the Student Support Thematic Review, members were informed that the University's EDI Lead will co-chair this review with a student convener. EUSA have undertaken initial student consultations and a review panel will be assembled in due course. It was recognised that the Student Support Thematic Review will be the process which provide QA oversight of services in the next two academic years whilst the approach for the Professional Services Review is developed. This is in line with the requirement that reviews are periodic rather than annual reviews.

9. Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) Update (SQAC 25/26 5H)

The Head of Quality, AQS informed the Committee that the STEP working group have compiled focus group videos to create a short film detailing the experience and gaps in support for students with disabilities. This will be hosted on the QAA website and shared with Committee members once available. The Committee noted that STEP's work is valuable to the Student Success Task Group and their remit for addressing the awarding gap.

Action: AQS to share STEP film with Committee members once it is published on the QAA website.

10. Scotland's Rural College (SRUC): Accreditation Committee (SQAC 25/26 5I)

The Committee was reminded that this report is an annual item provided for their information. The Accreditation Committee meets annually with SRUC to reconfirm their arrangements and the two programmes which SRUC delivers as University of Edinburgh awards. One is a taught BSc programme and the other is a PhD programme. The Accreditation Committee confirmed their satisfaction with the QA arrangements and delivery of the programmes by SRUC.

A member queried where this provision sits within the National Review of Awarding Arrangements. The Convener confirmed that the provision sits with SRUC although the University of Edinburgh will have to account for how it manages awards that are delivered by external partners.

It was recognised that SRUC now has its own taught degree awarding powers and will teach out the BSc programme, and it seeks to obtain research degree awarding powers. The representative from The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies advised the Committee that their Memorandum of Understanding with SRUC was dissolved at the beginning of 2025/26 for RDS(V)S provision and highlighted that the CSE and SRUC provision is covered under a CSE-owned agreement. The Accreditation Committee will continue to have oversight of QA and standards whilst programmes continue. A significant number of PhD students remain on the programme and their experience must be assured.

11. Committee Membership 2026/27 (SQAC 25/26 5J)

The Convener noted the membership changes occurring at the end of this academic year and extended thanks to outgoing members for their contributions. Members were informed that the Senate election process is ongoing and new, or returning, Senate elected representatives will sit on the Committee in 2026/27.

The Convener noted particular thanks to the external member of the Committee, Professor Nazira Karodia, Deputy Principal, Edinburgh Napier University, whose term has come to an end.

The Convener advised members that the new external member who will join the Committee from 2026-2029 is Professor Steve Tucker who holds the role of Dean for Quality Assurance & Enhancement at the University of Aberdeen.

12. Senate and Standing Committees Annual Internal Effectiveness Review (SQAC 25/26 5K)

The Committee noted the paper which had been presented for information. It was acknowledged that the paper had been submitted to all three Senate Standing Committees to provide the same update on the approach to evaluation. Members will be emailed with a survey in which they can contribute to the internal effectiveness review for 2025/26.

13. Date of Next Meeting

Committee meeting dates for 2026/27 are to be confirmed. The Committee Secretary will send the meeting details and invites as soon as possible.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

8 October 2026

Students' Association Sabbatical Officers' Priorities for 2026/27

Description of paper

1. This paper articulates the priorities of the Students' Association Vice President Education and the Sabbatical Officer team for 2026/27.

Fit with remit

1. Fit with remit

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

Action requested / recommendation

2. To note and comment

Background and context

3. Each year a paper is presented to Senate and its standing committees, summarising the Sabbatical Officers' priorities for the coming year, enabling Senate and its member to identify areas of common interest and collaboration. These priorities are based on the manifestos the Officers were elected on – this year's Officers received a combined 9,216 votes – and were further refined during the Officers' inducted, based on data from the various national student experience surveys and feedback from outgoing student representatives.

Discussion

4. See attached paper.

Resource implications

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

Risk management

6. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have risk implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

7. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have Climate Emergency and Sustainable Development Goals implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

Equality & diversity

8. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have equality and diversity implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

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

9. Actions arising from the ideas discussed in the paper may have communication, implementation and evaluation implications; these will be considered in detail if specific action is proposed.

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10/09/2026

Presenter

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Freedom of Information: Open

Students' Association Vice President Education priorities for 2026/27:

- Hold the University accountable for delivering the quality of education it promises, including challenging cuts to teaching, course and learning opportunities.
- Champion an inclusive, decolonised and globally relevant curriculum, with better support for inclusive teaching.
- Develop a fair, student-centred approach to AI in teaching and assessment that prioritises critical thinking, creativity and independent learning.
- Protect students' learning and wellbeing during disruption, while improving academic adjustments, support and access to essential wellbeing provision.
- Strengthen the student voice by ensuring students are meaningfully involved in decisions about their education.

Sabbatical Officer team priorities for 2026/27:

- Strengthen student voice and accountability, ensuring students are meaningfully involved in University decision-making and receive clear, transparent updates on issues affecting them.
- Tackle the cost-of-living crisis, including affordable housing and food, free or cheaper travel, financial support and access to essential services.
- Build a more inclusive and accessible student community, with better support for marginalised students, commuters, international students, postgraduates and students across different campuses.
- Improve student wellbeing, safety and support, including mental health provision, consent and sexual violence prevention, academic and welfare support and safer, more accessible spaces.
- Protect and enhance student life, through stronger societies, peer support, volunteering, employability opportunities and a more diverse range of social and cultural activities.
- Challenge University cuts and protect student services, scrutinising financial decisions and their impact on teaching, support and the wider student experience.
- Push for a more sustainable and responsible University, particularly around divestment, sustainable food and products, ethical investment and environmental responsibility.

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

8 October 2026

School Annual Quality Reports Sub-Group

Description of paper

1. This report updates the Committee on the Sub-Group tasked with reviewing School annual quality reports and highlights the key University-wide themes arising from the analysis and recommended actions.
2. For reference, the School Annual Quality Reports (SAQR) are saved here:
[Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting](#)

Fit with remit:

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

Action requested / recommendation

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

Background and context

4. Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) approved a revised template for the 2025/26 reports with additional questions included around Learning and Teaching and some more specific guidance included in some sections. The School reports also asked for confirmation that programme monitoring had taken place and asked Schools to identify any programmes which had not completed monitoring reports.
5. This year, Schools were asked for specific reflections on the following institutional priorities: the Learning and Teaching Strategy; the Student Voice Policy; the

Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities; student support arrangements; student outcomes; Generative AI.

6. To aid reporting, student data was available at the Insights Hub and the Student Analytics, Insights & Modelling SharePoint, with online training available at PowerBI help videos.

Discussion

7. See attached paper.

Resource implications

8. Resource implications will be considered as part of any proposed actions.

Risk management

9. The paper does not require a risk assessment.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

11. Equality and diversity will be considered as part of any proposed actions.

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

12. The Committee Secretary will inform the relevant areas of the Committee's decisions.

Authors

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(Convener)**

Deputy Vice-Principal Students
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Presenters

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Freedom of Information Open

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**School Annual Quality Reports
Sub-Group**

Meeting held on **Thursday 17th September 2026**
via **Microsoft Teams 2.00 - 4.30pm**

Notes

Present:

Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)
Professor Laura Bradley	Dean of Postgraduate Research, CAHSS; Doctoral College Representative (PGR)
Brian Connolly	Head of Academic Quality, Academic Quality and Standards (AQS)
Dr Michael Daw	Dean of Quality, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Sinéad Docherty (Secretary)	Academic Quality and Standards Manager, Academic Quality and Standards (AQS)
Morag Fairlie	Projects and Quality Officer, College of Science and Engineering
Professor James Hopgood	Dean of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, College of Science and Engineering (CSE)
Professor Steve Loughnan	Dean of Quality Assurance and Assessment, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)
Joana Mendes	Vice President (Education), Students' Association

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Convenor welcomed members and, in particular, Joana Mendes, EUSA VP Education, and the newly appointed College Deans of Quality for CAHSS and CMVM to their first meeting.

2. Consideration of School Annual Quality Reports

The Group noted that Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) approved a [revised template](#) for the 2025-26 School reports which included a focus on the Learning and Teaching Strategy and a more targeted question format to encourage more consistent responses.

Schools were also asked to identify which programme level reports had informed the School level report.

2.1 Key institutional themes for noting and action

Several themes were identified across the reports with areas for development and actions highlighted where relevant. Some themes were evident in the majority of reports, and others were not widespread but still prevalent within a number of Schools. The appendix contains examples of positive practice for wider sharing.

2.1.1 Generative AI

Schools widely report that Generative AI is driving significant change in learning, teaching and assessment. There is considerable evidence of Schools adapting their assessment practices, including the redesign of assessment to make it more authentic and resilient to inappropriate AI use, greater use of oral, in-person, reflective and process-based assessment, and activities which require students to critique or explain AI-generated outputs. Schools are also increasingly incorporating AI literacy, ethics and appropriate disciplinary uses of AI into teaching.

Several Schools highlighted the associated increased workload of in-person assessment. The increased workload on Academic Misconduct Officers was also raised in several reports, as well as reflections on the challenge of proving GenAI-related academic misconduct. Other specific issues identified within this theme include the requirements of external accrediting bodies around assessment, equitable access to GenAI tools within the student population as more advanced paid-for models become available and the impact of language assistance tools.

The subgroup noted that a significant number of Schools have created their own Generative AI guidance to supplement the University issued guidance for staff and students. There were some comments which indicated that further guidance which is more prescriptive around permitted use of GenAI would be helpful. Furthermore, the permitted use of GenAI can be decided at course level and approaches vary within and across Schools. With different practices, policies and permissions, there are potential risks around inconsistency and confusion for students around what is permitted.

Action: AQS to collate the School-created GenAI policies and guidance and share with the University's Assistant Principal Education Futures (GenAI lead) for oversight of local approaches.

Action: AQS to refer theme to Senate Education Committee to inform its ongoing work on Generative AI in education.

2.1.2 Staff workload and resource constraints

Collectively, the School reports articulate that the University's financial context, reduced staffing and wider institutional change initiatives are placing increasing pressure on the capacity of Schools to sustain the quality of teaching and the student experience. Across the reports, Schools describe the effects of recruitment restrictions, voluntary severance, unfilled vacancies and reduced budgets alongside increasing or more complex workloads. Professional Services and academic teams are frequently reported as operating at or beyond capacity, with reduced resilience to staff absence and turnover. Reports note growing pressure in areas including student support, marking and moderation, assessment redesign, administration and supervision. Opportunities for events, enhancement and development are being curtailed in some areas due to lack of resource.

The reports indicate that QA is largely being maintained and protected through the commendable and significant efforts of staff: however, diminishing capacity and resilience may present a risk to the sustainability of ongoing quality maintenance. The subgroup notes that, while there is no clear or immediate action arising from this finding, it is important to draw it to the attention of relevant senior leaders. The subgroup therefore recommends that this be noted as a potential risk and kept under review by the relevant areas.

Action: AQS to refer staff workload and resource constraints matter to Associate Principal & Deputy Secretary, Students for awareness and sharing with University Executive.

2.1.3 Student Outcomes and Awarding Gaps

Across the responses, Schools broadly reported a consistent set of awarding gaps most commonly affecting widening participation (WP) students, Scottish domiciled students and ethnic minority students. The local area findings reflect the issues known at University level and more widely across the sector. Some Schools reported that data sets, at School or programme level, were too small to be statistically reliable or significant, and there was variation in how Schools engaged with the data set available on the PowerBI dashboard.

While most Schools recognised awarding gaps, not all Schools were able to demonstrate action to address them. However, there was a range of activity demonstrated across a number of Schools in terms of their work to address awarding gaps. Common interventions include dedicated working groups and committees, largely focused on WP or EDI strategies, and foundational or targeted courses to bridge knowledge and skills gaps for students in their first year of study. Several Schools within CSE have implemented level 7 courses with the intention of bridging the curriculum gap between Highers and A-Levels. Some Schools within CAHSS referred to the ongoing work within the College on "Closing the Gaps" and reported their interaction with that workstream and

expectation of a report which will inform further action. There was a lack of activity to evaluate the impact of the efforts to address these concerns; hence it is not possible to know in many cases whether the efforts are having, or are likely to have, the desired impact on closing the awarding gap.

The responses highlighted that Schools were aware of the need to evidence the impact of any awarding gap interventions and indicated that institutional level direction would be appreciated by Schools. Resourcing of associated workload and initiatives was also raised by some Schools as a barrier to progressing this area of work. The subgroup noted that this theme requires consistent and evidence-informed action to make progress in closing gaps and is an area that will be considered within the next external review (scheduled for November 2027) as it was subject to previous recommendations by the QAA. The Student Success (Awarding Gaps) Task Group is considering this further.

Action: All responses to be referred to the Student Success (Awarding Gaps) Task Group. Specific areas of activity and good practice within Schools will be identified for further support and development through the task group, including evaluating the impact of activities.

Action: AQS and Convener to present paper to Senate Education Committee detailing the work to address awarding gaps and to request support for institutional-level oversight of awarding gaps.

2.1.4 Student Support: Student Advisor Resource and Ratios

Many Schools expressed their continued appreciation of Student Advisors and the value they bring to students. However, several Schools within CAHSS (Business School, Divinity and ECA) reported Student Advisor ratios of over 300 students per advisor with Divinity, at times, working with only one Student Advisor. The School of Divinity reports that this was noted in their Internal Periodic Review held in 2025/26 and was subject to a recommendation. Other Schools within CAHSS reported issues with capacity within the model alongside the demands of complex student needs that require additional time and resource.

Student Advisors provide frontline support to students and provide local and School-specific advice to their community. There are clear concerns around unsustainable ratios and where staff are at risk of being a single point of failure when operating in a smaller School. The subgroup recognises the risk that this presents to both staff and students and recommend that the Student Support Continuous Improvement Group (SSCIG) work with the identified Schools and CAHSS to address capacity and resilience within the model.

Action: AQS to refer Student Advisor resource and capacity recommendation to SSCIG and CAHSS administration.

2.1.5 Student Support: Cohort Leads and academic guidance

Schools reported variable practice and consistency across the Cohort Lead role. There are examples of the role working well, particularly where Cohort Leads have a defined academic purpose, regular contact with students and are embedded in teaching or transition activity. Schools report useful practice including academic drop-ins, transition events and interactions that are tied to the curriculum rather than events that have a focus on socialising or community building.

Many Schools highlighted the perceived lack of academic guidance in the student support model and the need for the Cohort Lead role to be reconsidered in a way that better provides opportunity for academic conversations. Some Schools indicated how they are adapting the role to meet this challenge, but there is a need to develop the role in a more consistent way with greater focus on academic advice and guidance.

Action: SSCIG to review responses in full as part of their evaluation of the SSM and to develop the Cohort Lead role with greater focus on academic advice and guidance.

2.1.6 PGR Experience

Schools reported on a range of matters within the PGR student experience, including completion rates, community, PGR tutor and demonstrator training and pastoral support. There were many examples of considerable efforts in community-building and careers and researcher development through seminars, writing retreats, peer mentoring, conferences and industry or alumni engagement. The responses portray a strong research culture and many examples of good practice, but highlight increasing challenges around timely completion, professional student support, supervisory capacity and funding.

Furthermore, training for PGR Tutors and Demonstrators, specifically the monitoring and recording of training, remains an ongoing challenge. While some Schools have well-established practices and monitoring, there is inconsistency across Schools. This has been the focus of recommendations in previous external reviews and remains an ongoing area of institutional focus. However, the subgroup note that since the University Lead for PGR retired this post has not been filled, leaving a gap in institutional oversight and capacity to ensure the University fully addresses the recommendations from external reviews.

The Doctoral College representative did confirm that College Deans of Education, QA and PGR have agreed what core tutor and demonstrator training needs to be monitored, and that Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling are establishing a mechanism for recording completion of core University and School training in AY 2026-27.

Action: AQS to refer PGR themes to University Executive and emphasise the pressing need for PGR oversight to be maintained and strengthened through the appointment of dedicated colleague(s).

Action: AQS to share all PGR related responses with the College PGR Deans and Doctoral College for their review and for responsibility of further action.

2.1.7 Supervisor Training

The School templates included specific questions (in section 8.4) around training of supervisors:

“What percentage of supervisors have undertaken the course Fundamentals of PhD Supervision in the last 5 years, and how is this monitored? What have been the key challenges relating to supervision in the last year, and how is the School addressing these issues?”

Responses highlighted low levels of compliance in many Schools, and in other Schools no data were provided in response. Schools indicated that records were not readily available or outlined uncertainty with how to establish completion rates now that the unit which owns the training (previously known as Institute for Academic Development) has evolved into Academic Development within Registry Services. Some Schools themselves identified the lack of compliance as an area for improvement in the year ahead. The variation across Schools indicated to the subgroup that this specific issue needs institutional focus to ensure that supervisory training meets compliance requirements and is systematically monitored.

Action: Academic Quality and Standards to work with Academic Development and the Doctoral College to assure monitoring of supervisor training and set expectations with Schools around the compliance of this.

Action: Doctoral College to promote Fundamentals of PhD Supervisor training through its network.

2.1.8 English Language Skills

Several Schools reported issues relating to English language proficiency and development. This issue was also identified in the reports from 2023/24 and 2024/25, indicating increasing recognition of the potential impact of translation tools and Generative AI on English language development within the learning environment. A small number of Schools questioned the University's English language entry requirements, while most highlighted challenges in managing the use of translation and Gen AI tools and their potential impact on language development, which would ordinarily be expected to develop over the course of a programme of study. Schools highlighted that the impact of lack of language skills can be seen in settings including group work, seminars, peer discussion and interviews. It was noted that the Centre for Open Learning offers in-session academic and English language courses through its English Language Education unit and this is a valuable resource which Schools can utilise to support their students. However, greater institutional support and resource would be needed to allow full uptake of this provision.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee has commissioned an English Language Skills Task Group to explore this issue throughout academic year 2026/27. The task group will be provided with the annual monitoring responses which identified issues with English Language Skills and will propose actions to be taken forward by relevant areas.

Action: Committee Secretary to share annual monitoring responses with the English Language Skills Task Group for that group to then consult with Schools and identify actions required.

2.1.9 Exceptional Circumstances Process

Exceptional Circumstances (ECs) and associated extensions emerged as both an operational and academic issue across a number of Schools. Schools reported sustained high, and in some cases increasing, volumes of applications, with resulting pressure on Student Support teams, teaching administration, marking, moderation and Boards of Examiners. Some Schools explained that the impact of staggered submission deadlines for an assessment can make timely feedback particularly challenging and affects the overall 3-week turnaround target. Some Schools also raised questions about oversight and unintended consequences within the current arrangements, although the reports do not provide evidence of widespread inappropriate use of the EC system. The subgroup agreed to refer this item to relevant projects and groups for their consideration.

Action: AQS to refer specific comments relating to Exceptional Circumstances to the Board of Examiners Project Group and the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group for their consideration.

2.1.10 Assessment and Feedback

Aside from the Generative AI practices as detailed in section 2.1.1, many Schools reported on the range of activities which took place throughout 2025/26 to strengthen assessment and feedback practices, in line with the Assessment and Feedback Priorities and Principles (now superseded by the Assessment and Feedback Policy implemented for 2026/27 onwards.)

The reports provide evidence of substantial and sustained enhancement activity across assessment design, marking criteria, feedback quality, turnaround times and revised volume and weighting of assessment with measurable improvements in student satisfaction in a number of Schools. The subgroup commend the work undertaken by Schools and note that the effort does correspond to improved assessment and feedback activities in several areas. Specific examples of good practice and enhancement include the creation of feedback toolkits, the availability of rubrics, grade descriptors and marking criteria, and significant assessment mapping work to improve the student journey through their programme.

Schools identified areas in which improvement is still required, and this includes the feedback turnaround times for PGT cohorts, the need for continuous improvement in feedback mechanisms, diversity of assessment, and challenges with in-person exams and use of GenAI. One particular issue was noted in the Education Futures Institute (EFI) report, relating to difficulties in establishing marks in a core course. This was previously referred to the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee through the concessions process. The subgroup agreed that the assessment and moderation processes in place within EFI will be subject to further QA focus through the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) which will take place in March 2027.

Action: AQS to refer all Assessment & Feedback responses to the A&F Strategy Group to share good practice, enhancement and areas for further development.

Action: AQS to address assessment and moderation processes with EFI through the upcoming IPR.

2.1.11 Learning and Teaching Strategy

The Annual Reports demonstrate that Schools are actively responding to the Learning and Teaching Strategy through ongoing development of programmes that reflect the Developing a Future Curriculum theme. There is evidence of a growing emphasis on interdisciplinary and experiential learning, with Schools seeking to connect academic learning to real-world applications, sustainability and contemporary societal challenges. This is complemented by approaches designed to enhance student empowerment and engagement, including community-building activities and opportunities for students to apply their learning in authentic contexts. Schools are also strengthening connections with industry and professional practice, with advisory boards, employability-focused activities and innovative teaching approaches being used to ensure that programmes remain relevant to the changing needs of graduates and employers.

Looking ahead, Schools identify a range of planned developments that further demonstrate alignment with the Strategy. These include increasing attention to AL, and embedding the Skills for Success Framework within programmes, alongside enhanced support for student development through careers advice and greater industry engagement. Planned programme reviews and course redesigns also indicate a commitment to ensuring that programmes remain responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities, including the increasing use of Generative AI.

Action: AQS to refer the theme to the LTSI Group to note the activity and developments in this area.

3. Reflection on the Process

The Group commended the Directors of Quality and all the School staff who had collaborated in the process for their excellent work in providing detailed and insightful responses through annual monitoring. In an ongoing period of institutional change, Schools continue to deliver high quality provision and support to enhance the student experience. The commitment to students, colleagues and creating a positive learning and working environment was evident throughout.

In relation to the templates themselves, the subgroup acknowledged that there is a large number of priorities and sub-questions. The subgroup recommend that the templates are streamlined for 2026/27. It was also noted that the templates are less relevant to the research-only Schools in CMVM and proposed that PGR focussed templates be created to better capture the specific focus of those Schools.

Action: AQS to review template design and questions ahead of 2026/27 annual monitoring and consult with QA colleagues across Colleges.

The subgroup noted that some Schools did not confirm full programme-monitoring activity. The subgroup will follow up with these Schools to ensure that the required level of monitoring takes place across all areas of provision.

Action: College Deans of Quality to collect outstanding programme reports for their areas and report completion rates to December meeting of the Committee.

Finally, the subgroup noted that there was variation in how Schools engaged with some of the questions, especially in sections that requested reflection on data sets supplied by the central University. The subgroup recommend that AQS consult with Academic Planning around the provision of centrally collated data sets to ensure greater consistency and clarity in responses.

Action: AQS and Academic Planning colleagues to liaise on the provision of centrally produced data sets to aide Schools with their annual QA reports.

Appendix of Positive Practice Examples

The following examples of positive practice for sharing were noted in relation to key aspects of the student experience as set out in the principles of the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#):

Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment:

- **Bayes Centre:** The Centre continues to engage with schools throughout the University to identify a suite of courses that reflect the multidisciplinary nature of Data Science, equipping students to apply the skills they learn in multiple domains. The interdisciplinary nature of provision and flexible delivery is commendable.
- **Business:** The School has developed a robust training and monitoring system to support PGR students who teach. In addition to induction and training, the School offers shadowing and peer observation, encourages teaching accreditation routes and has established the requirement for all returning tutors to complete an annual review to discuss and reflect on the experience and performance.
- **Centre for Open Learning:** The Academic Practice Sharing Hub launched a year ago and has been excellent in providing a shared space for COL staff to engage in CPD, with themes including, Decoloniality and Diversity, Skills for Success Framework and Student Voice.
- **Chemistry:** The School has referred to honours educational research projects to develop ideas for assessment, feedback, labs, etc. These have resulted in changes being made in these areas.
- **EFI:** The School completed phase 1 of its Education Review and has transitioned all 2026/7 courses to 20 credits, created a new and improved model of intensive block teaching and introduced a suite of Skills and Methods courses.
- **Engineering:** Disciplines run industry advisory boards (IABs) to ensure the curriculum keeps pace with developments in industry. Each board has an academic and industry co-chair. The industry co-chair also sits on the school's Engineering Development and Advisory Board to advise the School in relation to strategic planning of key areas of school vision and mission; learning and teaching; research as well as partnerships and alumni engagement.
- **Engineering:** The School developed the Feedback Improvement Toolkit (FIT) with the specific aim of improving the quality of feedback given to students. The focus of the toolkit is on ensuring that feedback is of the appropriate volume, provides specific actions for students to take, and sets it in the context of how improvements can be made for the future. The toolkit was initially developed within the School and is now being adopted across the College.
- **GeoSciences:** Efforts have been made to design assessments which are more resilient to Generative AI. Some courses have integrated reflective elements into submissions and made efforts to reduce essay-style assessments, e.g. video-based assessment which have been very positively received by both students and staff.

- **Medical School:** A feedback template has now been rolled out across all UG years. The template reinforces expectations that markers provide explicit advice on how students can improve their work. The NSS scores for "Feedback improves my work" increased from 54% to 63% and "Marking has been fair" increased from 60% to 72% from the student cohort which has had substantial experience with the template.
- **MHSES:** A PGR supervisor community of practice has been established to bring together supervisors to share and learn from each other.
- **SPS:** AI Resilience Project – Colleagues working on the AI resilience working group were effective in leading an audit of courses, followed by guidance and advice in developing more resilient forms as assessment.
- **Vet School –** The School has established an GenAI Working Group which aims to support staff and students to utilise AI within the unique challenges of the veterinary sector, incorporating client safety, data protection, and societal need. As one example of the work in this space, a number of PGT programmes have piloted AI use reflection statements as an appendix to assessments. After good practice sharing, more programmes plan to implement this practice.

Supporting Student Success:

- **Biological Sciences:** Career development has gained momentum through a 'Career-Ready' Welcome Day session, a placements talk in the spring Research Cultures workshop, and newly appointed Industry Engagement Director and Manager roles.
- **Centre for Open Learning:** The English Language Education UG credit collection is opening up to all students from 2026-27, having previously been only open to visiting students. Thus, there will be institution-wide academic language and literacy courses.
- **Divinity:** The School has implemented a Foundation Seminar which integrates core academic skill training for in-coming Year 1 students with thematic, subject-based seminars. This provision has been well received and is seen as a model that could beneficially be taken up by more Schools in the future.
- **EPCC:** The Centre has appointed a new Cohort Lead for online students and introduced a number of new activities for the online cohort including Q&A online sessions with current and former students, an online careers event featuring individuals working in related industries and a virtual tour of the Advanced Computing Facility.
- **HCA:** HCA's Writing Centre, overseen by the Director of Undergraduate Engagement and Experience, provides students with guidance on essay writing. GH tutors support students, with provision particularly aimed at new students and those seeking additional support with academic writing.
- **LLC:** The QAE Officer developed accessible widening participation datasets covering 2021/22–2025/26, alongside an executive summary to support further analysis by subject areas and departments. This work has also informed the establishment of a WP Steering Group to support outcomes for WP students.
- **Informatics:** Research by Informatics into the experience of Scottish students, who are statistically more likely to struggle and to drop out, has

informed the development of a bespoke mentoring approach for students identified as being at greater risk of struggling, enabling earlier and more targeted support. A new Level 7 maths course was introduced in 2025/26, with a new Level 7 programming course planned for 2026/27, aimed at closing this gap for students.

- **Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences:** Supervisors are encouraged to perform a training needs analysis with their student at the start of their programme, and a 10-week review is held in the first year to ensure that students have settled in and understand their project. This is in addition to the annual review at the end of the first year. The School have plans to ensure that this enhanced process is consistently implemented across the School.

Student Engagement and Partnership:

- **ECA:** A key School-level enhancement to Student Voice is the annual Programme Review Meetings which analyse NSS/PTES findings with Programme Directors, Subject Area Heads and Subject Area Education Directors, and Special Meetings for programmes that score low on Student Satisfaction to encourage staff to analyse and engage with survey results.
- **Economics:** The School have a number of good practice examples within the PGR community. Academic job-market support is provided, including via research-presentation and placement preparation. PGR student volunteers organise peer activity, including informal peer-to-peer research presentations. One-to-one “fireside chats” are available to give PGR students the opportunity for confidential conversations and raise any issues through this mechanism.
- **Genetics and Cancer:** Student engagement with the wider research environment has been noted as a strength within the School. Students have opportunities to present their research, participate in Institute seminars and interact with researchers beyond their immediate supervisory teams.
- **HiSS:** Colleagues across the School are encouraged to enhance their teaching practices by engaging in relevant teaching-related scholarly activity. As part of this, colleagues have worked on relevant initiatives in partnership with students in terms of curriculum development, effective teaching strategies and student voice activities (e.g. PGR staff-student-collaborative grant applications).
- **Law:** Utilised student focus groups to inform future School practice: the School has ensured that working group activities (Accessible and Inclusive Learning, and Assessment and Feedback) were informed by student feedback via School run student focus groups.
- **Maths:** With the Student PGR Committee, the Graduate School delivered a PhD Alumni Employability Event at the Bayes Centre in May 2026, funded by a £5,000 College Student Experience grant the Committee had been awarded. Feedback was very positive and many students asked for it to become a regular fixture.
- **MHSES:** To support community and belonging, the School have continued to develop peer support programmes. The School has EdBudds and SportsBudds for the UG cohort and Dissertation Buddies for PGT as well as

PhD Buddies. All of these programmes are student-led and provide opportunities for skill development and community engagement.

- **Population Health Sciences:** As part of each Research Degree Committee meeting, the Schools receives on-going and iterative feedback from its Student Society (via the Reps) about changes implemented in response to their earlier suggestions for improving student experience.
- **Physics and Astronomy:** The School has received good feedback from students, and elsewhere in the university, for their efforts regarding Student Voice, specifically SSLCs. Rather than have rep elections, any interested SoPA student can join: this has led to very well-attended SSLCs. Secondly, SoPA have increased the visibility of SSLC by the chair and facilitator attending cohort events and breakfast clubs, being visible at the UofE L&T conference, etc.
- **PPLS:** A Student Council has been formed that is run by students, with recognised and formalised links to the School. This has created a student-only forum for student voices with the widest scope to address how PPLS provides teaching, learning, and an experience of being a student. This initiative was inspired by the Student Council in SPS and is an example of good practice sharing across Schools.
- **Regeneration and Repair:** The School holds a series of events, some fully student-led, some student co-led, that ensure the teaching is relevant and offers what students wish to receive. Examples are a weekly journal club where students and postdocs present published papers, pre-lights or look at peer-review reports, and Lunch and Learn events around relevant developments in the subject area.

Professor Tina Harrison
(Convener)

Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)

Sinéad Docherty

Academic Quality and Standards Manager, Academic Quality and Standards

September 2026

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

8 October 2026

Internal Periodic Review Themes 2025/26

Description of paper

1. Identifies areas of good practice and areas for further development arising from Internal Periodic Reviews (IPRs) held in 2025/26, and proposes actions to share recommendations related to key University activities.
2. This paper contributes to the strategic aims of enhancing the student experience. It also fulfils a regulatory requirement as it reports on the internal arrangements for reviewing all provision across a six-year period, as mandated by the Scottish Funding Council.
3. Fit with remit:

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

Action requested / recommendation

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

Background and context

5. Six Internal Periodic Reviews were held during 2025/26:
 - Centre for Open Learning (UG provision)
 - School of Chemistry (UG & PGT provision)
 - School of Divinity (UG provision)
 - School of Informatics (PGR provision)
 - School of Social and Political Science (PGT provision)
 - Moray House School of Education and Sport (PGT and PGR provision)
6. The report for the review of the School of Social and Political Science is not yet complete. The below analysis reports on the themes evidenced in the other five reports. The Social and Political Science PGT IPR report will be presented to the Committee once it has been finalised.
7. Recommendations and commendations were themed and, where possible, sub-themed, to support the analysis of the outcomes of IPRs. This was done retrospectively and to the most pertinent theme and/or sub-theme (as outcomes may span multiple themes and/or sub-themes). Themes were identified from text

data and then used to code the content for analysis. The themes used for this analysis broadly align with the topics covered by the University Standard Remit for Internal Periodic Reviews and the priorities identified following the external quality review.

8. The Committee should note that the internal review of the Centre for Open Learning considered non-credit bearing provision and learners, as well as credit-bearing UG provision and matriculated students.
9. Individual review reports are available at: [IPR Reports 2025/26](#)

Discussion

10. The following areas of good practice are drawn from commendations identified with the reviews and relate to themes which appear across a number of reviews and/or align to a broader University priority/theme.

- **Learning and Teaching** (including curriculum design, collaboration and co-creation) was the most common theme with 17 commendations across the internal periodic reviews. Review teams most often commended the quality of provision and the enhancements to learning and teaching.

Specific examples of good practice identified within this theme as follows:

- The Centre has demonstrated many instances of working in collaboration with other areas of the University, notably with pre-sessional and in-sessional English Language courses, the two IFPs and the Access programme. The review team commend the way in which these programmes and courses interact with Schools. (Centre for Open Learning)
- The review team commends the practice-based and applied learning approaches demonstrated across programmes and courses. (MHSES)
- The review team commend the School for the breadth of the offering in their provision across the many areas of Divinity and commend the well-defined and clear identities within subject areas. It was recognised and commended that the School of Divinity has a leading role in the discipline within the UK. (Divinity)
- The introduction of the education-focussed lecturer roles within the School and the pride these role holders take in this area of work is commended. (Chemistry)
- The Review Team commends the School on its excellent REF performance and on securing CDT research funding, both successes demonstrating the relevance and impact of its strategic approach and a genuine academic culture of excellence and strong reputation in the field. (Informatics)
- All Schools received commendations for their provision of **Student Support**. Particular commendations noted by the review teams include:

- The strength of student support throughout the School, its exemplary implementation of the Student Support Model, and the empathetic approach taken to all student cohorts, including neurodivergent and WP students, is commended. (Chemistry)
 - The review team commends how the Student Support team has been integrated with the teaching office and teaching teams with a student-focused approach to support. (MHSES)
 - The Review Team commends the Graduate School Administrator and wider team on their sensitive and skilled approach and the clear and well-organised system for supporting students (including academic support, career development, and well-being initiatives). (Informatics).
 - The review team commend the immense effort and work of the student support team and teaching office team; their positive contribution was frequently noted and appreciated by students and colleagues throughout the review. There were many examples of colleagues in these teams creating an open, friendly and supportive environment for students and the review team were impressed by the overall organisation and inclusivity of the student experience. (Divinity)
 - The review team commend the Centre for its provision of support to students and learners and the sense of cohesion across the learning experience. (COL)
- **Staff communities of practice and the commitment to staff development** were noted in several areas. Particular examples of good practice and initiatives embedded to facilitate this within Schools are as follows:
 - The review team commend the recently formed Academic Practice Sharing Hub, an online community network with a monthly focus on themes related to learning and teaching. (COL)
 - The School had many examples of good practice in supporting their tutors, including the provision of banks of questions to lead class discussions and checking all the marking and feedback of PGR tutors, and the review team commend these practices. (Divinity)
 - The review team commend the establishment of shadowing opportunities for student advisers and Teaching office staff to improve understanding of roles and responsibilities and enable career progression. (MHSES)
 - The review team commend the Schools dedication to creating a community of practice and providing a space through the Course Organiser and Programme Directors Forums for staff to raise matters, make positive change and continuously develop. (MHSES).
 - Although not identified in every review, there were some notable **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** commendations which should be highlighted as good practice across Schools within the context of institution-wide efforts

to create an inclusive learning environment and take steps to address the awarding gap. Commendations identified by review teams:

- The review team commend the Centre on the range and type of activities offered, and the extent to which this impacts a very wide range of learners and students that is unique within the University. The Centre's commitment to having a positive impact on the lives of students and learners was evident throughout all discussions and was a clear motivation for colleagues within the Centre. (COL)
- The review team commend the Centre's work on creating inclusive learning environments and materials. (COL)
- In terms of Year 5, while it was noted that some students may not be able to afford undertaking the year of study abroad, students in this position are encouraged to undertake internships as these are often paid and tuition fees are reduced. Similarly, for in-School paid summer internship opportunities, the School employs a weighted rubric to support WP students who have no prior placement/research experience. The School's commitment to work in the area of widening access and participation is commended. (Chemistry).
- Widening participation has been advanced through a compulsory Foundation Seminar that builds core study skills and confidence, particularly for students from non-traditional backgrounds, and through tailored student support informed by contextual data... The review team commend the introduction of the Foundation Seminar into the first-year curriculum and its role in establishing skills, knowledge, and community for the incoming cohort. (Divinity)

Areas for further development

11. The following areas for further development are drawn from recommendations which appear across a number of reviews and/or align to a broader theme.

- **PGR support, supervision and community**

The Informatics and MHSES reviews, which considered PGR provision, noted wider challenges across the institution. Recommendations in these reviews related to supervisor culture, PGR community, appropriate areas of responsibility and PGR tutor training.

The PGR experience, and specifically the need to evidence training of PGR tutors and demonstrators, is an ongoing area of action in the University, aligned with the recommendation from the Quality Enhancements and Standards Review (the external review which took place in 2023).

Proposed action: Share theme and specific recommendations with Doctoral College. Monitoring of training for PGR tutors is already being taken forward in response to external review recommendations and will have greater institutional visibility from AY 2026/27. Engagement with supervisor training should be monitored and evidenced across the institution. As action is undertaken against

these recommendations in 2026/27, the Doctoral College will have a role in sharing improved practice and new initiatives.

- **Sustainable delivery: workload, capacity and strategy**

Across the reviews, recommendations related to institutional issues concerning workload, capacity, role clarity and increasingly complex demands upon staff. The institution is working through ongoing strategic change and the impact upon Schools was evident throughout review activity, in both their responses to priority areas of action and their efforts to plan for the years ahead.

Specific recommendations differed across review areas, but it was evident that the broad themes of strategic direction, fair and transparent allocation of workload and effective use of available resources are all key aspects for Schools as they seek to operate within the changing landscape and face increased financial pressures.

- **Student Support Resourcing**

As detailed above, all Schools were commended by the respective review teams for the care, commitment and support that is in place for students. The School of Divinity received the following recommendations to strengthen their student support provision:

- The review team recommend that the Student Support Continuous Improvement Group (SSCIG), who are responsible for the oversight and evaluation of the Student Support Model, work with Divinity to consider how the student support model works in small Schools, and how to mitigate against single points of failure and burnout.
- The review team recommend that SSCIG works with the School of Divinity with some urgency to address this, and to ensure no other Schools in the University face a similar level of risk.

The Divinity recommendations must not be interpreted as evidence of poor-quality support. Indeed, the staff effort was highly commended in the review, but the review team identified significant and clear fragility in the student support system that is in place in the School of Divinity. There is one full-time member of staff dedicated to the undergraduate community of around 330 students, and 0.5 FTE member of staff dedicated to the postgraduate taught cohort. The review team recognised that this lack of capacity within the Student Support team poses a risk to student experience and both student and staff wellbeing.

Proposed action: Recommendations to be referred to SSCIG and the group to report back to the December meeting with a clear action plan that can support and direct Schools who experience acute pressures on the Student Support team and identify risk to student and staff due to lack of capacity.

Action against themes

12. Recommendations from IPRs have been directed for action the relevant Schools, Colleges and service areas. Updates will be monitored through the 14-week response and subsequent annual action plans submitted to the Committee.
13. It is expected that the themes identified above will correspond with those themes identified through the School-level Annual Monitoring quality process (also reporting to the Committee in October). Relevant context and actions from both processes will be shared with appropriate areas or task groups (i.e. Doctoral College for PGR Experience and Tutors and Demonstrators, Student Support Continuous Improvement Group for actions relating to the SSM).
14. Academic Quality and Standards will monitor actions against the themes which align with the QESR external review recommendations and capture progress in these areas to be reported annually to the QAA.

Resource implications

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

Risk management

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

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

18. Equality and diversity will be considered as part of any proposed actions. EDI is integral to the internal review process and is considered within each review.

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

19. Areas which have responsibility for action, such as relevant Schools/Colleges or the QESR oversight group, will be informed of the recommendations and informed of the relevant process through which their progress against these recommendations will be monitored.
20. College Deans of Quality are asked to communicate the areas and the outcome of the discussion to relevant College committees.
21. Academic Quality and Standards communicates the areas for further development arising from internal periodic review reports and responsibility for action to Schools/subject areas which had provision reviewed in 2025/26.

22. Academic Quality and Standards will work with the College Quality Offices and School Directors of Quality Network to share examples of good practice across the University.
23. Areas for further development as identified by quality assurance processes will also be reported to University Executive.

Author

*Academic Quality and Standards
21 September 2026*

Presenter

Brian Connolly

Freedom of Information The paper is open.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

8 October 2026

English Language Skills Short Life Working Group

Description of paper

1. This paper presents proposals for the establishment of an English Language Skills Short Life Working Group.

Fit with remit:

Quality Assurance Committee	Y/N
Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice.	X
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.	X
Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.	X
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

2. The Committee is requested to discuss the proposals outlined in the paper and approve the establishment of the short life group.

Background and context

3. In meetings in September and December 2025, the Committee noted through School and College Quality Assurance reporting an increasing number of issues with proficiency in English language skills. These included language capability of students at time of entry, language development through a programme, and the impact on workload, assessment and peer learning. It was noted that some students appeared to be reliant on translation software and GenAI in the classroom and in assessment.
4. These findings were remitted to the Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions, in the first instance, who assured the Committee that there have not been any significant changes to English language entry requirements for the University of Edinburgh.
5. The Committee called for clearer University-wide expectations of English language development and support as part of academic progression, alongside

stronger evidence, clearer accountability, and coordinated action involving relevant academic and student leadership.

Discussion

6. It is proposed that the working group is established and tasked with the following:
 - identify any factors at programme, institution, or sector level that may be affecting students with insufficient English Language skills in engaging effectively with study
 - explore the student experience over the first 12 months of study at UoE to identify enablers and obstacles to further development of English Language competence and confidence
 - These may include curricula design, teaching methods, community and individual student factors
 - Consideration will be given to the staff teaching experience and the wider impact on the student learning experience
 - explore the potential impact of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), automated translation and live translation technologies on students' opportunities and ability to develop and demonstrate English language skills during their studies.
 - consider both the potential risks and benefits of these technologies for how students develop their own English language proficiency.
 - make recommendations to SQAC, and the University, as to how students can be supported to develop the English language skills required for academic study and wider participation in the University experience.
7. The group may also explore any relationship between English language skills and awarding gaps present for international students across each area of provision.
8. The group are expected to report to SQAC by the end of academic year 2026/27, sharing findings on the extent of the issues identified across Schools, their impact on teaching, learning and outcomes, and recommendations for any actions to support English language proficiency across the student population..
9. Committee members are asked to discuss and approve the Terms of Reference for the group and proposed membership (see appendix).

Resource implications

10. There are no immediate resource implications related to this working group, beyond the time commitment required of the membership. There will be resource implications depending on the approach taken and specific interventions and supports that may be agreed to be taken forward.

Risk management

11. For students, insufficient development of English language proficiency during their period of study may limit their ability to participate fully in learning and assessment, engage confidently with peers and staff, and make full use of the

wider opportunities available to them. Where language development needs are not identified and addressed effectively, there is also a risk of contributing to differences in attainment and awarding outcomes, as well as affecting students' wider sense of belonging, engagement and overall student experience.

12. For the University, ensuring that students have appropriate opportunities to develop the language skills required for successful academic study is therefore important to supporting equitable learning and assessment, reducing the risk of contributing to awarding gaps, and enabling all students to participate fully in university life and achieve their intended outcomes.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

13. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Equality & diversity

14. Equality and diversity are integral to the student experience and academic outcomes. The task group will work closely with the University EDI Lead and EDI Committee to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to this work.

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

15. Further details to be developed through the proposed English Language Skills Short Life Working Group.

Authors

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Presenter

Tina Harrison, Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)

Freedom of Information Open

The University of Edinburgh

English Language Skills Short Life Working Group Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The English Language Skills is a short life working group tasked with understanding the current position of English language development in the student population.
- 1.2 The Group will consider factors that are influencing the development of English language skills and consider any additional support needed.
- 1.3 The Group will make recommendations to SQAC, and the University, as to how students can be supported to develop the English language skills required for academic study and wider participation in the University experience.

2. Remit

- 2.1 The Group will identify any factors at programme, institution, or sector level that may be affecting students with insufficient English Language skills in engaging effectively with study.
- 2.2 The Group will explore the student experience over the first 12 months of study at UoE to identify enablers and obstacles to further development of English Language competence and confidence. These may include curricula design, teaching methods, community and individual student factors. Consideration will be given to the staff teaching experience and the wider impact on the student learning experience.
- 2.3 The Group will explore the potential impact of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), automated translation and live translation technologies on students' opportunities and ability to develop and demonstrate English language skills during their studies.
- 2.4 The Group will consider both the potential risks and benefits of these technologies for how students develop their own English language proficiency.
- 2.5 The Group will explore whether particular groups of students may be disproportionately affected by the use of GenAI and explore whether this has an effect on awarding gaps experienced by certain groups.
- 2.6 The Group will consider available and achievable mechanisms which can support and develop English language skills within the curriculum, such as in-session language courses.

2.7 The Group will consult with Student Recruitment and Admissions on the expectations and assurance of English language capability and the time of application and entry to the University.

2.8 The Group will consider whether existing University policies, strategies and practices remain appropriate as these technologies develop and make recommendations for areas of enhancement.

3 Meetings

3.1 The Group will meet 4 times throughout the academic year.

3.2 Additional meetings relating to specific tasks set by the Group may be convened as necessary.

4 Operation

4.1 The Group will report to SQAC by May 2027 to present its findings and make recommendations for any institutional actions required to set expectations for English language use and proficiency in learning environments.

4.2 The Group will link to the University Admissions Group (a subgroup of the Future Students Committee) and the University Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC) via overlapping members.

5 Membership

Role	Member	Name
Convenor	Senior Lecturer in Clinical Psychology in the School of Health in Social Science	Dr Emily Taylor
Student Representative	Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association	Ex officio
Student Representative	TBC	TBC
EDI Committee Representative	TBC	TBC
Student Recruitment and Admissions	TBC	
Centre for Open Learning Representatives	Colleagues with expertise in English Language Education	TBC

Academic Development Representative	TBC	TBC
Student Success – Awarding Gap Task Group Representative	TBC	TBC
College Representatives	Nominated College Deans across roles	TBC Dean of Quality (CAHSS) Dean of Students (CSE) Dean of Education (CMVM)
Academic Quality & Standards Representative & Group Secretary	Academic Quality and Standards Manager	TBC

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

8 October 2026

Student Success (Awarding Gaps) Task Group Update

Description of paper

1. This paper presents an update on the activities of the Student Success (Awarding Gaps) Task Group and actions the group propose to take forward. The task group is a subgroup of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee ([Terms of Reference available here](#)).

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
Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice.	X
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.	X
Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.	X
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

2. The Committee is requested to note the proposals outlined in the paper. The Committee is invited to propose mechanisms to raise visibility of this work and establish greater accountability within the institution.

Background and context

3. In December 2025, the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) approved the terms of reference and remit for the Student Success (Awarding Gaps) Task Group. The group is responsible for identifying actions aimed at reducing awarding gaps and informing institutional level monitoring of awarding gaps.
4. The University's approach to monitoring the awarding gap was the subject of the following QAA recommendations:

QESR recommendation (2023): Attainment gap monitoring - The University should pay particular attention to sharing good practice and supporting staff in understanding the causes of attainment gaps and taking effective action.

ELIR recommendation (2021): Attainment gap monitoring - Consider how to address attainment gaps in student performance through the oversight, coordination and monitoring at an institutional level of school-level actions.

5. The task group has been presented with a series of data analysis reports compiled by Academic Planning (Registry Services) colleagues. The reports have detailed the degrees awarded across the student population and have explored key student profiles and intersectionality across groups. Analysis has also focussed on gaps at College-level to give more insight across subject areas.
6. The data analysis has identified that students most likely to be affected by awarding gaps include Widening Participation students, ethnic minority students and Scottish domiciled students. This reflects the awarding gaps most commonly seen elsewhere in the sector. Key statistically significant gaps are as follows:
 - a. **Ethnicity:** Black, Chinese and Asian students are significantly less likely than White students to be awarded a First Class degree (with gaps of 21.3, 15.9 and 8.1 percentage points respectively). The Black–White gap has widened over time, the Asian–White gap has narrowed, and the Chinese–White gap has remained broadly constant. There are no significant gaps in 2:1 awards. Among UK-domiciled students, the only significant ethnicity gap is between Black and White students, with Black students 24.4 percentage points less likely to be awarded a First Class degree.
 - b. **Domicile:** Scottish-domiciled students are 14.9 percentage points less likely than RUK students and 6.1 points less likely than international students to be awarded a First Class degree. Both gaps have widened over time.
 - c. **Widening Participation (WP):** Among UK-domiciled students, WP students are 10.5 percentage points less likely to receive a First Class degree, with no significant gap for 2:1 awards. The gap increases to 18.1 points when WP is defined using SIMD20 and ACORN 5/6. The overall WP gap is largely driven by Scottish-domiciled WP students (10.7 points); there is no significant First Class gap among RUK WP/non WP students. The awarding gap for WP students has not changed significantly over the last five years.
 - d. **Disability:** Students with a disclosed disability are 3.6 percentage points less likely to receive a 2:1 than students without a disclosed disability, with no significant gap in First Class awards. The key gaps are for students with social/communication conditions (22.7 points) and those who prefer not to disclose their disability (6.3 points). No significant gaps were identified for other disability types.
7. Whilst improvements for and limitations of the existing data have been identified by the task group, changes to University-wide data collection and systems are not an achievable aim in the coming years. Existing data does evidence clear gaps affecting certain groups of students. This can inform decisions about where

to target efforts and support work with selected Schools during 2026/27–2027/28 to test different approaches and build the evidence base of what is effective.

Discussion

8. Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) manages the annual monitoring QA process where all programmes and Schools report on their activities within key themes and institutional priorities. There is a section on Student Outcomes where Schools are asked to report on the awards and outcomes data on their PowerBI Dashboard and to identify any local actions they are taking to address awarding gaps.
9. The task group has collectively reviewed the 2025/26 responses from Schools and identified a number of promising areas of practice. However, there is currently insufficient evidence to determine their effectiveness. Working with Schools, the next step will be to develop the data and evidence base to evaluate impact and build understanding of what works, for whom, and in what contexts.
10. The group noted the importance of working within existing initiatives and strategies, such as the WP Strategy, the CAHSS Closing the Gaps initiative and the University's EDI Roadmap, to avoid duplication of effort and fragmentation of workstreams.
11. Specific promising areas of practice include:
 - **Business:** A WP Steering Group meets three times per year, supported by a WP strategy. The strategy is currently being refreshed, informed by focus groups with Widening Participation students. The academic attainment of WP students is monitored and reported through the WP Steering Group.
 - **Biological Sciences:** UG Immunology is the main programme reporting specific actions. These include continued drop-in sessions, the introduction of formative feedback opportunities ahead of all summative assessments, and a summer school bridging second and third year.
 - **Divinity:** For the last three years, a compulsory first-year UG course, the Theology and Religious Studies Foundation Seminar, has focused on developing students' core academic skills, with particular relevance to students from WP or otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds. The seminar has received positive feedback through SSLCs and student feedback and was also commended by the IPR Panel.
 - **Edinburgh Medical School:** Within UG Medicine, the planned introduction of regular applied knowledge testing, prompt feedback and enhanced academic support provides an opportunity to evaluate impact on progression before and after resits, support uptake and outcomes for Context Plus and other relevant student groups. The programme should also consider assessment demands alongside work, commuting and caring responsibilities, and monitor the differential impact of changes to resit and progression arrangements.

- **Engineering:** In collaboration with the CSE planning team, a dashboard has been developed to track degree outcomes and awards for groups of students by ethnicity, gender, disability and age at programme entry. A comparable dataset for socio-economic background has not yet been identified. As a new tool, the dashboard may also provide a potential model for similar monitoring across other Schools in the College.
- **HCA:** A new Widening Participation committee has been established as one mechanism for addressing attainment gaps. Work is also underway to ensure that international students, including at progression stages where some awarding gaps have been identified, are better recognised and supported. Further work has begun to consider how the core recommendations from the CAHSS 'Closing the Gaps' project can be implemented.
- **Informatics:** Research into the experiences of Scottish students, who are statistically more likely to experience difficulties and withdraw, has informed the development of a bespoke mentoring approach for students identified as being at greater risk of struggling, enabling earlier and more targeted support. A new Level 7 maths course was introduced in 2025/26, with a Level 7 programming course due to follow in 2026/27, with the aim of addressing gaps for students entering with insufficient entry qualifications.
- **Law:** Existing activities include: Early offer-holder days with a WP focus; A mentoring scheme pairing WP students with alumni; A 'Dress Smart' drop-in/free service providing formal clothing for interviews and events through donated items; Engagement with IntoUniversity, an organisation based in Craigmillar, including a day visit organised with Edinburgh Cares and Reach for S1–S3-aged young people and their families.
- **LLC:** With support from the LLC Widening Participation team, datasets covering 2021/22 to 2025/26 have been developed to explore key WP-related questions. These datasets are now accessible for further analysis, supported by an executive summary of the findings. Subject areas and departments can use the datasets to explore the findings in greater depth. Building on this work, a Department of European Languages and Cultures (DELIC) WP Steering Group has been established to support outcomes for WP students.
- **SPS:** The School continues to implement its three-year Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy for Learning, Teaching and Student Experience, adopted in 2025, which aims to create an inclusive and aspirational learning environment and contribute to closing awarding gaps. In 2026, the School's EDI Committee organised a workshop for staff and PGR students addressing accent bias, social class and linguistic discrimination, with the aim of raising awareness and providing research-led strategies for mitigating these issues.

12. The responses from Schools demonstrate a range of activities and approaches targeting their respective student communities. However, it is also apparent that Schools recognise the need to strengthen the evidence base on the impact of these activities and indicated that institutional-level direction would be helpful in guiding and supporting this work. A key next step is therefore to work with Schools to better

understand the activities currently in place, assess how these align with the awarding gaps and student groups identified through the available data, and ensure that activity is appropriately targeted across the range of identified gaps.

13. The task group also identified the need for greater consistency in the allocation of responsibility for this work across Schools and Colleges, while recognising that the appropriate approach may differ according to context. Working with Schools will provide an opportunity to identify where activity is already addressing particular gaps, where there may be gaps in provision, and where further evidence is needed to understand the effectiveness of existing approaches. This should support a more systematic approach to identifying, developing and evaluating activity, rather than assuming that existing activity is necessarily addressing all identified gaps or student groups.
14. In relation to disability, further consideration is required of the specific gaps identified for students with social/communication conditions and for students who are not currently recorded as disclosing a disability. It is proposed that this is taken forward in discussion with Student Disability Service (SDS), including consideration of how existing activity and support arrangements address these groups. In particular, it will be important to understand whether students who do not currently disclose a disability are accessing the appropriate support and reasonable adjustments, and whether there are barriers to disclosure or accessing support that should be addressed. This work would help to ensure that activity is informed by the specific circumstances and needs of the student groups identified in the data.
15. The task group observed variation in how Schools currently use and interpret the available data and dashboards, with some Schools also developing their own datasets to support local analysis. The task group agreed that there would be benefit in establishing a consistent set of core metrics and data to be shared across all Schools, providing a common baseline against which progress can be monitored and reported over time. It is proposed that this work initially builds on the data and analysis already being undertaken by Schools, working with them and the Student Analytics and Insights team to develop a standard set of key metrics for baseline reporting and future monitoring of progress.
16. The task group noted that some Schools observed that there may be a link between English language skills and the academic development demonstrated by some students from an ethnic minority background. It was speculated that some students who do not speak English as their first language are more likely to experience awarding gaps. The Senate Quality Assurance Committee has tasked an English Language Skills Working Group with exploring language skills and their relation to awards and engagement. The working group will operate throughout 2026/27 and report in to SQAC.
17. This work will also be considered alongside related activity being taken forward through the Race Review Action Plan and the EDI Action Plan, as well as the work of the Education Project Board (EPB) Lead and the three recently appointed Decolonisation Transformation Leads (DTLs), one within each College, providing

an opportunity to connect relevant activity and avoid duplication. Further work should therefore consider how these existing strands of activity can be joined up where they have the potential to address ethnicity-related awarding gaps, and how learning and evidence from this work can inform the wider approach to closing awarding gaps.

18. There is an expectation that the University will have taken steps to support staff in addressing awarding gaps and sharing good practice by the time of the next external review that will take place early in AY 2027/28.
19. Therefore, it is necessary for the task group to continue in a way that allows collaboration with relevant Committees and strategies, has oversight of effective activities at School and College level and can demonstrate efforts and progress towards closing awarding gaps.

Resource implications

20. There will be resource implications depending on the approach taken and specific interventions that may be agreed to be taken forward more widely.
21. Resource consideration must be given to the teams working in data analysis and planning roles, as well as staff in QA roles which will manage the systematic monitoring. Additional resource may be required as these teams roll-out data and evidence-based monitoring throughout the institution.

Risk management

22. For students, failing to address awarding gaps risks perpetuating systemic inequalities that undermine students' fairness, belonging, wellbeing, and long-term opportunities. For the University, poor performance across the range of student experience and lifecycle metrics is a risk to the University's reputation, particularly if we do not develop a better understanding of which groups of students are at higher risk of withdrawing or experiencing inequitable outcomes and the underlying reasons.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

23. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Equality & diversity

24. Equality and diversity are integral to the student experience and student success. The task group will work closely with the University EDI Lead and EDI Committee to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to this work.

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

25. Communication will be driven by the Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) and shared by staff working in QA roles across the institution. Action may be driven through existing and enhanced QA practices.
26. Evaluation will be a key part of any practice adopted to address the awarding gap. The task group expects that interventions will be initially piloted and evaluated to understand their impact before rolling out more widely.

Authors

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Freedom of Information Open

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

8 October 2026

Proposal to form an equivalent Board of Studies for Professional Services Groups and adopt a standard Short Courses Approval Form

Description of paper

1. This paper sets out the proposed formation of a Board of Studies group for Professional Services Groups (University Secretary's Group, Corporate Services Group and Information Services Group) who create and deliver continual professional development and upskilling non-credited short courses. This proposal aligns with the Learning and Teaching Strategy, Supporting Inspiring Teaching in the area of Continuing Professional Development.

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
Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice. 2.4 Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. Review and if acceptable approve the proposal and recommendation to establish a Board of Studies for the three Professional Service Groups to review proposals for non-credit bearing, continuing professional development and upskilling courses predominantly delivered via the Short Courses Platform.
3. Approve in principle, a standard course approval form for non-credit bearing courses, that can act as the core details for reviewing and approving short course that course teams can supplement with any additional course information to be considered for approval.

Background and context

4. The three professional services areas (University Secretary's Group, Corporate Services Group and Information Services Group) create and deliver a wide range of non-credited short courses focussing on professional areas of work which are delivered as part of the Short Courses Platform.
5. The courses offered are not academic courses, rather they are continual professional development and upskilling courses in areas where the University of Edinburgh are subject matter experts, often fulfilling requirements of industry compliance. Examples of courses delivered are personal training licence courses

for Bioresearch and Veterinary Services, Biosafety Practitioner courses and online course production courses.

6. Currently courses are developed locally within business areas, and reviewed by senior colleagues, however there is no institutionally consistent approach to quality assurance for all the professional services portfolio.

Discussion

7. In order to provide a consistent approval process for all non-credit bearing courses we propose the introduction of a professional services Board of Studies equivalent, providing a similar approach to the quality assurance of non-credit bearing courses as found in academic schools.
8. The current portfolio of short courses delivered by professional services groups is 13 courses to 645 Learners since the adoption of the Short Courses Platform in 2025. It is anticipated that no more than 5 courses would be reviewed in an academic year, based on the current portfolio.
9. Membership will be from representatives from across the three professional services groups who deliver short courses. A provisional membership list has been collated (Appendix A). Please note, this list is a suggestion and no members have been approached to discuss them joining the equivalent board of studies, this will be progressed if the proposal is approved.
10. The group will be convened with a College representative. We suggest that this could be from the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; the college with the highest proportion of short courses. In addition, it will include an academic colleague with experience of the creation and delivery of short non-credit bearing courses.
11. This will allow the group to mirror the good practice and consistency with the existing Boards of Studies. It will also allow for the incorporation of an external academic perspective.
12. The recommendation is that the group would meet once per semester, however the frequency would remain under review with the option to approve courses via ebusiness if required.
13. In consultation with Short Course Portfolio Owners and other College representatives, members of the Short Courses Strategy Group (chaired by Melissa Highton and Jenny Hoy) held a workshop to begin identifying the vision for short courses to aid the creation of a Short Courses strategy. This will align with Strategy 2030 and other university strategy and committees such as Future Students Committee and University Fees and Scholarships Group. This high-level strategic direction for the institutional short course portfolio builds upon Colleges and Professional Services Groups' current strategies, where those exist. This will allow the development of a strategy for the Boards of Studies to assess course proposals against and embed quality assurance processes from the inception of each course.
14. To enhance the standardisation of short, non-credit bearing course approval this is also a proposal to develop a standard course approval form for **all** not-for-credit Short Course Approvals (Appendix B). Following the revision of the Programme and Course Approval, which has consistent and interwoven references to the approval of short courses, a standard form will allow parity for courses to be reviewed, appraised and approved across the institution enabling a more robust and accountable quality assurance process.

Resource implications

15. There will be a minor increase in workload for the members of the Board of Studies, however, based on the current portfolio of courses from Professional Services groups, there are not high volumes of courses being added to the platform and it is not anticipated to be more than half a day per semester.

Risk management

16. The current approval method lacks consistency and robust quality assurance reviews. The implementation of a Board of Studies equivalent for Professional Services Groups will allow the standardisation of processes to ensure a robust and rigorous course approval process in line with institutional quality assurance processes which will help mitigate this risk.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

17. This paper does not respond to the climate emergency or contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & diversity

18. There are no specific Equality and diversity issues resulting directly from this paper.

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

19. The Short Courses Service will work with stakeholders from the Professional Services Groups already engaged in short course activity to assist in the establishment of a Board of Studies.
20. If the creation of a standard course approval form is approved, this again will be finalised with the Short Courses Service Community of Practice and the final version made available on the [Short Courses Platform Hub - Home](#).

Author

Fiona Buckland

18 September 2026

Presenter

Fiona Buckland

Freedom of Information

This paper is open.

Appendix A - Proposed Membership of Professional Services equivalent Board of Studies.

The proposed membership is composed of representatives from all three professional services groups. Where applicable the membership has been drawn from areas already delivering short courses, at present, **no one has been approached to invite them to join the equivalent Board of Studies**. It aligns with the Learning and Teaching strategy to allow this area to deliver courses for continual professional development, which are flexible and inclusive ways to learn and demonstrates a commitment to developing a future ready curriculum for a lifelong learning audience,

Name	Role	Professional Service Group	Department
Jenny Hoy or James Mooney	Convenor	CAHSS	CAHSS – Centre for Open Learning
Fiona Buckland	Secretary	Information Services Group	Short Courses Platform Service Manager
Nikki Moran	Academic Colleague	CAHSS – ECA	Reid School of Music
Melissa Highton		Information Services Group	Learning, Teaching and Web Services
Chris Yeomans		University Secretary's Group	Edinburgh Global
Rachelle Norry		University Secretary's Group	Development and Alumni
?		University Secretary's Group	Careers Service
Gemma Gourlay		Corporate Services Group	Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Mel Leech		Corporate Services Group	Bioresearch and Veterinary Services
Candice Schmidt		Corporate Services Group	Health and Safety
Dominic Tate		Information Services Group	Digital Curation Centre
Anne Robertson		Information Services Group	Edina

Appendix B

Draft Short Course Approval Form

The details captured in this form are not intended to record operational information about a course, the form is designed to ensure course approvals meeting institutional quality assurance standards to provide a robust and rigorous course review and approval process.

Course Outline			
Course title			
Department			
College / Group			
Course Owner name			
Email address			
Availability (circle)	Fixed / Flexible (always open)		
Course Duration			
Course Summary			
Course Description			
Learning Outcomes	•		
Course Delivery Information			
Course start date		Min/Max no of learners	/
Delivery mode	Online / In person / Hybrid		
Course materials	Courses delivered on the SCP should only include openly available resources including Open Access materials or OERS, please confirm you can create your course using these? Yes / No / Other (please expand)		
Learning and Teaching Activities			
Assessment			

Proof of completion	Digital Badge* / Certificate / Other (please provide more details) / None *if you intend to use BadgEd digital badge platform, you course must include assessment.
Additional Information	
Skills for Success	List of skills this course will enable learners to develop/enhance
Keywords	
Which initiative(s) does the course align to?	• Data Driven Innovation • Research • Sustainability • Social and Civic • UN Sustainable Development Goals • Widening Participation & Inclusion

Market Analysis and Intended Audience	
Internal Market Analysis Please evidence that your proposed course does not cut across existing UoE Short courses or dilute the current offering. Please review the Short Courses Platform catalogue www.shortcourses.ed.ac.uk	
External Market Analysis Please evidence demand for	

this new course and provide a brief analysis of competitors (Guidance is available Market Research Toolkit for New Short Courses).	
Intended Audience	Public Audience / Private / B2B / Other (please specify)

Resourcing	
Have you confirmed that the appropriate resources are in place (finance, professional services and teaching staff, technicians, tutors, demonstrators, IT)?	Yes / No / TBC

Board of Studies Reviewer feedback	
Please use this space to record any comments, or use tracked changes within the main document. If/when you are happy for the final proposal to be submitted for BoS approval, please indicate this within the approval table at the end of this form.	
Reviewer name	
Reviewer date	

Approval		
Approval Stage	Committee/Board/Reviewer Name	Date

Board of Studies reviewer		
School/Department Board of Studies		

Senate Quality Assurance Committee**8 October 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

Quality Assurance Committee	
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
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:

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 21 October 2026 meeting. Changes to membership are 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 are reflective 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
September 2026

Presenter

Brian Connolly
Academic Quality and Standards
September 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)	Dr Michael Daw		No
	Dean of Quality and Enhancement (CSE)	Professor James Hopgood (Deputy Convener)		Academic
	Dean of Quality Assurance and Assessment (CAHSS)	Professor Steve Loughnan		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 (Director of Quality)	Dr Calum Maciver	1 August 2026 – 31 July 2029	No
3 x elected member of Senate	Representative of Senate (CAHSS)	Dr Jacob Bard-Rosenberg	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
	Representative of Senate (CAHSS)	Professor Carol Richardson	1 August 2026 - 31 July 2027	Academic
	Representative of Senate (CMVM)	Dr Sari Pennings	1 August 2026 – 31 July 2027	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 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. Academic Quality and Standards	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 (Director of Students, Edinburgh futures Institute)	Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar	1 August 2025- 31 July 2028	No
	Co-opted member	Vacant	Vacant	
Committee Secretary	Committee Secretary	Sinéad Docherty		No

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

8 October 2026

Internal Effectiveness Review of Senate Standing Committees 2025/26

Description of paper

1. This paper provides the Committee with the results, analysis and proposed actions drawn from the responses received to the internal effectiveness review survey for Senate Standing Committees, conducted in July 2026.

Fit with remit

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

Action requested / recommendation

2. To note the analysis of feedback received and comment on the areas for development as set out in Appendix 1.

Background and context

3. 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."

4. At its 19 May meeting, Senate approved plans for an internal effectiveness review of Senate Standing Committees. This was to consist of a survey of Committee members focussed on the Committee's effectiveness. The survey also included targeted questions on actions taken in response to the external review recommendations on the following topics:
 - a. Recruitment and Induction
 - b. Senate Standing Committees and their relationship to Senate
5. In June 2026, a survey was issued to all members of Senate Standing Committees.

Discussion

6. A summary of the responses, analysis, and areas for improvement are provided in Appendix 1.

7. There is a substantially lower response rate when compared to the previous internal effectiveness survey of Senate Committees; the areas for improvement are proportionate to the scope of the review, volume of feedback received and areas for improvement as given in survey responses.
8. The outcome of the survey will be reported to Senate alongside the annual report from the Standing Committees in October 2026.

Resource implications

9. The resource implications of the areas for improvement have been considered within Academic Quality and Standards and will be prioritised and taken forward in line with available resources.

Risk management

10. This activity supports the University's obligations under the 2023 Scottish Code of Good HE Governance. Internal effectiveness review activity is intended to aid continuous improvement of the University's approach to academic governance.

Equality & diversity

11. The review provides an opportunity for members to identify any issues relating to the internal effectiveness of Committees. Members were not asked specific questions on equality and diversity issues, however are at liberty to raise such issues via the completion of the survey if they believe this to be relevant.

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

12. As detailed in paragraph 9.

Author

Olivia Hayes
Head of Committees and Governance
Registry Services

Presenter

N/A

Freedom of Information

Open

APPENDIX 1: Report of Senate Standing Committee Internal Effectiveness Review 2025/26

A single anonymous survey of all Senate Standing Committees was conducted in June and July 2026. Respondents were asked to identify which Committee they were a member of at the commencement of the survey. Those who are members of multiple committees were invited to complete the survey for each Committee they are a member of. The Convener, Vice-Convener and Secretary did not participate.

Fourteen responses were received, there are a total of 61 members across all Senate Committees, excluding the Convener, Vice-Convener and Secretary. This equates to an overall response rate of 23%.

Three responses were received from members of the Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC) from a total of 20 members giving a response rate of 15%. Three responses were received from members of the Senate Education Committee (SEC) from a total of 26 members giving a response rate of 12%. Eight responses were received from members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) from a total of 15 members, giving a response rate of 53%.

An internal effectiveness review survey of Senate Committees was not undertaken in the 2024/25 academic year, however compared with the 2023/24 academic year there has been a substantial reduction in response rate. For APRC, there was a 40% reduction in response rate from 13 to 3 responses. For SEC, there was a 32% reduction in response rate from 11 to 3 responses. For SQAC, there was a 1% increase in response rate to 8 from a possible 14, which is an increase from the 9 responses from a possible 16 received in 2023/24.

Of the responses, five responses were received from ex-officio members, including student members and five responses were received from nominated members, including College and Service area representatives. Two responses were received from elected Senate members and two responses received from co-opted members.



Due to the low response rate from APRC and SEC, and the potential to identify individual respondents, the analysis of survey results has been undertaken as a single exercise for all Committees. Where there is Committee-specific feedback provided in free text comments, this has been provided for completeness with any identifying information removed from comments.

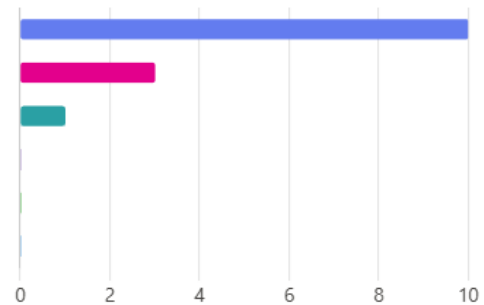
A summary of survey responses Agendas and papers

Meeting agendas

The majority of respondents found meeting agendas to be clear and well-structured, one respondent was neutral on this question and no respondents disagreed with this statement.

3. I found meeting agendas to be clear and well-structured.

Strongly agree	10
Agree	3
Neutral	1
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I did not read/use the agenda.	0

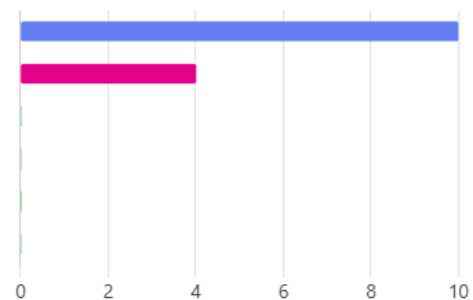


Fit to remit

All respondents agreed that agenda items fit within the Committee's remit. A majority of respondents (13) found the mapping of agenda items on the cover paper helped their understanding of how agenda items fit within the remit of the Committee, one respondent disagreed with this statement.

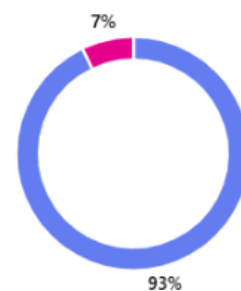
4. I found agenda items fit within the Committee's remit.

Strongly agree	10
Agree	4
Neutral	0
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0
I did not read/use the agenda.	0



5. The mapping of agenda items to committee remit in the cover paper helped me understand how items fit within remit.

Yes	13
No	1
I am not aware of this	0



Coverage of agenda items

A majority of respondents (13) felt that agenda items were adequately covered during meetings, one respondent disagreed with this statement.

6. I felt that agenda items were covered adequately during meetings of the Committee.

● Yes	13
● No	1
● I did not attend meetings.	0



There were three free-text comments received in relation to Committee agendas. Free text comments in this category were submitted by 3 members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and a summary of the feedback is provided:

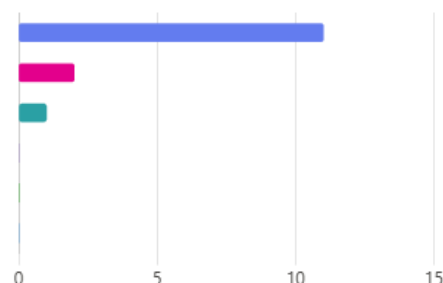
- The majority of Committee papers were to a high quality and aligned to Committee remit, however where papers were not high quality, or the action requested was unclear, this impacted on the Committee's discussions and decision-making and created confusion for members.
- There is a lack of clarity between the Committee's remit and University strategy, which impacts on the Committee's effectiveness and strategic and institutional impact on QA matters.
- Overall Committee discussions were productive and constructive, however did not address governance aspects required to support full Senate understanding and decision making on relevant matters.

Committee meetings

A majority of respondents (13) agreed that all members had an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion, one respondent was neutral on this statement.

8. I felt that all members had an equal opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

● Strongly agree	11
● Agree	2
● Neutral	1
● Disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0
● I did not attend meetings.	0



A majority of respondents (13) felt that the hybrid meeting format allowed members to contribute equally. One respondent disagreed with this statement.

9. The hybrid meeting format allowed in-person and online members to contribute equally?



Four free-text comments were received in relation to Committee meetings. Three free text comments were submitted by 3 members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and one free text comment was submitted by a member of another Senate committee. A summary of feedback is provided:

- One respondent expressed a personal preference for meetings to take place in-person or online only, noting that hybrid meetings can feel disjointed and technology is generally inadequate.
- Two respondents indicated that it was difficult to measure whether members had an equal opportunity to contribute, with one respondent stating that strong voices dominate Committee discussions.
- One respondent expressed appreciation for hybrid meetings which facilitated attendance for members in particular circumstances.

Relationship to Senate

A majority of respondents (11) strongly agreed with the understanding that the responsibilities of the Committee are delegated by Senate. One respondent agreed, one respondent was neutral on this statement and one respondent disagreed with this statement.

12. I understand that the responsibilities of the Committee are delegated by Senate



A majority of respondents (9) strongly agreed that they understood the Committee's role in relation to Senate. Three respondents agreed, one respondent was neutral and one respondent disagreed with this statement.

13. I understand the Committee's role in relation to Senate



There were two free-text comments received on the Relationship to Senate. Both free text comments were submitted by 2 members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and a summary of the feedback is provided:

- There are ongoing discussions regarding Standing Committees at Senate meetings and it has been some time since the delegation of responsibilities and roles of Committees were discussed at Senate. A respondent referenced a decision to not honour a vote on committee chair's being elected.
- One respondent expressed a general understanding of the written remit of the Committees, however another expressed uncertainty regarding their understanding of the Committee's relationship to Senate.

Committee effectiveness

A majority of respondents (12) considered the Committee to be effective. One respondent was neutral on this statement and one respondent disagreed with this statement, both respondents were members of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC).

11. Overall, I consider the Committee to be effective.



Additional questions: measuring the effectiveness of the external review recommendations

There was one additional question intended to measure the effectiveness of actions taken in response to the External Review of Senate undertaken in 2022/23. Respondents were asked for their view on the effectiveness of Recruitment and Induction actions implemented in 2025/26 which were in response to the recommendations of the External Review.

Recruitment and Induction – Standing Committees

Standing Committee Induction pack

Of the fourteen responses, eight respondents indicated that they were not a new member in 2025/26 and therefore could not comment on the provision of a Senate Standing Committee induction pack, including a recording of the Senate Induction Session and additional Committee resources on the Committee Portal. Of the remaining six respondents, two responses indicated this was very positive, one response indicated this was positive, two respondents were not aware of the action and one respondent did not give an answer.

Overall Standing Committee Induction Process

Five respondents indicated that the overall Standing Committee Induction process was positive, with one respondent indicating they were unaware of the action. Eight respondents were not a new member in 2025/26 and therefore could not comment on the action taken, and one respondent did not give an answer.

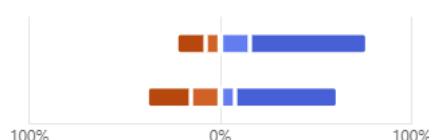
15. Please rate the effectiveness of the following actions on Recruitment and Induction:

[More details](#)

● Very positive ● Positive ● Negative ● Very negative ● I am not aware of this action ● I was not a new member in 2025/26

The provision of a Senate Standing Committee induction pack, including a recording of the Senate Induction Session and additional Committee resources on the Committee Portal.

The overall Standing Committee Induction Process



There was one free text comment with the respondent indicating that support from other members was helpful for their induction.

The responses to this section will be logged for the next External Effectiveness Review of Senate.

Good practice

Based on the responses to the survey presented above, the following areas are consistently highlighted as areas where there is good practice:

- **Fit to remit on Committee paper templates:** A majority of respondents agreed that the paper templates and mapping of agenda items to the Committee remit helped them to understand how items fit to the Committee remit. This was an action in response to the internal effectiveness review survey conducted in 2023/24.
- **Hybrid meetings:** A majority of respondents value that meetings are conducted in hybrid format. Meetings will continue to be held as hybrid, and AQS staff will

arrange meetings in rooms with good hybrid functionality, wherever possible and subject to availability.

Areas for development

Two key themes were identified within the feedback as areas where the Committee could seek to focus enhancement:

- **Survey response rate:** The reduction in response rate to the survey in 2025/26 (overall response rate of 24%) makes it difficult to ensure that the results are sufficiently representative of members' views and that actions reflect members' priorities for improving the internal effectiveness of the Committee. We will therefore aim to improve response rates for the next survey.
- **Relationship to Senate:** The responses to questions on the relationship to Senate indicate that respondents have an overall positive view, however these responses indicate a lower level of satisfaction when compared to other questions. The Statement of Senate's Primary Responsibilities (SOPR) has recently been approved by the University Court and will help to explain the relationship and develop understanding of the responsibilities delegated by Senate to its Standing Committees.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee**8 October 2026****Internal Periodic Review****Description of paper**

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

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

Action requested / recommendation

3. The Committee is invited to note and approve:
 - the IPR final reports from the 2025/26 cycle
 - the progress reports provided year-on responses.

All reports are available here on the Committee SharePoint: [IPR Reports and Responses](#)

Background and context

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

Discussion

6. Committee members should be assured that the scrutiny of the College Deans of Quality will identify areas of good practice to share and any recommendations to be tracked through existing quality processes.
7. Recommendations from the 2025/26 reviews will be tracked through School-level action plans which will be submitted alongside the annual School QA reports in 2026/27 and thereafter.
8. The College Deans will be invited to highlight themes and issues from the reports and responses relevant to their College.

9. The Committee will be invited to discuss and approve the reports and responses in the light of the College Deans' comments.

Resource implications

10. No additional resource implications.

Risk management

11. The paper does not require a risk assessment.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

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

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

14. Comments will be reported back to the School/Subject Area and the reports and responses published on the Academic Quality and Standards website.

Author

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Presenter

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September 2026

Freedom of Information *Open*