

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

**Meeting to be held on Thursday 17 December 2020
at 2pm via Microsoft Teams**

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10. Task Group Updates SQAC 20/21 2O
11. Thematic Review 2018-19: Update SQAC 20/21 2P
12. Enhancement Theme: End of Theme Report SQAC 20/21 2Q
13. External Examiners: Exceptional Appointments Report 2019/20 SQAC 20/21 2R
14. Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses SQAC 20/21 2S
- 15. Any Other Business**
- 16. Date of Next Meeting:** Thursday 25 February 2021, 2pm, MS Teams

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 9 September 2020
at 2pm via Microsoft Teams**

Present:

Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Fizzy Abou Jawad	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
Brian Connolly	Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
Dr Gail Duursma	School Representative (Engineering), College of Science and Engineering
Olivia Eadie	Assistant Director and Head of Operations and Projects, Institute for Academic Development
Dr Katherine Inglis	School Representative (Literatures, Languages and Cultures), College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Nichola Kett	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Professor Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, College of Science and Engineering
Stuart Lamot	Edinburgh University Students' Association Representative
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Dr Claire Phillips	Dean of Quality Assurance, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Katie Scott	Head of Student Opportunities, Students' Association
Paula Webster	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling, Student Systems Partnership

Apologies:

Dr Jeni Harden	School Representative (School of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences), College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
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Present:

Alastair Duthie

Academic Governance and Quality Manager, College of Arts,
Humanities & Social Sciences

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Convenor welcomed Fizzy Abou Jawad to her first meeting as the new Students' Association Vice President Education, and Alastair Duthie attending in his role as Academic Governance and Quality Manager for the College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences.

The Convenor reported that Professor Leigh Sparks, Deputy Principal University of Stirling, would join the Committee as the new External Member and would attend his first meeting in December.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 May 2020 and the electronic meeting conducted between Monday 17 and Monday 24 August 2020

The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meetings.

3. Matters Arising

The Convenor thanked members for all comments received during the electronic meeting and noted that these had been incorporated.

For Discussion

4. Students' Association Priorities 2020-21

The Students' Association Vice President (VP) Education noted her priorities for 2019-20 as follows:

- **Improving the quality and consistency of teaching and feedback** – the VP Education will work with Schools and University bodies to improve the quality and consistency of assessment feedback. The VP aims to build on new practice arising from COVID-19 by continuing to push for online assessment feedback, delivered consistently across all programmes. The VP Education will work on promoting academic representative roles in the wider student body. The Student Association will research effective structures to improve communication between Programme and School reps, so that feedback can effectively be brought to staff.
- **Ensuring all students have access to high-quality academic support** – the VP Education will explore ways to give students who are completing joint honours more freedom to 'design' of their academic support structure. Also, since implementation of the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review has been delayed until next year, the VP Education will take this opportunity to ensure that changes provide sufficient support for all students.
- **Create an inclusive and accessible learning environment** – the VP Education's current focus is on the impact which COVID-19 will have on the learning environment. The Hybrid Model has potential to create a more inclusive environment for all students in the long term. The VP Education will work alongside Schools on universal

lecture recording and promoting the use of alternative forms of assessment beyond this academic year. The VP Education will also be supporting the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Liberation Officer throughout the year on their work tackling the BME attainment gap at the university.

The Students' Association Vice President Education also noted the overarching priorities for the Sabbatical team for 2019-20 as follows:

- **Building inclusion** – the Sabbatical team is committed to building a University community in which all students feel welcome, respected, and able to participate, with a particular focus on addressing the financial barriers to student life and the negative experience of our BME members.
- **Ensuring support** - robust, consistent, and accessible support for all students is vital, particularly in-light of the challenging personal circumstances many of our members will experience as a result of the pandemic.
- **Facilitating connection** - it is more important than ever that we ensure that students - no matter which campus they are based at or what their mode of study is - feel connected to each other, to the University, and the wider Edinburgh community.

5. Enhancement Led Institutional Review Reflective Analysis

The Committee received and discussed the Reflective Analysis (RA), a self-evaluation of the University's strategies, policies and practices in support of academic standards, learning and teaching and the student experience. The Convenor noted that the RA was a key piece of evidence to support the University's next Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR), due to take place in semester 2 2020/21.

The Convenor noted that drafts of chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 (developed using information gathered from colleagues across the University and the Students' Association) were made available to all staff and students in November and December 2019 with accompanying Teaching Matters blog posts. Comments received on the draft chapters were used to develop a first draft of the RA which was then reviewed by key internal and external stakeholders in late January/early February 2020. Comments received on the first draft were used to develop a second draft, which was made available to all staff and students in March and April 2020 with an accompanying Teaching Matters blog post. The second draft was then updated with the addition of a reflection on actions taken in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was noted that this final draft RA represents the University's actions and intentions as at August 2020.

It was noted that Academic Services would continue to work on the glossary of acronyms, referencing within the RA (e.g. to related sections and appendices), the appendices, and web links. The Principal's foreword and photographs would also be added final publication.

The Committee thanked the Convenor and the Academic Services team for all their work producing the RA and recommended the content to Senate for approval.

6. Internal Periodic Review Themes 2019-20

The Committee discussed the themes that emerged from internal periodic reviews held in 2019-20.

The following areas of good practice were noted:

- **Student Support** - The dedicated support provided to students by both academic and professional staff, including as part of the Personal Tutor system and during students' transitions.
- **Learning and Teaching** - commitment to teaching and curriculum development.
- **Employability** - developing employability and graduate attributes through involvement of the Careers Service.
- **Supporting Staff** - supporting and developing staff, including support for tutors and demonstrators, continuing professional development, and roles to support tutors and demonstrators.
- **Sense of Belonging** - community building through initiatives including peer support, societies and social activities.
- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion** - accessibility, inclusivity and Widening Participation initiative.

The Committee noted the following areas for further development and approved the proposals for responsibility for action in response as follows:

- **Tutors and demonstrators** (recommended in eight reviews) - recommendations covered training (including continuing professional development), allocation of work and remuneration, the creation of roles to provide support, and recruitment processes.
Action: Academic Services to refer recommendation to Human Resources for response.
- **Space** (recommended in seven reviews) - recommendations related to the impact that pressures on and challenges with the estate are having on the student and staff experience, including on the ability to build community. The lack of space for tutors and demonstrators to carry out marking and meet with students was also noted.
Action: Academic Services to refer recommendation to Space Strategy Group for response.
- **Community building** (recommended in six reviews) - recommendations focused on developing and implementing approaches to improve community building. The impact of pressures on and challenges with the estate on efforts to build community was also noted.

Action: Academic Services to refer recommendation to Senate Education Committee for response.

- **Curriculum** (recommended in six reviews) - recommendations relating to curriculum development and course provision, and embedding and assessing skills and employability within the core curriculum.

Action: Academic Services to refer recommendation to Senate Education Committee for response.

- **Student support** (recommended in six reviews) - recommendations related to the importance of clearly communicating support available to students and also encouraged the preservation of good practice within the current Personal Tutor system in future models of support.

Action: Academic Services to refer recommendation to review of Personal Tutor and Student Support for response.

It was noted that Academic Services would inform areas and individuals with allotted responsibilities, including example recommendations for context. The areas for further development would also be reported to University Executive. It was agreed that Academic Services and the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) would consider how good practice identified in the reviews could be shared across the University in 2020-21, possibly via a Collaborate event. In the longer term, Academic Services would explore optimal ways of sharing good practice across the University as part of the Digital Maturity Project.

Action: Academic Services and IAD to explore options for sharing good practice.

7. Thematic Review

The Committee considered updates on progress to implement the recommendations from the 2017-18 Thematic Review of Support for Mature Students and Student Parents and Carers and the 2018-19 Thematic Review of black and minority ethnic (BME) students' experiences of support at the University.

The following was noted in relation to the 2018-19 review update:

- 4.1.2 Staff Experiences – the University must set out how the experiences of black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) staff will be captured if the proposed Semester 1 2020/21 initiative is not funded.
- 4.1.3 Racial Literacy – the University should give consideration to upskilling via the Senior Leadership Programme and the Unconscious Bias training module (particularly in regard to how positive discrimination can be used in recruitment).
- 4.4.1 Curriculum – the University must ensure that the Curriculum Review takes a strategic approach to enabling BAME students to be involved in diversifying content, including the co-design of curricula and assessments.
- The Committee will seek regular progress updates in relation to the 2018-19 review during the current academic year.

Action: Committee Secretary to feedback to the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee and the Race Equality and Anti-Racist Sub-Group.

8. Monitoring Retention, Progression, and Attainment Data

The Committee agreed to task a small group, led by the Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS) and the Head of Student Data and Surveys (Student Systems), to examine data set and methodological options for monitoring student retention, progression, and attainment data. The remit of the Task Group would be focused on addressing the recommendations remitted to SQAC by the 2017-18 and 2018-19 Thematic Reviews.

Action: Data Task Group to hold initial meeting and report to the December meeting of the Committee.

9. Committee Effectiveness Review: Questionnaire Initial Analysis

The Committee considered the initial analysis of the feedback received from the Senate Committee Effectiveness survey.

It was noted that Academic Services was taking part in the Digital Maturity project setup by the Digital Transformation Programme, with the objective of evaluating the Committee's Digital Transformation journey to date and exploring ways to further increase the Committee's Digital Maturity.

10. Personal Tutor (PT) System Oversight Group

The Committee discussed a proposal to focus responsibility for oversight of the Personal Tutor (PT) system on School Annual Quality Reports and the Adaptation and Renewal team responsible for the transition to hybrid learning, teaching and support.

The Committee noted that the PT System Oversight Group was established by the Committee in 2015 and tasked with the responsibility for quality assurance (QA) oversight of the PT system during the transition from the conclusion of the implementation of PT system (i.e. the end of Enhancing Student Support (ESS) project) to full mainstreaming within the QA processes of each School. The primary responsibility of the Group has been to ensure that each School remains aligned to the University's commitment to a quality student experience across the PT system, as enshrined in the School Personal Tutoring Statement (SPTS). However, Schools were not required to update their SPTS this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the adoption of a new set of Guiding Principles for PTs and Student Support Staff produced by the Adaptation and Renewal team responsible for the transition to hybrid learning, teaching and support. Furthermore, with the anticipated changes to student support, as part of the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review, it was unlikely that the Group would be required to meet again to approve SPTS.

It was also noted that the Group has also continued to monitor the relative performance of schools by considering key statistical and free text data drawn from student surveys, such as the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and School and College Annual Quality Reports. However, the Group has consistently drawn attention to the limitations of the PT performance data currently available for this task. It has been the opinion of the Group that more robust and granular internal benchmark data

are required if meaningful conclusions are to be drawn and/or judgements made in regard to the relative performance of both Schools and individual PTs.

It was noted that since September 2018 the Group has developed a role in the annual quality reporting process whereby it considers PT related trends in student surveys and then feeds comments to the September meeting of the SQAC Sub Group considering the School annual quality reports. This enables the latter group to make judgments and recommendations to Schools informed by the PT System Oversight Group's considerations which in turn allows SQAC to monitor the PT system within mainstream School QA processes. However, given the Covid-19 driven changes to the annual monitoring process and the fact that there is no PT question in the NSS or PTES this year it would be difficult for the Group to discern valid trends or make meaningful judgements in regard to the relative performance of Schools.

The Committee noted that the new Guiding Principles for PTs and Student Support Staff references the School Annual Quality Report process as the oversight mechanism for a new School based approach to QA for the PT system. The Monitoring and Improvement section of the new Guiding Principles notes the following:

All Schools and Deaneries must define a mechanism that ensures that the advice and assistance that students receive from their support teams and Personal Tutors is of high quality and responsive. The results, in the form of feedback and reflections on the support provided should be included in the School's Annual Quality Report. The mechanism for monitoring and improvement must be made public and made clear to both students and the Assistant Principal for Quality Assurance.

This will have implications for the way the School Annual Quality Report process is managed, with specific guidance required for reporting on each Schools' PT system.

The Committee was in agreement that, given the delay to implementing the new system of student support, it was important that the Group be maintained as an oversight forum during the transition period.

Action: Academic Services to liaise with the Assistant Principal Student Support and the ART team to explore options for oversight of the PT system.

11. UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Advice and Guidance Mapping

The Committee approved the mapping of the University's policies and practices to the advice and guidance that underpins the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and thanked those responsible for an extremely comprehensive mapping. It was noted that the mapping would form part of the Advanced Information Set (AIS) for ELIR.

For Information and Formal Business

12. Terms of Reference, Senate Committees Members' Guidance and Committee Priorities 2020-21

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference, Senate Committees Members' Guidance, and summary of the planned priorities for 2019-20 which was approved by Senate in May 2020.

13. Scottish Funding Council Annual Report 2019-20

The Committee noted the University's annual statement on institution-led review and enhancement activity to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The Committee commended the author, Nichola Kett (Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services) for her work on the report.

14. Quality Processes – University Level Actions Update

The Committee noted an update report on University level actions agreed in response to issues identified as areas for further development in School Annual Quality Reports 2018-19 and themes that emerged from teaching/postgraduate programme reviews held in 2018-19.

15. Enhancement Theme 2020-2023: Resilient Learning Communities

The Committee noted that [Resilient Learning Communities](#) would be the sector-wide Enhancement Theme from 2020 to 2023. This Theme will focus on meeting the changing needs and values of an increasingly diverse student community, and a rapidly changing external environment.

16. Internal Periodic Review – Reports and Responses

The Committee confirmed that it was content with progress implementing the recommendations from the internal periodic reviews. However, in relation to the response of the School of Social and Political Sciences, it was agreed that the Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS) would have a follow-up conversation with the School regarding the PGR annual review process recommendation (i.e. that it is a requirement and must be adhered to).

Action: Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS) to discuss response with School.

17. Any Other Business

18. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 17 December 2020, 2pm, MS Teams

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

**School Annual Quality Reports
Sub-Group**

Executive Summary

This report updates the Committee on the sub group tasked with reviewing School annual quality reports.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper is relevant to the Committee's responsibility for the quality assurance framework.

Action requested

Discuss the positive practice and themes for further development at University level and agree on recommended actions.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

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

2. Risk assessment

The paper does not require a risk assessment.

3. Equality and Diversity

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

4. Freedom of information

Open.

Key words

School Quality

Originator of the paper

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

School Annual Quality Reports Sub-Group

Meeting held on **Tuesday 8 December 2020**
via **Microsoft Teams**

Notes

Present:

Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)	Assistant Principal, Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
Fizzy Abou Jawad	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
Brian Connolly	Secretary to Senatus Quality Assurance Committee, Academic Services
Nichola Kett	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, Academic Services
Professor Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, CSE
Dr Paul Norris	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Dr Claire Phillips	Dean of Quality, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

1. Update on University Level Actions from 2019-20

The Group received an update on University level actions from the previous year.

2. Consideration of School Annual Quality Reports

The Group noted that in response to the Covid-19 pandemic Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) had suspended the normal annual monitoring, review and reporting processes for 2019-20. Instead a light-touch interim process has been put in place with the aim of complimenting ongoing academic contingency work during this academic year. Schools were invited to complete a streamlined reporting template focused on the impact of and learning from the Covid-19 pandemic but which also allowed for optional updates on actions identified from last year's reporting cycle and a reflection on other aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience. During this interim process, reflection on available data sets using the PowerBI Quality Data Dashboards has also been light-touch.

Therefore this year the Group was asked to focus on sections 2 and 3 of the reports (the optional section 1 information will be used to ensure continuity when the regular reporting process resumes). The Group was invited to consider:

- what worked well across each College, including good practice that could be shared across the College and University?
- what could have worked better or required further development by the School, College or University?

2.1 Positive practice for sharing across the University

The following themes of Positive Practice for sharing across the University were noted:

2.1.1 Student and Staff Welfare

The sense of community evoked by the pandemic and support that academic and professional service staff provided for their students and each other within Schools was a strong positive theme throughout the reports. Of particular note was the good communication at local level between staff and students which helped manage expectations and allay anxieties at a very challenging time for all.

Examples include:

- **Centre for Open learning** - used operational surveys to support staff during the period of working from home and to prepare for a return to campus. The Centre's CAM team brought in a Thank You card system to allow staff to send a virtual note of thanks to one another which was popular and boosted a sense of community and morale during a difficult period of time.
- **Economics** - introduced a monthly student review meeting (with Senior Tutor, SSOs, Teaching and Student Services Manager and Manager of Student Welfare) to improve awareness of individual students experiencing difficulties.
- **HCA** - implemented the 'UG Students in HCA' Learn website, a 'one-stop shop' where UG students can find everything they need to know as a student in HCA.
- **MGPHS** - social and pastoral support processes increased: additional personal tutor sessions offered to students to support with any issues; daily and weekly 'Collaborate' sessions offered to students on most programmes; our own special circumstances committee set up as a virtual group, responding to a high volume of SCs with responses within 2-3 working days for most; regular signposting to mental health and wellbeing support and services within the University.
- **Biological Sciences** - in those courses and programmes that maintained frequent communication with their students via weekly meetings and check-ins, student engagement remained high and the students felt supported. It also helped build and maintain their cohort and peer support networks and allowed problems to be spotted early.
- **Informatics** - communications from School leadership have prioritized concern for the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff at this difficult time, with frequent injunctions to be kind to one another and to look after ourselves. Weekly Teaching Hours have been very helpful in supporting staff as they have adjusted to the online context.

2.1.2 Teaching & Learning

The transition to hybrid delivery led to innovation in teaching & learning across Schools. Students and staff were particularly pleased with the partnership approach to curriculum adaptation and the co-creation of learning materials. It was noted that these discussions and new approaches would provide the University with a sound foundation on which to build the impending Curriculum Review.

Examples include:

- **ECA** - used Miro (an online collaborative whiteboard platform) software to mitigate some of the impact on student experience resulting from loss of access to on-campus studio learning and teaching environments, and could be beneficial and have broader application across non-studio subject areas/schools.
- **LLC** – used MS Teams for synchronous teaching with students and staff reporting better accessibility features and better quality connections in Teams than in LEARN and Collaborate. Also very effective for School meetings and Town Hall events.
- **Clinical Science** - the adaptability of programme teams was uniformly exceptional, indeed, some of this adaptability enhanced the student experience: MSc Critical Care initially paused programmes to manage clinical staff workload and negotiated the first wave successfully. They rapidly created a covid-19 specific course to allow students to gain key current skills, and catch up the academic credit. The course content is responsive to emerging developments in the field and captures student experience at managing patients with covid-19.
- **RDSVS** - PGT programmes greatly supported undergraduate hybrid teaching in Semester II by providing access to online lectures and other resources.
- **Engineering** - CREW (Curriculum Renewal in Engineering Workshops) workshops for curriculum renewal were held over summer and these led to the development of the new first and second year structure and courses.
- **Maths** - mounted a coordinated and comprehensive response to the challenges posed by Covid-19 and the resulting hybrid model for learning and teaching that cut across the School, with particular involvement from our Technology Enhanced Mathematical Sciences Research Theme, our Learning Designer, IT Support in the School, the Mathematics Teaching Organisation, and our custom ASID Creation Team, with oversight from the Head of School and the Director of Teaching.

2.1.3 Assessment

Schools adapted and reformed assessment processes while maintaining standards in a very challenging year. Online and Open Book assessments were particularly well received by students, with feedback noting how the assessments allowed them greater scope to demonstrate their learning than traditional paper examinations alone. Staff also noted the positive impact this diversification of assessment methods had on the consistency of marking and their workload (once adaptations were made).

Examples include:

- **Education** - has used some innovative approaches to assessment have been particularly effective, e.g. video presentations on MSc TESOL.
- **Divinity** - has used a diversity of assessment type, quality of feedback and streamlining of the process for the doublemarking of dissertations.
- **LLC** - many programme reports indicate that there will be movement away from sit-down exams in future as other methods have been shown to work.

- **Biological Sciences** - on some courses, students were consulted on how they would be assessed. This created a feeling of ownership of their own education which can be lacking.
- **Chemistry** - the move to open book examinations for 2020 worked surprisingly well in Chemistry, inducing a deep rethink of future examination policy. The examination performance of students improved slightly, but staff felt that the open-book format did not compromise the ability of the examinations to distinguish between students in different degree classifications.
- **Biomedical** - guidance in the form of tailored workshops on How to write a scientific manuscripts as well as how to analyse and interpret experimental data.

2.1.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

There were examples of Schools striving to promote an inclusive learning environment during the pandemic.

Examples include:

- **ECA** - new courses and teaching staff hires further strengthened global diversity in the curriculum.
- **HiSS** - the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee is active and supported the PGR students to develop their own race equality campaign, ConveRACEions.
- **LLC** - Anti-Racism Resource Hub Sharepoint site.
- **Edinburgh Medical School** - introduced two new groups towards the end of the session – a short life working group Race Equality and Anti-Racism Group; and a longer term Inclusivity Group which will set priorities and develop objectives that improve inclusivity and diversity within the programme.
- **Informatics** - Decolonising the Curriculum working group is currently running workshops (one per institute) to help staff to think through how to ensure inclusiveness and avoid racial bias in the content and delivery of their courses.
- **Geosciences** - a PTAS project is investigating the experiences of students entering the university from widening participation backgrounds with the aim of identifying ways of enhancing the support offered to these students. Lessons from this study may illuminate the issues about differential performance noted in the School report.
- **Physics and Astronomy** - tackling widening participation via recruitment and tracking through the application and selection process. WP applicants are tracked by the School via the acceptance process, and if they accept and come, their names are passed to the Senior Tutor, prior to the allocation of PTs to ensure they are allocated to an experienced PT who understands the difficulties that these students may have so they can be aware of their background when advising on course choices. This also makes PTs in general more aware of their background.
- **Physics and Astronomy** - informal School networks for staff and students who are parents or carers and for LGBTQ+ staff & postgrads (EqualiTea). The EqualiTea network continued to meet during lockdown (once a week, via videoconference). Two new student networks have been created: a School BAME student (and staff) group and a School LGBTQ+ network for students. Those proposing the LGBTQ+ network for students were aware of EqualiTea, but felt a separate group - perhaps with some joint activities with EqualiTea - would be more suitable for undergraduates in particular.

2.1.5 Administration

Schools rapidly developed new and innovative administrative systems and procedures in response to the pandemic. Of particular note was the move to online Boards of Examiners and PhD vivas which allowed Schools to draw on a wider and more international pool of external examiner expertise. The beneficial financial and environmental sustainability effects were also noted.

Examples include:

- **Economics** - to manage the workload involved and ensure papers were ready in good time, a new step-by-step timetable and procedure was introduced for exam paper preparation. Exam boards in 2019-20 were given clearer and more complete information. This involved greater use of the automatically generated exam board reports from the University's systems, and hence reduced chance for human error.
- **Law** - the shift to online Boards of Examiners meetings was generally successful and an innovation that could be retained for future years. The inherent flexibility around online meetings seemed to suit colleagues and feedback received from externals who attended the online Boards was positive.
- **LLC** - Asynchronous Board of Examiners Sharepoint used to present, discuss and revise documents over a period of 3-4 days per board. Asynchronous approach to decision making enabled input from subject area delegates, exam board members, and subject experts.
- **RDSVS** - successful virtual PhD vivas to be rolled out post-COVID as this allows for international examiners to be appointed at no extra travel costs.
- **Maths** - we would like to retain the ease of requesting a remote viva; allowing these as the norm would imply that supervisors are not restricted in who they select as External Examiner, and that they can appoint the most suitable person, rather than someone within the UK or in easy travelling distance. We also feel that remote vivas allow for greater flexibility overall.
- **Maths** - championed a decentralised approach to timetabling that was firmly aimed at optimising the student experience and utilisation of the available estate to provide opportunities for face-to-face teaching to those students who wanted them in compliance with University and Government guidance on physical distancing.

2.2. Areas for further development at University level

The following themes for further development were noted:

2.2.1 Staff Welfare

There are concerns that the pandemic has exacerbated existing issues in relation to staffing and workload pressures.

Examples include:

- **Education** - insufficient staffing/high workloads continues to have a detrimental impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- **HiSS** - there is concern that the ongoing situation is having significant impact on staff well-being in the School and that this could be problematic going forward, including the potential impact that this might have on student experience. There are

sterling efforts from staff demonstrating commitment, resilience and superb dedication, but at significant cost.

- **Edinburgh Medical School** - consideration will need to be given to the increase in student numbers and how this will impact on the administrative and academic staff burden costs; and overall student experience.
- **MGPHS** - staff are exhausted after eight months of intense and increased workload and student support efforts, with few breaks from working online at home. There are limited measures in place to support staff mental health and well-being and we should be making sure that we offer the same additional support to staff as we do our students.
- **Medical Education** - consideration will need to be given to the increase in student numbers and how this will impact on the administrative and academic staff burden costs; and overall student experience. MBChB numbers are significantly higher this year at 238 compared to the usual intake of 207 which has an immediate impact on academic and administrative staff time; it will present a challenge to find suitable teaching space and clinical placements next year. The New HCP-Med programme has also begun and although has additional support, some parts are being delivered as a further teaching load by current staff. The MSc Clinical Education team feel that continuing to grow the programme is not sustainable with current staffing.
- **Informatics** - staff workload has increased very significantly over non-hybrid teaching years, owing to the demands of preparing new online teaching materials whilst simultaneously providing on-campus learning opportunities. Since admin units are also under strain, many tasks are having to be done by lecturers to ensure fast turnaround (e.g. scheduling and room booking for tutorials). The frequent switching in and out of on-campus activities by students (e.g. due to Covid-19 isolation requirements) also creates an admin overhead.

2.2.2 Communication

A theme that emerged across the reports was the need to improve central University communications to students and staff. Ensuring that University level communications to students align with local communications and plans was noted as a key element to managing student expectations. There was also a widespread desire from staff for more information and clarity from the central University in relation to ongoing initiatives or projects such as the Student Support and Personal Tutor Review, the Student Experience Action Plan, and the Curriculum Review.

Examples include:

- **Business** - although there is an excellent level of care taken in communication with students, going across all programmes, there is simultaneously a lack of coordination of student communication. Many different groups of people are communicating with our students, within UEBS, however no one is leading this communication.

- **COL** - Initially, there were unhelpful oversights in the University student comms which were confusing and lacking relevance to our student communities, causing us to have to intercept and interpret messages so as not to cause alarm. Disappointingly, we did struggle to have this rectified but we have since seen an improvement here and perhaps more importantly, an understanding of why this was an issue for us.
- **Law** - the School encountered significant issues in dealing with certain central University communications issued directly to students. The central University must give greater advance notice to Schools of planned communications to students on matters which impact on teaching and assessment.
- **PPLS** - ensure that good quality communications that provide accurate information updates are provided to students in a timelier manner and with input from staff beforehand.
- **SPS** - Some greater consideration of overall University messaging to students, particularly as it pertains to teaching delivery. Gaps regarding institutional expectations and the latitude schools and programmes have in meeting these expectations has created a great deal of complexity around the actual setting of teaching delivery, which has in turn impacted relations between staff in the school and students studying on our programmes.
- **Clinical Sciences** - acknowledging the broad impact of covid-19 we nevertheless request careful consideration of external messaging to avoid the implication that online or hybrid models are inferior to in-person, on campus approaches for learning and teaching. Such messaging is demoralising to staff who are highly committed to delivery of a suite of online-programmes within the Deanery, widely considered as globally leading.
- **Engineering** - as the SSPT review is on hold, there is some concern with stasis and information about the review implementation is sought from the University.
- **Maths** - while University communications to Honours UG students, PGT students, and PGR students following the national lockdown in the spring seemed timely and comprehensive, a prolonged lack of clarity on the assessment and progression for Pre-Honours UG students created confusion and dismay for both our staff and students. It is hoped that such a situation can be avoided in future.

2.2.3 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Concerns were raised in a number of reports about the impact of the pandemic, and the response of the University, on students with protected characteristics.

Examples include:

- **Law** - there is evidence of a trend in which the course pass rate among care leavers has been dropping since 2017/18 (100% pass rate in 2017/18; 79% in 2018/19; 70% in 2019/20).
- **LLC** - programme reports raise particular concerns about the impact of the pandemic, and limits of University support for, students with caring responsibilities and from WP backgrounds. Evidenced by the Covid-19 Survey, recruitment trends, and growing attainment gaps.

- **LLC** - review of the impact of Covid adaptations and adjustments on those students who failed to progress or exit with the intended award to understand how adjustments did not accommodate their cases and investigate whether any future adjustments should permit further action. Initial insights into LLC's disparities between disabled and non-disabled students have been shared with College.
- **Geosciences** - investigate if differences in progression, and degree classification, between RUK & Scottish students are specific to Edinburgh or not.

2.2.4 Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC)

The new centralised Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC) system emerged as a theme across School reports.

Examples include:

- **Business** - the new centralised Special Circumstances System is not so far helping students, or helping Schools to manage special circumstances and extensions. Those running the new system are working hard, but simultaneously, the Schools are completing more work in this area than previously.
- **SPS** – a review of ESC and the new process in place by which decisions on Special Circumstances and Extensions are taken. Some discrepancy remains between the now University-wide process and subsequent actions at the School level.
- **Clinical Sciences** - The centralised extensions and special circumstances system has been implemented with the IT systems incomplete in the middle of a semester. It is widely viewed as unfit for purpose at the moment, and response delays are clear. This is particularly exasperating as this feedback in the strongest possible terms was given to the IT implementation team, and also given that the DCS' SC committee was considered a major positive outcome of the Deanery's PPR.
- **MGPHS** - the implementation of a new centralised Extensions and Special Circumstance (ESC) service has caused considerable confusion and concern among staff and students and additional workload for staff. It has been particularly unhelpful to introduce these new arrangements at a time when staff are already under pressure as it has added significant extra workload for staff to understand the new requirements to advise students and trying to help students who have received incorrect responses from the service.

2.2.5 Online Learning Platforms

There was a general dissatisfaction with the various online teaching platforms that the University had in place at the outset of the pandemic and a desire for a strategic assessment of whether they are fit for purpose going forward.

Examples include:

- **Business** - the Collaborate platform is inflexible, difficult to access in China and provides limited student engagement (for example you cannot see all students at once). It is difficult to use for interactive sessions.
- **COL** - Collaborate platform is not popular - requests for Microsoft Teams or Zoom.
- **Divinity** - Collaborate is widely regarded as unsatisfactory due to unreliable connections and limited functionality.

- **Education** - Collaborate has caused particular challenges for inclusive teaching in a digital context (e.g. subtitling and software that supports accessibility) and is a common theme of dissatisfaction in student voice channels.
- **PPLS** - The learning platforms supported by the University at a time when staff had to quickly move to online teaching were seriously inadequate (e.g., Collaborate, Learn, Media Hopper). Online platforms need to be more accessible to both our staff and students and it is not clear that the situation has improved for 20/21 hybrid teaching.
- **Biological Sciences** - the technology platform needs to be more robust and the production of authoring and placing video lectures in the VLE streamlined.
- **Physics and Astronomy** - there is a lack of IS support for MS Teams and Zoom for teaching which we are using heavily. Learn issues were very problematic and Collaborate was painfully slow. TopHat was extremely buggy this year: teaching tools need to be fairly stable and robust during the semester without regular changes to interface and behaviour.
- **Informatics** - many staff initially favoured Blackboard Collaborate as a platform for online synchronous activities, but it has been found that this suffers from some connectivity problems, especially for students in China. For this reason, some courses have (reluctantly) switched mid-semester to Microsoft Teams, which offers better connectivity but a less intuitive interface for their purposes. Making this switch for all online tutorials and other activities was again a huge additional burden for some courses.

2.2.6 On-campus Space and Resources

Access to the University's on-campus space and resources continues to be a persistent theme across School reports.

Examples include:

- **ECA** - there was undoubted student experience impact as a result of studios and key museums/galleries/collections, archives and libraries being inaccessible for the latter part of 19/20 and limited access in 20/21 to the estate and a "normal" studio learning and teaching environment. Art MFA2 and MA students were especially impacted in the move to digital portfolios to replace the physical exhibition of work in the degree show, but impact was felt across subject areas.
- **HCA** - requests that the University address the question of the HCA estate, which was under strain before Covid-19 and which will be under further strain when an expanded cohort of students returns to campus after the pandemic.
- **HiSS** - timetabling has been a challenge overall. Specific challenges continue around critical clinical skills workshops necessary for the professionally accredited programmes and there are a number of problems with facilitating on campus workshops/skills preparation due to lack of suitable room availability. Clinical skills timetabling for nursing teaching of clinical skills at Chancellors has led to significant increased teaching load for nursing studies. Mental Health simulation could not go ahead because of capacity and rooming constraints. There are also gaps in clinical skills provision and IPL specifically. Some of these missed opportunities could diminish student experience and need to be addressed urgently by timetabling and the provision of space and rooms.
- **Law** - a major issue throughout lockdown was the lack of access for students to the University's library resources, particularly the Law Library. This impacted on UG

and PGT exam preparation and assessments/dissertations, as well as also significantly adversely affecting the Law School's PGR community.

- **SPS** - Estates remain a persistent issue in programme Quality Reports, both in terms of quality and suitability of teaching space and office capacity. While the specificity of this issue has been dramatically transformed by the pandemic, we continue to see evidence that this issue is having a significant and negative impact on quality of teaching and student experience.
- **Physics and Astronomy** - we made a tremendous effort to schedule hybrid teaching where every student had the possibility of in-person tutorials/labs. This is a strain on the School and we suffered due to timetabling delays.

2.2.7 Assessment and Progression Tools (APT)

Some Schools (predominantly in CAHSS) reported issues with the functionality and reliability of APT.

Examples include:

- **HCA** - issues with the functionality and reliability of APT in 2019-20. ATP was not adequately flexible to deal with complex course structures and required manual calculations/checking.
- **LLC** - lack adequate functionality – requiring intensive manual workarounds to enable accurate BoE calculations and timely delivery to key dates (to enable graduation).

3. Reflection on the Process

The Group was in agreement that the streamlined interim process had worked well this year and commended the Directors of Quality and all the School staff who had collaborated in the process for their excellent work under very challenging circumstances.

The Group agreed that, as was the case in the Schools, there had been some positive lessons from the adaptation of quality processes that should be built upon going forward. In particular, the streamlining of the reports while maintaining a good level of information on QA issues and activities. The Group discussed the merits of a themed template that would allow for a more standardised approach to reporting while also allowing Schools the scope to expand on specific local issues and activities. It was agreed that Academic Services would explore reporting options, and the plans for the next QA reporting cycle, and discuss with the College Deans early in 2021.

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
December 2020

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

School Annual Quality Reports Good Practice

Executive Summary

The paper provides a comprehensive overview of good practice identified by Schools in the annual quality reports.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

Aligns with the Committee's responsibility of "Disseminating good practice in quality assurance, as identified through the work of the Committee."

Action requested

For information.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Academic Services, College Offices and the Institute for Academic Development work together to share good practice across the University using a variety of methods. Also, an area of the University's quality website has been developed to share good practice and resources: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice>

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

The paper is for information, no actions are proposed, and therefore there are no resource implications.

2. Risk assessment

The paper is for information and a risk assessment is not required.

3. Equality and Diversity

The paper is for information and equality impact assessment is not required.

4. Freedom of information

Yes.

Key words

Quality reports, good practice

Originator of the paper

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services
December 2020

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Business School:

- **Appointment of Senior Teaching Fellow in Business Education and appointment of Subject Group Teaching Champions:** This development has been positively remarked upon by representatives of other CAHSS Schools, who have passed on their approval of these new structures, recognising the importance of teaching, to our Director of UG Programmes. It is the view of our Director of UG Programmes that these new positions are generating a greater level understanding of all staff members' teaching within the Subject Groups. Staff are becoming better connected to the total range of teaching within their Groups, and this is helping to improve the management and delivery of programmes.
- **UEBS Graduate Competency Framework:** Increasing student understanding of their competencies.
- **Student representative / Student societies:** We are lucky to have an engaged and proactive student Undergraduate representative (2020/2021), who is meeting every week with student programme representatives, rather than waiting until the Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings take place in week 7. Simultaneously, UEBS staff (in particular our Student Experience Officer) are helping our student societies to work well together.
- **Development of interdisciplinary programmes:** The MSc in Finance, Technology and Policy started running in 2019/2020. With content drawn from financial economics, mathematics (objected oriented programming), informatics (artificial intelligence), economic sociology, ethics and law, it is the most extensive and interdisciplinary programme within the College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences and perhaps within the University of Edinburgh.
- **The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Subject Group's Innovators and Entrepreneurs in Residence:** These structures are improving engagement with the University's wider entrepreneurship mandates in relation to the City Deal.
- **MSc IBEM's creation of a Social Wellbeing Steering Group (9 students) to engage the cohort beyond the remit of the two student representatives:** The Social and Wellbeing Steering Group has been effective in providing a timely and informal channel for feedback and has buoyed morale by facilitating a better sense of community.
- **PhD Student Resource Fund:** We have created a Student Resource Fund for those impacted by Covid 19 to ensure they have the resources (books, IT etc.) required to continue their studies. This has been welcomed by students, with positive feedback from individual students and the Doctoral Society.
- **PhD new coursework:** The 'Introduction to the PhD in Management' course explains that the students will be expected to contribute to local and international research networks (through giving conference papers, carrying out journal reviews, and publishing in high quality journals). A new piece of coursework was introduced this year. This was to interview an academic in the School about a recently published article, and to write it up as a blog. The students performed very well this assessment (and several of the blogs were published on the School website, PGR 'Research Roundup' newsletter etc.).

Centre for Open Learning:

- **Commitment of our Staff** - COL staff have worked sensitively and responsively as regards the Covid-19 outbreak, seeking opportunity and working through the significant challenges faced by our students and staff community. The use of operational surveys had proved invaluable as it has helped us support our colleagues during the period of working from home and has informed our preparedness to return to campus.
- **Learning Technologist Support** - valued and essential. This allowed us to use a flipped approach enabling courses to easily pivot from online to in-person, maximising opportunities for collaborative learning and differentiation.
- **Thank You Notes** - In April 2020, COL's CAM team brought in a Thank You card system whereby colleagues can send a virtual note of thanks to one another, this has proved popular (73 colleagues received at least one note) boosting a sense of community and morale during a difficult period of time.
- **Communication with Students** - Timely, helpful and practical communication with students has been a priority, students tell us they feel supported and informed as a result. We had to navigate travel arrangements and visa implications and so for example, on all three credit bearing ELE courses, academic and professional services colleagues kept in contact with students, to reassure them as they attempted to complete the course while in transit to or quarantining in their home countries. Extensions were given to students as needed and in line with regulation.
- **Pivot to Remote Learning** - A mix of synchronous and asynchronous approaches are being utilised across the Centre, including the use of recorded lectures, flipped activities, discussion boards, detailed feedback and feedforward on written work, live online workshop sessions, and 1-1 tutorials. Academic and Professional teams responded nimbly to adapt materials and approaches and training was offered by our Digital Services teams. Our English Language Pre-Sessional (which was quickly moved online and catered for more students than ever) proved key to PG recruitment and retention across the University. The process of submitting and assessing Art and Design coursework online was met with great success and substantial praise from the External Examiner as it allowed assessments to be shared virtually and in great detail.
- **Academic Communication Course Developed for ART** - Developed in collaboration with IAD, this course has the potential to reach all new undergraduate students and has been valued by students who are transferring learning to their work – the provision could be repurposed as a pre-arrival course for all students.
- **Free Open Lecture Series** - Live Open Lectures were offered over the summer months, free to students, and making good use of the expertise within our teaching community. Resource allowing, this should be repeated, alongside other diverse types of online or free provision if possible.

School of Divinity:

- **Learning and teaching provision:** Divinity has successfully delivered hybrid teaching, with students greatly valuing campus contact. In June (for s1) and October (for s2) all COs were required to submit a hybrid delivery plan for UGSC consideration and approval listing their plan, online pivot and timetabling needs. Level 8 lectures are digital but as much level 10 seminar teaching and level 8 tutorial

teaching has been on campus as possible given severely reduced capacity. In practice, at level 10 this has typically meant one of the two teaching hours. For larger level 10 courses, owing to room constraints each class on campus has needed to be taught two, three or even four times. Informally, some very small Divinity courses (e.g. PGT) have used synchronous hybrid elements, which have worked well on an ad hoc basis.

- **PGR and PGT research:** Divinity has successfully maintained high-quality supervision and support. Digital supervisions have generally worked well. Colleagues have organised extra reading groups. Digital research seminars have hugely benefitted distance PhD students and enabled international presenters. The level 11 Approaches to Research course is now digitally available. A digital ethnography seminar series helped some students change research project.
- **PG consultation:** The New College Postgraduate Committee (which includes the PG programme reps) reports being well consulted on an ongoing basis about changes made in response to the pandemic.
- **Learn programme hubs:** These have provided a useful single-site information source and the ability to email or post announcements to students on a programme.
- **CO review of learning, teaching and assessment:** Reflecting on and adapting practices has renewed courses.
- **Learn sites:** Content expansion is likely to bring ongoing benefits.
- **Summative assessment modes:** In May, before the 2019/20 s2 course BoE, Divinity COs were required to complete a course impact form detailing the impacts, if any, of the early pandemic disruption (and preceding industrial action) on coverage of learning outcomes, teaching delivery and assessment elements. Early in 2020/21 assessment planning a need was identified to adjust modes and in some courses reduce loads. As part of hybrid delivery plans, COs have been required to submit assessment changes for UGSC agreement and BoS approval. This is enabling all Divinity courses and taught programmes to continue to be assessed numerically via ECMS1 (UG) and ECMS4 (PGT).
- **Summative assessment outcomes:** The 'no detriment' policy made 2019/20 s2 course outcomes and 2019/20 programme outcomes somewhat higher than normal. EEs commended policy application. Year 4 dissertations were assessed normally because the project period mostly preceded the pandemic. In our relatively small courses and programmes it is difficult to compare attainment of demographic subgroups within cohorts.
- **Online PhD vivas:** These have generally worked well, with internal examiners not requesting a non-examining chair.
- **Student support:** Since March, Divinity SSO has been operating with email as the first contact. As usual, student and colleague enquiries have been responded to or appropriately forwarded promptly and effectively.
- **Learning technology and web support:** Our learning technologist (0.5 FTE), communications officer and digital marketing modern apprentice have been essential.
- **UG management:** A new DUGS took up post in July 2020 due to the previous role-bearer completing three years. This may have had the effect of aiding our pandemic response by splitting management during an exceptionally demanding period, rather than requiring one colleague to shoulder the burden throughout.

- **PGT programmes:** The pandemic may precipitate future digital developments (e.g. synchronous hybrid delivery) that support recruitment against a background of high UoE fees.

Edinburgh College of Art:

- **Innovation in teaching & learning:** There has been very positive staff and student experience trialling Miro (an online collaborative whiteboard platform) software in ESALA, which has largely been supported by academic leads in ESALA and Design. The software has been beneficial as a means of mitigating some of the impact on student experience resulting from loss of access to on-campus studio learning and teaching environments, and could be beneficial and have broader application across non-studio subject areas/schools. There are other positive innovations arising from digital teaching that subject areas want to carry over beyond the period of Covid mitigation: Art seminars (Methods /Future Business of Art) found essay tutorials were as good or better online, as staff were able to discuss annotated essays with the students in real time via Teams. Design tutors prepared practical video demonstrations and lectures that will serve as an ongoing useful resource that can be uploaded and delivered across different courses on LEARN; History of Art also used recorded and online tutorials, lectures; and invited external speakers to give extra Q&A session and seminars for online audiences; collaborated with students to contribute to online resources; directed students in Edinburgh to objects in local collections and encouraged them to visit those objects when they are available.
- **Innovation in communicating student work:** ESALA UG published a catalogue-yearbook featuring work across all courses and years within the programme that has been a strong external communication tool (reaching 2000+ views online) and an internal instrument to reflect on the integrative nature of the programme.
- **EDI in the curriculum:** New courses and teaching staff hires further strengthened global diversity in the curriculum. EE comments on History of Art UG programme: 'amongst the most exciting in the discipline,' and 'a model course for the sector' and commends leading UK role (alongside SOAS) in decolonising the curriculum, illustrated by staff co-creating an online 'Diversifying Art History' bibliography that was widely circulated and positively received beyond the university. EE comments on 'how helpful and instructive the 'Diversifying Art History' bibliography... is for colleagues across the discipline' - more testament to how History of Art at Edinburgh is contributing to national and international changes in the sector.

School of Economics:

- **UG1 & PGT1 Hybrid Arrangements:** Our hybrid teaching arrangements involved: (i) pre-recorded lectures, delivered asynchronously, (ii) live online Q&A sessions in the standard lecture slots, and (iii) enough in-person and live online tutorials to meet student demand. Mid-course feedback suggests that students appreciate these efforts to maintain some sort of normality in our teaching delivery.
- **UG2 and PGT2 Assessment:** We imposed a common approach "x+1" hour online open-book exam format across all Honours courses and PGT core courses. Students were encouraged to trial the submission process for online examinations as often as they wished, and, partly as a result, the submission process created no difficulties during the examination diet.
- **UG3 and PGT3 Student Welfare:** Introduction of a monthly student review meeting (with Senior Tutor, SSOs, Teaching and Student Services Manager and Manager of Student Welfare) to improve awareness of individual students experiencing

difficulties. New activities focused on encouraging students and staff to take care of their own wellbeing, including mental and physical health awareness.

- **UG4 Assessment Types:** The University's current systems for online, open-book exams make it challenging to ensure that MCQs are robust to collaboration/cheating. MCQs are now only used for low-stakes assessments or purely diagnostic purposes. There is greater reliance on group work and project work, especially in pre-Honours, which should raise interaction amongst students and help to maintain a sense of community.
- **UG5 Examination Standards and Procedures:** To manage the workload involved and ensure papers were ready in good time, a new step-by-step timetable and procedure was introduced for exam paper preparation. Exam boards in 2019-20 were given clearer and more complete information. This involved greater use of the automatically generated exam board reports from the University's systems, and hence reduced chance for human error.
- **UG6 Induction & Transition:** To facilitate induction of new students and switch to digital-first provision for returning students, dedicated New and Returning Students Learn pages were launched in September 2020 to provide a one-stop source of information and advice to UG students arriving or returning to study Economics this year. These pages appear to have contributed to a relatively low rate of email enquiries to the School at the start of the year (along with the Q&A sessions held in August, the recordings of which were included on the pages).
- **UG8 Refresher Exams:** To mitigate the effect of the suspension of pre-Honours examinations, we introduced not-for-credit MCQ-based refresher examinations, (released via Learn and available for the whole of Week 1 of the new academic year). The purpose of the refresher exams was explained to students, who seem to appreciate the additional opportunity to develop and demonstrate understanding of material which acts as a foundation for the study of economics in the current academic year.
- **PGT4 Study-Groups:** We often get complaints about the composition of study groups about issues arising from better students doing much of the homework and less able students feeling shut out and not able to contribute, causing frustration all round. This year, we allowed students the option of self-organising. The vast majority chose this option and the usual problems with groups did not arise.
- **PGR1 Hybrid Delivery:** PhD supervisions, research seminars personal tutoring, PhD progression reviews and vivas all successfully moved online.
- **PGR2 Co-authorship:** Many more students co-wrote papers as was encouraged in a previous year.

Moray House School of Education:

- **Digital Delivery** - In general, the move to digital delivery for teaching at such short notice worked well. Some innovative approaches to assessment have been particularly effective, e.g. video presentations on MSc TESOL
- **Staff** - Our students were able to complete their courses and programmes successfully in Semester 2, 2020 because of the additional work and commitment of individual colleagues and programme teams. For example the time, effort, experimentation, ingenuity and risk taking of staff to build and strengthen the staff: student relationships on the PGDE Primary programme within a digital context.

School of History, Classics and Archaeology:

- **The 'UG Students in HCA' Learn website** - The planned Learn website 'UG Students in HCA' – a 'one-stop shop' where UG students can find everything they need to know as a student in HCA – is up and running and is fast becoming an established element in our students' learning experience. Designed and maintained by Academic, PS and SSO staff (principally the UG Director and UG Manager), it brings together a range of expertise and up-to-date practical information across, in its current form, twelve subsections, including one for Hybrid learning (the others cover: Things you really need to know; Welcome and Meetings; Student Support and Wellbeing; Student Voice and Community; Academic Skills; Getting the most out of Assessment and Feedback; Subject Area Handbooks and Regulations; Tools to Support Learning; Year Abroad; Resources for Developing your Career; Tips and Tools for your Dissertation). The website's clear layout and streamlined content enables students to navigate a complex array of material. As time goes on we are hopeful that it will become embedded in our students' learning and community experience and enable them to take more proactive responsibility for their learning and personal development.
- **Assessment:** diversity of assessment type, quality of feedback and streamlining of the process for the double marking of dissertations.
- **Writing Centre** - the PTAS-funded pilot Writing Centre (where UG students work one-on-one with a trained PG writing tutor) is in its second year and will scale up to become a permanent feature of the school from 2021-22.

Health in Social Sciences:

- **Programme Delivery** - For PGT, PGR and UG programmes we promoted a 'digital-first' delivery to staff. Teaching has followed the models set out in the hybrid strategy document. We offered all of our lecturing via a blend of pre-recorded, voiced, close captioned and video recorded lectures, demonstration skills clips, activities, readings, live webinars and weekly group and individual drop-in sessions. We have staff in place to support students if they request in-person, on-campus contact and we have signposted students to the bookable library and student study space to encourage them to come to campus if they wish and can do safely, with the goal of promoting social distancing. Nursing clinical skills are delivered face to face in small groups (more on this in the actions). Shift to Digital First delivery has removed to some extent the geographical constraints in programme delivery. Delivery of psychology clinical skills teaching online during the initial pivot was achieved (but was unsustainable). Many staff not skilled in online teaching undertook training courses and there are high levels of appreciation from students for the swift acquisition of skills for digital first delivery. Staff and students responded well to transition to hybrid delivery despite increased workload. Some changes are positive and now to some extent are likely to be maintained/integrated into standard delivery across programmes. However, the time required to make these adjustments has been significant, especially in the context of little TEL resource, and early indications are that delivery of hybrid is excessively time-consuming.
- **Assessment** - All PGR vivas were moved to be remote and use a range of technologies most vivas took place and with successful outcomes. A small number of vivas in Counselling and Psychotherapy were postponed. The requirement for a formal agreement for the viva remains in order to ensure the process is robust. Processes are in place to ensure all aspects of the PGR annual reviews continue

whilst being remote. Amendments around taught assessment changes are overseen by the School Board of Studies and then by examination boards. Amendments to assessment have been notified to the relevant professional bodies. University wide no detriment rules have been in place at the relevant examination boards. While it was well-intentioned and ultimately students were pleased with the results, prior to the exam boards, the no detriment policy seemed to cause a lot of anxiety for UG and PGT students. This seemed to be because it was such an unknown process and students did not have a clear understanding of how it would be implemented and the unknown as to their results. Some students were frustrated in the time taken for the no-detriment policy for professionally accredited programmes to be confirmed as this was a time-consuming process, and this was a challenging time for staff and students alike. The outcome promoted academic integrity as well as a sympathetic stance towards students and met the professional body standards.

- **Equality and Diversity** - The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee is active, meeting regularly and has, during 2019-20, reviewed the school webpages to ensure that text and images promote an inclusive learning environment, ensured staff wellbeing was checked during lockdown, and supported the PGR students to develop their own race equality campaign, ConveRACEions. As for other committees in the school, it has student representation.

Law School:

- **Teaching** - Teaching content was delivered using recorded lectures, Collaborate live tutorials/seminars or other online means, as appropriate. On the PG Diploma in Professional Practice, the use of pre-recorded lectures - introduced as a pandemic response - is now noted as a point for longer-term consideration as a move which may serve more generally to enhance flexibility for students.
- **Assessment/examination** - All outstanding forms of UG or PGT assessment that could no longer be safely or reliably completed after the move online in March 2020 were amended to appropriate alternative forms of assessment. Staff feedback indicates that, in some instances, the replacement assessment worked so well that it will be retained going forward. Most Ordinary courses are professionally qualifying courses and required an exam in the May diet to be graded in the usual way. Those few that are not were graded Pass/Fail. All UG exams in the May and August diets took place in take home format. Comments from Law students in the University's Covid-19 UG survey highlight that these take-home exams were felt by students to afford a better opportunity to showcase learning and legal skills compared to traditional in-person exams (which are perceived as much more of a test of memory), as well as removing the stress of exam-hall conditions. Some Ordinary exams adopted a common format of multiple choice questions (MCQs), but as these tend to be fact-heavy and relatively easy to look up, a 'window within the window' approach was adopted: at some point within the 48-hour examination period a student could trigger the MCQ part of the exam and would then have that shorter window to complete it. While formulating necessary changes to teaching and assessment for the School's UG programmes and the PG Diploma in Professional Legal Practice, the School worked closely with the Law Society of Scotland to ensure continued compliance with their requirements for the assessment of accredited courses. It was helpful to be able to provide this assurance to students, and to have confirmation that changes and decisions made were aligned with other Law Schools in Scotland.

The School took a detailed approach to the implementation of the 'help not hinder' ('HNH') policy at PGT course level, which was felt to have worked particularly well. Each PGT course was reviewed for eligibility for HNH and an appropriate threshold for HNH adjustment to course marks. As a minimum, HNH was only applied where existing assessments completed by students totalled at least 30% of the overall course mark; the availability of HNH was further assessed on a course-by-course basis to ensure that existing element(s) of assessment represented a sufficiently substantial part of the course's overall learning objectives/outcomes. It was also decided that forms of assessment such as class participation or in-class oral presentation could not be used alone to constitute course marks under the HNH policy. Undertaking this early scrutiny of PGT courses contributed substantially to the later smooth running of PGT Boards of Examiners meetings. Although University guidance suggested running reduced Boards of Examiners meetings, the Law School took a more expansive approach, with the invitation to attend extended to all colleagues and two externals (rather than just one) per Board. It was felt to have been helpful to have a larger number of colleagues participating, including some critical of HNH, in ensuring the rigour of the Boards' decision-making. It was also helpful to have the views of two externals on more complex matters. The shift to online Boards of Examiners meetings was generally successful and an innovation that could be retained for future years. The online format did not undermine the potential for discussion, and meetings proceeded smoothly and constructively. The inherent flexibility around online meetings seemed to suit colleagues and feedback received from externals who attended the online Boards was positive.

School of Literatures, Languages, and Cultures:

- **Asynchronous digital Board of Studies** - and a digital 'Hybrid Teaching Working Group' (running April through summer) enabled rapid revision of all LLC credit-bearing courses in anticipation of hybrid delivery in AY 2020- 21; all course assessment structures were made more resilient, and all learning outcomes and assessments revised so that (i) standards were maintained (ii) students could meet LOs while studying remotely and asynchronously; synchronous sessions were offered for all courses, but students are able to engage fully through asynchronous means if circumstances require.
- **Asynchronous Board of Examiners:** this was key to LLC's success in implementing Annex A effectively and to deadline. To run the exam board virtually, work to the new regulatory framework across the School and ensure BoE resilience in the context of Covid (eg in case of staff illness), in April Senior Management Group streamlined LLC's devolved BoE structure into a single online forum, convened by a small group of School office holders and professional services leads who had responsibility for key decisions and implementation of Annex A and related regulations. Student reports, records of modelling, and all documents relevant to the regulatory framework were presented on Sharepoint; all decisions requiring discussion, further scrutiny, or revision were discussed on Sharepoint discussion boards over a period of 3-4 days per board, to enable all to participate. This process worked very well: all course and programme key dates were met, appeal numbers are low (3 of 15 upheld) and lower than 2017-18. The process has been praised by the majority of department representatives and external examiners who commented

on it, particularly clarity of communications to externals and to students. For instance, one EE wrote: "The discussion boards in particular demonstrated that decisions were robust and collectively checked and re-checked. There was genuine concern not to disadvantage students during what was a difficult and disorienting year for them on a number of fronts, and this concern was translated into a flexible set of principles and models." Key to LLC's BoE success was asynchronous scrutiny of materials, modelling, implementation of Annex A, special circumstances, and ratification of decisions using Sharepoint to enable asynchronous decision making with input from subject area delegates, exam board members, and subject experts.

- **Equality and Diversity** - creation of LLC Anti-Racism Resource Hub Sharepoint site.

School of Philosophy, Psychology, and Language Sciences:

- **COVID-19 mitigation** - changes in teaching delivery followed Scottish Government guidelines concerning working at home. Technical support enabled transition to online teaching. Teaching Practice, Assessment, Research Impact, Communications, Operational and Student Experience working groups were convened to implement decisions and support the development of appropriate responses to challenges of COVID-19. The University-wide policy of "no detriment" was implemented. Students were surveyed in March and on the basis of their responses, many semester 2 assessments were cancelled and students were awarded overall passes where evidence of achieving the learning outcomes could be identified. If required, exams were replaced with other assessments and marked using a 'coarse grained' scheme (i.e., A=75, B=65, C=55, D=45 and Fail = 38) to reduce markers' workload and improve confidence in the reliability of marks. Special Circumstances panels and Exam Boards reflected University-wide guidance on COVID-19 mitigations.
- **PGT dissertations** - supervisors supported their students re-model dissertation projects to enable online data collection or use of pre-existing datasets. The School secured a contract with testable.org to provide and support software for online experiments. The ethics committee quickly devised a streamlined ethics re-approval system and mitigation statements were considered by dissertation markers when marking. The Writing (now Skills) Centre moved their services online and offered more writing appointments (3 per month), information on learning at the time of COVID-19, training for online experiments, and statistics appointments.

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Deanery of Biomedical Sciences:

- **Assessment** - Anatomy of the limbs includes an assessment in which experimental data is provided to students to analyse and then they are asked to write a scientific manuscript. Guidance is in the form of tailored workshops on How to write a scientific manuscripts as well as how to analyse and interpret experimental data.
- **Assessment** - MScR in Biomedical science have a Project in a nutshell assignment. This is in the form of a piece of public communication of the students' choosing (10% of 80 credits) and the main stated aim is to capture the imagination. Examples in the past have included making stop motion videos, making a website and even poetry. In one case, the result of the assignment was used on the host centre's website. As the body of examples have built up, previous examples are now shown to students as inspiration.

Deanery of Clinical Sciences:

- **Covid Adaptation** - the adaptability of programme teams was uniformly exceptional, indeed, some of this adaptability enhanced the student experience: MSc Critical Care initially paused programmes to manage clinical staff workload and negotiated the first wave successfully. They rapidly created a covid-19 specific course to allow students to gain key current skills, and catch up the academic credit. The course content is responsive to emerging developments in the field and captures student experience at managing patients with covid-19.

Medical Education:

- **Involving final year students as online tutors:** we invited interested Y6 students to become tutors and work with Y4 and Y5 students in their online tutorials. This was evaluated very positively by the students, for example one said “Having a 6th year teach is highly beneficial. They know what resources are good to use, how exam questions like to be phrased and pick out the key bits of knowledge. They provide a non-judgemental environment allowing students to make mistakes compared to some consultants on the ward”.
- **Use of end of week/end of module (usually 2-3 weeks) quizzes.** This allows students to regularly check their learning, identify any gaps in knowledge or understanding and follow links to resources to address those gaps. The quizzes were highly used (97% of those who filled in the evaluation) and 99% of those who reported completing the quizzes found them to be helpful.
- **MSc Clinical Education team:** Staff delivered numerous sessions to support others in the move to online teaching (to our students, to other university staff, to external professional groups). This highlights the importance of drawing on the expertise of those involved in online learning.
- **Curriculum development public consultation:** We conducted a public meeting to present and discuss our plans for the Y1 and Y2 curriculum. Suggestions and comments were incorporated into the plans as they were finalised.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** We introduced two new groups towards the end of the session – a short life working group Race Equality and Anti-Racism Group; and a longer term Inclusivity Group which will set priorities and develop objectives that improve inclusivity and diversity within the programme.

Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences:

- **UNCOVER (Usher Network for Covid-19 Evidence Reviews)** - In response to the pandemic, this initiative was developed by MPH online co-directors with Usher colleagues to work in review teams with MPH and PhD students. Staff and students provide up to date rapid and systematic evidence reviews for UK policy-makers such as SAGE to inform responses to the pandemic for the ‘public good’. Outputs to date also include team publications in high impact journals and an online conference to showcase students work with high attendance and engagement across the University and beyond (240 attended over 3 days, and 350 views of the recordings to date). A new dissertation format was designed by the Dissertation Coordinator to allow UNCOVER students to develop their rapid review work into a dissertation for the MPH campus programme.

- **Significant increased student support activities in all PGT programmes** - The impact of Covid-19 on Masters students was substantial. Many online students are clinicians or employed in frontline health roles. Campus students had to adapt to online study, some returned home. Many remained relatively isolated in student accommodation and flats. All programmes offered increased pastoral and social support to students and academic adjustments in the form of special circumstances, assignment changes in format and interruptions to study. These actions appear to have mitigated any effect on student performance. Academic adjustments to support students:
 - Group projects were redesigned to individual assignments in most programmes and some assignment formats were changed
 - No detriment rules applied in the second semester
 - Changes in dissertation guidance and support to adapt to online data collection methods. Campus students volunteering for UNCOVER were offered a new rapid review dissertation format to credit their voluntary work whilst retaining academic standards and expectations of original and autonomous work. All campus students whose research design had been affected by the pandemic were asked to include a covid-19 impact statement in their dissertations and markers were asked to disregard issues stated there such as small sample sizes.
 - Deanery statement mitigated the impact of Covid-19 on all students by a generous adjustment of borderline marks, extensions and special circumstances and instructions to markers to disregard aspects of research design such as online data collection and smaller sample size due to Covid-19.

Social and pastoral support processes increased:

- Additional personal tutor sessions offered to students to support with any issues.
 - Daily and weekly 'Collaborate' sessions offered to students on most programmes
 - Our own special circumstances committee set up as a virtual group, responding to a high volume of SCs with responses within 2-3 working days for most
 - Regular signposting to mental health and wellbeing support and services within the university
- **Lenient assignment deadlines and format changes** - All programmes changed assignment submission deadlines and format from group to individual assignments.
 - **Working together and across programmes, supporting staff and other programmes** - The MPH campus programme's shift from campus to online was facilitated by support from the MPH online programme learning technologist and course organisers in addition to the use of the MPH online courses and induction materials. The dissertation guidance and resources developed for MPH online has been shared with MPH campus, Family Medicine and Global eHealth programmes. A significant improvement in the student experience of the Masters research ethics process has been achieved by MPHEG, the MPH ethics group. It was developed to provide timely responses for MPH campus and online dissertation students and has improved the response rate from approximately 3-4 months to 3-4 weeks. The Chair

of MPHEG also conducts ACCORD reviews, enabling students to conduct appropriate Level 2 research without additional pressure on ACCORD and without an increased waiting time for students. Learning technology colleagues are working towards an equitable approach to support all programmes within the hub. 19/20 has seen us join the Learn Foundations project and work towards its output. Providing a consistent structure throughout our courses has acted as a springboard in sharing practices with course organisers and tutors. This supported the sharing of content between the two MPH programmes. The English workshops arranged by MPH Campus has been offered to all programmes within the Pughub in 20/21 and in total, 74 students have enrolled to date. Our PGT Pughub has been a source of support and fruitful discussion and helped mitigate the move to working from home by increasing from monthly to twice weekly meetings at the start of lockdown. These now weekly meetings help us share support, expertise and resources across programmes.

- **Usher Marketing Co-ordinator** - This post has helped reduced the pressure on programme staff to plan effective marketing activities in addition to their academic or professional services jobs and enabled new, effective measures. When the MPH campus changed to online delivery for 20/21 due to covid-19, only 7 students were confirmed in August. A strategic social media campaign and communications plan was executed by the marketing co-ordinator and additional efforts were made by the MPH team, both to attract new applicants and address queries from applicants with conditional offers. These led to an increase to 40 confirmed students in September.
- **A Deputy Director of Quality has been appointed and a Deanery Quality Committee has been set up to ensure wide representation and applying a quality lens to all programmes** - we currently have representation from all Masters programmes and PGR colleagues and have invited student representatives to widen and enhance our perspective and representation.

Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies

- Discussion fora setup with immediate effect to solicit student feedback and act on concerns for each year group. Monitored by year administrator and year director.
- Staff development sessions and support provided by the school Digital Education Unit.
- PGT programmes greatly supported undergraduate hybrid teaching in Semester II by providing access to online lectures and other resources.
- Successful virtual PhD vivas to be rolled out post-COVID as this allows for international examiners to be appointed at no extra travel costs.
- The R(D)SVS PGT/UG QAE flow chart and process is now considered the gold standard for the College and is being offered out across the Deaneries.

College of Science and Engineering

School of Biological Sciences:

- In one course there was suspected collusion on an online test. Questions will be randomised in future.
- A few Year 3 courses chose to have final exams. One course organiser made the excellent point that "... the degree exam provides an environment and opportunity for

students to synthesize and integrate course material, through their revision. We felt that without the learning that would normally take place as part of revision, students would be poorly prepared for 4th year.”

- On some courses, students were consulted on how they would be assessed. This created a feeling of ownership of their own education which can be lacking.
- Some students found oral presentations online much less traumatic than in-person.
- In those courses and programmes that maintained frequent communication with their students via weekly meetings and check-ins, student engagement remained high and the students felt supported. It also helped build and maintain their cohort and peer support networks. It also allowed problems to be spotted early. This, of course, requires considerable time and effort from staff to support students and to minimise impact of the changes.
- Staying in Edinburgh did have some advantages, including, no interruptions due to travelling back home and enforced quarantine and good internet access.
- To facilitate remote assessments, one course scheduled additional remote Q&A sessions in advance of tests and the exam, and they also ran a practice run of submissions online so that students would be familiar with the logistics of downloading papers and uploading their answers. This has already been adopted by other Year 3 and 4 courses.
- The ease of attending external online talks and seminars was of great benefit to Year 4 students as they heard many more excellent and relevant talks than would previously have been possible.

School of Chemistry:

- **Open Book Examinations** - The move to open book examinations for 2020 worked surprisingly well in Chemistry, inducing a deep rethink of future examination policy. The examination performance of students improved slightly, but staff felt that the open-book format did not compromise the ability of the examinations to distinguish between students in different degree classifications.

School of Engineering:

- **CREW (Curriculum Renewal in Engineering Workshops)** workshops for curriculum renewal were held over summer and these led to the development of the new first and second year structure and courses.

School of Geosciences:

- **PTAS project** is investigating the experiences of students entering the university from widening participation backgrounds with the aim of identifying ways of enhancing the support offered to these students. Lessons from this study may illuminate the issues about differential performance noted in the School report.
- **Community** - Geophysics organises an annual informal evening (usually mid-S1) for all UGs where students who had internships the preceding summer give short presentations about their experience, including the application process. The evening doubles up as a social event across all years.

School of Informatics

- **Staff and Student Welfare** - communications from School leadership have prioritized concern for the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff at this difficult time, with frequent injunctions to be kind to one another and to look after ourselves. Weekly Teaching Hours have been very helpful in supporting staff as they have adjusted to the online context.
- **Equality and Diversity** - Decolonising the Curriculum working group is currently running workshops (one per institute) to help staff to think through how to ensure inclusiveness and avoid racial bias in the content and delivery of their courses.

School of Maths:

- **Teaching and Learning** - The School mounted a coordinated and comprehensive response to the challenges posed by Covid-19 and the resulting hybrid model for learning and teaching that cut across the School, with particular involvement from our Technology Enhanced Mathematical Sciences Research Theme, our Learning Designer, IT Support in the School, the Mathematics Teaching Organisation, and our custom ASID Creation Team, with oversight from the Head of School and the Director of Teaching.
- **Administration** -The School championed a decentralised approach to timetabling that was firmly aimed at optimising the student experience and utilisation of the available estate to provide opportunities for face-to-face teaching to those students who wanted them in compliance with University and Government guidance on physical distancing.

School of Physics and Astronomy:

- **Equality and Diversity** - tackling widening participation via recruitment and tracking through the application and selection process. WP applicants are tracked by the School via the acceptance process, and if they accept and come, their names are passed to the Senior Tutor, prior to the allocation of PTs to ensure they are allocated to an experienced PT who understands the difficulties that these students may have so they can be aware of their background when advising on course choices. This also makes PTs in general more aware of their background.
- **Equality and Diversity** - informal School networks for staff and students who are parents or carers and for LGBTQ+ staff & postgrads (EqualiTea). The EqualiTea network continued to meet during lockdown (once a week, via videoconference). Two new student networks have been created: a School BAME student (and staff) group and a School LGBTQ+ network for students. Those proposing the LGBTQ+ network for students were aware of EqualiTea, but felt a separate group - perhaps with some joint activities with EqualiTea - would be more suitable for undergraduates in particular.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

**College Annual Quality Reports
2019-20**

Description of paper:

1. The College annual quality reports for 2019-20.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. For discussion.

Background and context:

3. The College annual quality reports for 2019-20.

Discussion:

4. See attached papers.

Resource implications:

5. Considered within the reports.

Risk management:

6. Considered within the reports.

Equality & diversity:

7. Considered within the reports.

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

8. College reports should be considered by the relevant College committee. Should the Committee agree any actions, consideration will be given to how to communicate these.

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December 2020

Freedom of Information: Open

<p style="text-align: center;">UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH - ANNUAL MONITORING 2019/20 College Report College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)</p>
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Guidance:

- An interim process to reflect on the impact of and learning from the Covid-19 outbreak. May also be used to reflect on other aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience, including the impact of industrial action. Designed to be light touch and work alongside other academic contingency activity.
- Covers all types of credit-bearing provision: undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research, including collaborations. The report may be split by type of provision.
- The report should be **brief** (suggested length of no more than three pages). Use bullet points where possible.
- Reports should not contain information which identifies any individual – [Data Protection Policy](#)
- **Deadline:** Friday 27 November 2020 (completion of the report delegated to College Dean of Quality or equivalent).

Section 1: Reflection on School Reports

Resource and Staff Workload

There is significant evidence of staff achievement and success this year, with a large number of nominations to the CAHSS Recognition Awards. However, multiple Schools reported that Covid-19 has exacerbated the already significant increases in individual staff workload and constraints on resource reported in previous years. Covid-19 mitigation work (particularly preparation for hybrid delivery) and existing problems with processes and systems (incl. People and Money, EUCLID and APT) and rising student numbers (high student to staff ratios) have created a 'perfect storm'. This is severely impacting staff health and wellbeing and reducing the time academic and professional services staff have to focus on routine work, research and enhancing the student experience.

Boards of Examiners: Reflections on application of no-detriment

Online exam boards (some asynchronous) ran successfully and may be retained in some areas (e.g. Law and SPS). The virtual exam board group is praised for supporting Schools in this transition. External Examiners reflected positively on the exam board process, Annex A and the application of no detriment, which they believed to be comprehensive, rigorous and fair. The following areas are reported as needing attention:

- **Communication of no-detriment ('Help not Hinder')**: the University's communication strategy for no-detriment was criticised for creating 'anxiety' and 'confusion' and generating additional work for Schools; guidance for PGT dissertations (and impact statements) was issued too late, leaving Schools little time to plan their approach.
- **Application of no-detriment**: successful but made significant demands on academic and professional services staff and particularly time-consuming for accredited programmes. Some areas reported slightly higher course and programme outcomes in semester two (2019/20), particularly at Honours level, with a noticeable increase in the number of high classifications awarded.
- **Impact on dissertations (UGT and PGT)**: UGT dissertations assessed normally and little impact reported. Multiple areas reporting that PGT dissertations affected severely by restricted access to libraries and data sources (e.g., NHS for HiSS). HCA evolved a Dissertation Impact Form for UG and PGT students – External Examiners received this positively.

- **Assessment and Progression Tools (APT):** multiple Schools reported issues with the software, which many found clunky and unreliable. Flexibility on key award confirmation dates (e.g., summer of 2020 and again in autumn/winter 2020 for the graduating 2019/20 PGT cohort) came very late and only after intervention from Schools. This created significant pressure for academic and professional services colleagues.

Exams and Assessment

The approach to exams, and assessment more generally, went well with few Exam Boards reporting major issues or concerns. External Examiners in multiple Schools praised and process. A number of concerns are reported:

- **Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs):** Economics note that open book MCQs are more susceptible to cheating and collusion as a result of inadequate systems support. These are now only used for low-stakes assessment and refresher exams to support returning UG students who had pre-honours exams suspended.
- **48 Hour Model:** student feedback indicated that questions took longer than the indicated exam length or students were spending considerably longer than expected to complete the exam (Economics and Law). It was acknowledged this has been addressed by the 24-hour exam window and word limits set for UG take home exams, although this needs to be long enough for Honours students to express their answers and is being reviewed locally (LAW).
- **Academic Misconduct:** some areas also reported that the Help not Hinder policy did not sufficiently consider penalties for academic misconduct on discounted elements of assessment. It was requested that if this approach is be used again in the future, this is an issue which requires attention at University level. External Examiners noted concerns about some pdf-scripts not being annotated (Economics).
- **Joint Programmes:** a perceived lack of consistency across the College regarding assessment requirements and approaches to implementing hybrid has resulted in some areas reporting a varied teaching experience for students on joint programmes.
- **Professional requirements:** Health noted concerns that the suspension or closure of community-based counselling placements risks jeopardising recruitment to some programmes, which rely on these placements.
- **Dissertation Marking:** professional services staff developed an online marking form to support the blind double-marking of dissertations (HCA).
- **Assessment, Feedback and Moderation:** some Schools have indicated that they are undertaking reviews of their moderation (HCA) and/or marking and feedback procedures (PPLS).

Student Achievement and Retention

Reports highlight some trends in attainment data that need to be explored:

- **Degree Outcomes:** UG attainment data (high classification: 2:1 and above) suggests an average of 92.2% for the College, with LLC (97.98%) reporting a high attainment rate. Law reported a rise in the percentage of first-class degrees awarded (+18% to 39.1% in 2019/20, compared to 21.1% in 2018/19). Attainment data also suggests a difference between some groups of students. A noticeable disparity between RUK students and Scottish students (HCA, 97% vs. 88%), Access Programme students (LLC, 87.5% vs. 97.98%) and SHEP students (LLC, 90% vs. 97.98%) suggests these groups achieved a lower percentage of high classifications compared to the rest of the cohort. Law reported a steady drop in RUK students achieving high classification since 2017/18 (100% in 2017/18; 89% in 2018/19; 75% in 2019/20).

- **Widening Participation/Access (WP):** some Schools reported that WP students performed poorly in comparison to their peers (e.g., HCA and LLC). A specific concern was raised about support for students from WP backgrounds (particularly those with caring responsibilities) and there is some evidence to suggest that Annex A was insufficient in addressing the circumstances of these students. The course pass rate among care leavers has been dropping year-on-year in Law since 2017/18 (100% pass rate in 2017/18; 79% in 2018/19; 70% in 2019/20). Further demographic disparities were reported in LLC where the pass rate (average 96.6%) is lower among students aged 25 or over (86.3%), Access Bursary (83%), Care Leavers (70%) and Scottish scholarship students (93%), and disabled students (94%).
- **Disabled Students:** UG attainment (high classification) data suggests a widening of the gap between disabled and non-disabled students (e.g., HCA 90% vs 95%).
- **Support for Progression:** a 'Stepping up to Honours' has been designed to support students in each subject area in their transition from second to third year. A writing skills workshop has also been piloted for international students enrolled in the postgraduate ELE programmes (HCA). Some Schools noted that students who may not have normally progressed into Honours are likely to need additional support, which may place increased pressure on staff.
- **Study Abroad:** in the Business School, most students were able to access their partner University from Edinburgh and have a virtual exchange. Those who were unable to do this had their learning assessed using a long essay.

Learning Technology support

The transition to remote working and the blended approach to teaching delivery was successful. This was only made possible by the remarkable efforts of professional services and academic staff. There are many examples of excellent collaborative working between Learning Technologists and Learning and Teaching teams to develop courses and programmes in preparation for the move to hybrid delivery. Several issues and examples of good practice are identified:

- **Lecture recording:** additional support and resource is needed to ensure teaching delivered online is inclusive. Lecture captioning/subtitling must be enhanced to ensure accessibility, while reducing manual interventions from staff. There is a request to increase the Lecture Retention Policy beyond 18 months, which Divinity feel is too short in the current circumstances.
- **Online platforms:** multiple Schools reported challenges with Collaborate where feedback from staff and students has been poor, citing unreliable connectivity and limited functionality, which are not conducive to an inclusive teaching experience. Zoom and Teams are widely regarded as better alternatives and support is requested for integration of these platforms into Learn, with more training for staff. Schools also request that Learn Discussion Boards are upgraded or that alternative tools (e.g., Padlet and Miro) are sanctioned and made available for teaching when demand is high.
- **Digital Tools:** ECA have used 'Bookit' to help co-ordinate on campus teaching delivery and a range of digital tools to showcase student work (e.g., ESALA catalogue yearbook), support essay tutorials and for practical video demonstrations. HCA have developed three new Learn sites - 'UG Students in HCA' and 'HCA MScT Community' (students) and 'Teaching in HCA' (staff) - to provide key resources and act as a one-stop-shop for information in the School, acting as a community hub.

Student Wellbeing and Mental Health Support

Some Schools report an increase in inquiries directed to the Student Support Offices (SSO) in 2019-20 and it was noted that additional recruitment to the SSO will be required in 2020-21 (HCA). A large proportion of those inquiries concerned mental health issues – a particularly high proportion of

those affected were students on PGT programmes, who experienced longer periods of isolation and separation from their home countries (e.g., Law). International students (predominantly Chinese students) sometimes experienced difficulty accessing teaching materials, which caused increased anxiety and stress.

Student Voice and Representation

Schools continue to work closely with the Students' Association to enhance student voice mechanisms and structures for representation, enhancing the operation of SSLCs (e.g., ECA, HCA) and involving students in discussing National Student Survey (NSS) results (e.g., MHSES enhancement framework). SPS, LLC and Divinity report some challenges embedding the new programme representative structure, but are working towards a solution with a strategy in place.

Community Building

Effective community building has proven exceptionally challenging since the move to hybrid delivery of teaching. However, several initiatives have been introduced across the College:

- **Practice Worth Sharing (PWS):** MHSES has introduced a forum for sharing a range of teaching and student focused practice. It is open to all staff and PhD students with teaching roles and uses a range of events to share practice and insights and create a professional learning community.
- **'Thank You' Cards:** the Centre for Open Learning has introduced a system where colleagues can send a virtual note of thanks to one another. This popular initiative has helped to strengthen the sense of community and morale during a difficult time.
- **Academic Clans and Group Projects:** Economics has used more group and project work to increase opportunities for interaction amongst pre-honours students and help to maintain a sense of community. They also plan to introduce Academic Clans (online social groups of 15-20 first year students, with second- and third-year Leaders from similar programs of study) to tackle reported isolation.
- **Writing Centre:** HCA are running a PTAS-funded pilot for a Writing Centre, where UG students work one-on-one with a trained PG writing tutor. It is now in its second year and will scale up to become a permanent feature of the school from 2021-22.
- **PGR Town Halls:** LLC and Business have organised regular Town Hall meetings, creating a space for community building and for the sharing of views. Schools also ran virtual research seminars and LLC organised online coffee meetups.

Accessibility and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

A range of initiatives have been introduced by Schools to champion Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:

- **EDI Committees and Director roles:** help to coordinate this activity, leading work on the renewal of Athena Swan Awards (ECA), reviewing school web pages to ensure they are inclusive and monitoring staff wellbeing (HiSS) and embedding EDI in the curriculum (HCA). The Business School launched the first LGBT+ postgraduate scholarship in Scotland, in collaboration with Somewhere, a social enterprise that aims to break down the barriers to LGBT+ inclusion in business. There are several initiatives focusing on race equality including:
 - An Anti-Racism SharePoint Hub (LLC)
 - Decolonising the Arts Curriculum campaign (ECA)
 - PGR student led race equality campaign, ConveRACEions (HiSS).
- **Accessibility:** has also been promoted and coordinated in MHSES, by establishing a dedicated Coordinator of Accessible Learning role.
- **Widening Participation/Access:** remains a key strategic priority with some Schools working to embed WP within existing work. In LCC, Widening Participation is embedded in the work

of the PGRC (Postgraduate Research Committee) and LTC (Learning and Teaching Committee), which the WP Director attends. A school-wide SLICC to support WP/outreach work was also created.

Support for Postgraduate Research Students

Supervision, research seminars, annual reviews (small number postponed) and viva voce examinations all moved online successfully. Some areas noted an intention to retain online vivas, which allowed them to use a wider pool of international examiners. Online research seminars seem to have created more opportunities for engagement from students and international speakers. Some challenges noted include:

- **Online Viva:** Digital viva concession process is considered complex (Divinity)
- **Hard Copy Thesis:** A specific request is made for a hard copy of the thesis to be posted to External Examiners (Divinity) when required.
- **Research:** Access to archives, libraries and other resources, as well as the switch to remote working, has had a significant impact on research students. Students conducting clinical research (which requires face-to-face data collection) were severely impacted by the loss of direct access to the health service (e.g. HISS).
- **Tutoring Support:** The Business School is using its Learning and Teaching Forum to examine support, development and recruitment of Teaching Assistants and is hoping to have an in-house Edinburgh Teaching Award (Qualification) in place for the start of 2021/2022, enabling all Teaching Assistants to have the opportunity to train to the level of Associate Fellow of Advanced Higher Education.
- Social and Political Science has appointed a Director of Student Development to its Learning and Teaching Directorate, who provides a direct point of contact for issues of tutor training and works with the Student Development Office and the SPS TEL Team to develop and extend training opportunities for GH tutors.

Summary

Key College Strategic Priorities for 2020-21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Technology and Platforms: better integration and support for Schools. • Joint Degree Programmes: enhancing the experience for joint degree students. • Curriculum Review: developing a fully integrated and coordinated approach. • Staff Wellbeing: support wellbeing, recognising and dealing with stress and high workload. • Staff-Student Ratios: address the imbalance in the student-staff ratio to enhance the quality of the teaching and learning experience. • EDI Support: support for School initiatives identified through local EDI Action Plans.
Key University Actions 2020-21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and Progression Tools (APT): improved functionality and additional resource. • Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC): support and resource for this key service. • Learning Technology and Platforms: full integration and practical support/training. • Communications: improved student communications and expectation management • EDI Support: clear route to University support for initiatives identified in local EDI Action Plans; including reviewing and further developing support for WP, care experienced and students with caring responsibilities in order to improve their university experience. • Student Support and Personal Tutoring: support for a return to the PT system review delayed due to Covid-19 at the first opportunity.

Section 2: Actions identified for the College

No.	Action	Responsible
1.	<p>Learning Technology and Digital Platforms: support requested from Information Services for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full integration of preferred digital platforms (Zoom and Teams) into Learn. • Investment of resource to enhance subtitling/captioning to make teaching materials accessible. • Guidance on the digital platforms and tools supported by College (with updates indicating those under impact review). • Support for Schools in resource allocation and staffing support relating to learning technology. 	College CIO and ISG
2.	<p>Joint degree programmes: request that the College continue with its pre-Covid efforts to improve the experience of students on joint degree programmes including the development of a role descriptor for an Undergraduate Programme Director.</p>	Dean UG Education
3.	<p>Staff wellbeing: Develop procedures for line managers to support staff wellbeing (e.g., recognising and dealing with stress, workload) during the COVID-19 pandemic; in particular, there is a concern for early career staff and for staff with specific protected characteristics.</p>	College Staffing Committee
4.	<p>Student-staff ratio: requests for College support in mitigating a student-staff ratio that is un conducive to its working environment and student experience. Addressing the student-staff ratio will support quality of teaching and learning experience, accessibility, and working environment.</p>	College Planning and Resources Committee
5.	<p>PG Admissions: full College support for the Law School's move to gathered field PGT admissions and all further steps decided upon by the School to reduce PGT over-recruitment, including the forthcoming trial of tuition fee deposits for 2021/22 entry.</p>	PG Admissions
6.	<p>Monitoring MOOCs: College guidance is requested on how quality procedures can be applied to MOOCs and data sets emerging from these courses captured in Power BI.</p>	Dean QA and Curriculum Approval
7.	<p>Graduate Outcomes: College support is requested to explore an in-house solution for surveying graduates, to support a richer understanding of graduate outcomes beyond 15 months from graduation, ideally including those who are self-employed.</p>	Careers Service
8.	<p>PhD Viva Support: request to set up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new simple mechanism for recording PhD viva mode. • To post a hard PhD thesis copy to examiners who require it. • University or College guidance and support for students submitting a 'three paper thesis' (Business). 	PGR Office Dean PG Education
9.	<p>Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC): College asked to confirm whether SSLC remits submitted in 2019-20 are approved so that these can be implemented or revised.</p>	Dean QA and Curriculum Approval Academic Services
10.	<p>Development of COL: Continue to work with colleagues in COL and across the University to develop mechanisms for tracking the impact</p>	College QA Committee

	of COL provision on further study, in terms of transition, retention, and course outcomes.	
11.	Hybrid Teaching: Ensure implementation of on-campus aspect of hybrid teaching is consistent for semester two courses in CAHSS.	Director ASA
12.	Degree Outcomes: College support for further analysis and reflection on number of outlier programmes with high classification degree outcomes percentages is requested.	Dean QA and Curriculum Approval GASP
13.	EDI Support: College is encouraged to support School initiatives identified through EDI Action Plans.	EDI Committee
14.	Curriculum Review: request for a fully integrated and coordinated approach to the University curricula review, led by the College.	Academic and Student Administration
15.	PT System Review: ongoing College support for a return to the PT system review that has been pushed back due to Covid-19 at the first opportunity.	Dean of Students
16.	Sensitive content: College guidance, perhaps generated by a short-life working group, on the issue of sensitive course content and teaching, restricted by local laws and governmental policy where students are domiciled.	Academic and Student Administration
17.	Support for Health in Social Science provision: College support requested in three areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued support for students (funding, extensions) whose work is delayed by limited access to the NHS. Support for Progression Boards making decisions on students with missing placement hours. Develop a College-wide support structure and pre-enrolment support for articulating students joining from Edinburgh College/the Our Health Programme. 	College Deans Executive

Section 3: Actions identified for the University

No.	Action	Responsible
1.	Centrally Managed Deadlines: support and early information from the University on deadlines, systems and reviews to support local staffing reviews and all related actions such as recruitment (staff), course review and completion of CCAM and DPT records for student recruitment. When setting UG/PGT marking, Boards of Examiners and award timelines, to give greater and more realistic advance consideration to the impacts of home working, hybrid delivery and other current demands on staff time.	Student Administration/Student Systems
2.	ELE Support: Continue to work with the Centre for Open Learning to progress discussions on in-sessional provision and funding with reference to the Curriculum Review.	Senate Education Committee
3.	Learning Technology Support: in order to address the inadequacy of existing learning platforms (e.g., Collaborate, Learn, Media Hopper) embedded university technical support and resource for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of Teams and Zoom into Learn. Licensing for high demand software (including for licensing Miro). 	Information Services Group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to address connectivity issues for most affected students (in halls of residence and abroad). • Platforms and digital resources must be made more accessible to staff and students and issues addressed quickly when raised by staff. • Enhanced support for lecture captioning and subtitling is urgently required. • Revision of Lecture Recording Policy (section 6) to specify minimum retention of 30 months. • Amend the draft Personal Computing Policy to support up to two devices per colleague and provide webcams for all fixed staff workstations. 	
4.	Assessment and Progression Tools (APT): request that the University urgently address the functionality and reliability of APT in Euclid, consulting academic and professional services staff involved in Boards of Examiners. Workarounds involving offline calculations and duplication of effort are not sustainable and must be addressed by investing time, effort, and money in our university systems.	Student Administration/Student Systems
5.	Student communications: Ensure that good quality communications that provide accurate information updates are provided to students in a more timely manner and with input from senior School staff before disseminated.	Head of Internal Communications
6.	Communication and expectation management: University support with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing student expectations that may negatively affect student survey responses; specifically around the 15-day feedback turnaround. • Greater advance notice to Schools of planned communications to students on matters which impact on teaching and assessment. • University Help Services (EdHelp and Finance) must be enhanced. 	Student Administration/Academic Services
7.	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: clear route to University support of initiatives identified in local EDI Action Plans.	University EDI Committee
8.	Local Timetabling: support for timetabling rooms and space for specific provision in Health requested.	Timetabling Unit (TTU)
9.	Staff Wellbeing: Greater recognition and support for staff health and wellbeing and a request for extra resource in areas severely affected by Covid mitigation.	Health and Safety
10.	Estates and Space: HCA and SPS requested that the University address the pressures on their estate (suitability of teaching space and office capacity), which was under strain before Covid-19 and which will be under further strain when an expanded cohort of students returns to campus after the pandemic.	Estates
11.	Help not Hinder: If HNH is considered again for 2020/21, to review and revisit how HNH will apply in cases involving academic misconduct.	Academic Services
12.	Course Enhancement Questionnaires: continued review of CEQs with support for the data in Power BI to be aggregated by subject area.	Student Data and Analytics

13.	Library electronic resources: request for the University to expand its electronic Library collections given the current problems with licenses for textbooks during hybrid teaching. There was also a request for a contingency plan to increase library service resilience (e.g. click and collect hard copy books).	University Library Committee
14.	WP Support: Urgent review of support needed and currently available to improve the experience of WP and care experienced students, and students with caring responsibilities.	Student Recruitment and Admissions (WP)
15.	Attainment Data: request for a full review of the impact of 2019-20 on those groups of students whose negative performance was not addressed by Annex A (e.g., disparities between disabled and non-disabled students).	Governance and Strategic Planning
16.	Special Circumstances and Extensions: support to enhance the new centralised system, reassuring students and reducing the volume of work for Schools.	Student Administration
17.	Academic Misconduct: A review of misconduct cases to consider whether any protected characteristics, fee or WP status, or special circumstances/concession requests correlate with likelihood of referral to SAMO/CAMO.	Academic Services
18.	Covid-19 Impact Survey: request for a survey for PGT students, as was run for UG and PGR to explore particular concerns about the impact of Covid19 on 1-year PGT students, particularly those whose dissertations were seriously disrupted.	Student Data and Analytics
19.	PG Fee Review: request support from the University in varying MSc fee price points, both downwards and upwards, where this is appropriate to the planned offering.	Student Recruitment and Fee Strategy Group (SRFSG)
20.	Attendance and Engagement: Separate engagement (i.e. pedagogical) monitoring from attendance (i.e. immigration) monitoring, placing engagement monitoring under educational governance and developing it using appropriate research and tools (e.g. Learn retention centre) and reducing attendance monitoring to the level necessary to meet legal obligations.	Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC)
21.	University Curriculum Review: guidance for Boards of Studies about the plans for curriculum review – Conveners are reporting an increase in curriculum changes and proposals generated by the move to hybrid and would like to align any new changes with institutional plans.	Vice Principal (Students)/Senate Education Committee
22.	PT System Review: ongoing University support for a return to the PT system review that has been pushed back due to Covid-19 at the first opportunity.	Student Support and Personal Tutoring Review Group
23.	EUSA Support: request for the Students' Association to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline a plan of action for how to address poor results on NSS Student Union question. • Outline formal mechanisms for communicating names of student reps to Schools. 	Students' Association

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH - ANNUAL MONITORING 2019/20
College Report

Guidance:

- An interim process to reflect on the impact of and learning from the Covid-19 outbreak. May also be used to reflect on other aspects of academic standards, student performance and the student learning experience, including the impact of industrial action. Designed to be light touch and work alongside other academic contingency activity.
- Covers all types of credit-bearing provision: undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research, including collaborations. The report may be split by type of provision.
- The report should be **brief** (suggested length of no more than three pages). Use bullet points where possible.
- Reports should not contain information which identifies any individual – [Data Protection Policy](#)
- **Deadline:** Friday 27 November 2020 (completion of the report delegated to College Dean of Quality or equivalent).

Authors: Dr Claire Phillips and Ms Victoria Bennett

1. Reflection on School/Deanery reports

A general summary of School/Deanery reports is that every area of the College has done a tremendous amount of work and shown both advancement and enhancement of Learning and Teaching provision over 2019/20 despite the significant challenges faced by both staff and students, especially since March 2020.

Each School/Deanery faced challenges, some common and some subject-specific.

- There was very rapid development of online L&T. This included clinical years UG to reduce impact of loss of clinical placements (BVM&S, MBChB, Oral Health Sciences). Student feedback on quality, engagement and support has been very positive.
- Another challenge has been the clinical responsibilities of many staff and students (PGT) as part of Covid 19 response. These NHS responsibilities have impacted teaching and assessment roles which at times has put greater pressure on non-Healthcare staff.
- A particular mention should go to the MSc Critical Care team's launch of MOOC 'COVID-19 Critical care' which has enrolled more than 45,000 learners.
- Despite all the challenges the Schools/Deaneries continue to gain recognition, accreditation and re-accreditation from Professional bodies – Oral Health Sciences, Masters in Public Health (MPH) online.
- Given the nature of the provision across the College, Professional and Regulatory Statutory Body (PRSB) and accreditation requirements sit alongside all the QAE work and adaptation to digital teaching and assessment.

It is important to note the amount of progress each area has achieved with actions planned in previous reports despite coping with the impact of the Pandemic on our normal activities. This shows the embedded nature of QAE across the College and also the continuous work on actions throughout the year, ie pre-Covid, rather than actions being an afterthought at the close of the academic year. Some examples are:

- Biomedical Sciences (BMS): analysis of marking criteria and assessment types on spread of marks.
- Clinical Sciences (CS): development of moderation guidelines. (see Actions for CQAEC 20/21).
- Molecular Genetics and Population Health Sciences (MGPHS): community building activity.
- Medical Education (ME): development of early years curriculum and PebblePad App (Pebble Pocket forms) introduced to support supervised assessment reporting.
- Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (R(D)SVS): Work to address CEQ response rates, Global academy work on feedback mechanisms.

Industrial Action - No reported impact on learning and teaching or the Student Experience of pre-Christmas industrial action. Historically the College is usually impacted less by industrial action compared to the other Colleges.

PGR provision - Compared to previous years there was increased inclusion and reflection in School/Deanery reports. College QAE has been working to embed PGR more explicitly in its processes and raise the profile of this area of our provision.

College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (CQAEC) activities 2019/20:

- Demonstrates a collegial atmosphere, growth in QA capacity and awareness across the College (some new DoQ and deputies, new QA committee in MGPHS, Dean QA and Quality Officer membership of UG, PGT and PGR committees etc.).
- Developed a new process for oversight of course approval.
- The review of SSLC remits resulted in convergence of template format and the recognition of PGR-related gaps and discussion on PGR equivalence activity.
- Inter-School/Deanery QA document visibility audit has led to change and enhancement of practice.

QAE more broadly across the College

- Increase in visibility, awareness, appreciation and engagement with QAE at local level. Including QAE process development and sharing of good practice, templates etc.
- Generally stable or improving NSS and PTES results
- Online blog post of cancelled March 2020 CMVM Good Practice Showcase (posted IAD). Planned virtual event for March 2021 - 'Innovation in challenging times'.
- We have a full complement of student reps on all CMVM committees for this 2020/21. Medical School Council (student body) has incorporated a new QAE student lead role.

Common threads/themes:

What positives have emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic?

- Standards maintained – student performance and degree classifications generally compare to previous years. A reflection of the hard work and dedication of staff, both academic and professional services, to delivery of teaching. Reports of varying impacts of Covid No-Detriment Policy; Some report neither positive nor negative impact; others report positive impact, perhaps overly so. No area reported a negative impact of the policy on student performance (see below for comments on broad evaluation of no-detriment policy).
- Maintenance or improvement in student satisfaction with teaching (NSS and PTES) despite the impact of the pandemic. Evidence of improving student experience as an outcome of developments in feedback processes and visibility over recent years.
- Virtual PhD Vivas going very well. Many areas feel these should be retained post-Covid, also likely to increase pool of external examiners including international.
- The expertise and experience of existing (pre-Covid) online programme support (academic and professional services staff) was acknowledged, valued and crucial for those moving online at the start of the pandemic. There was extensive support from digital education units and others for design for hybrid delivery across Schools/Deaneries.
- Work to review assessment criteria and assessment methods across the College. Outcome in one Deanery the suggestion that 24hour open-book assessments, introduced during Covid, be retained rather than return to closed-book essay assessment.
- Numerous successful online teaching methods introduced during pivot will be maintained in many areas where appropriate.

What things have been exacerbated and brought into sharper focus that need to be addressed

- Pressure on all staff during the pandemic – teaching and assessment design, delivery, student support, academic administration across all provision. Staff in all areas were already experiencing increased pressures of workload and dealing with increased student numbers prior to March 2020. There is concern in all areas of staff resilience and lack of opportunity to take a break.
- PGT – ongoing difficulties in recruiting teaching staff, particularly in the context of high PGT student recruitment (issues in post-approval and understaffing). Allied concerns re maintaining quality and standards in context of this growth
- Although started in 2020/21 this is included in this report. Strong, widespread concerns about the new Extensions and Special Circumstances service. In particular the resulting increase in workload for staff in local areas and the long delays for students. Most areas question the introduction of the partial system, mid semester, during the Pandemic and show frustration that some anticipated concerns expressed during development consultation are being realised. (See actions requested of University).

Lessons learnt

- Current processes of BoE procedures and decision-making worked well for the appropriate consideration of impact (Covid and industrial action) and application of No-Detriment policy.
- Local Digital Education Units are valued highly by colleagues. A good time to review future needs of L&T with a view to potential enhancement and expansion of these units.
- Beware of setting precedents for the future (eg PhD students – expectation that they will get extension (non-COVID reasons) if they ask for it).
- Changes to teaching and assessment – many positives to be retained but review of purpose and outcome to ensure not change by stealth or inertia.
- Good communication with students has been a clear thread. Regular, tailored, relevant and local. Local activities to address student concerns through year group discussion forums and other methods have shown greatly enhanced student engagement with the student voice
- More than one area reported that UG students welcomed structure and daily timetable of activities during digital delivery.

Reflection in coming months and years

It will be important to track the performance of students over the coming 1-2 years to identify any longer-term impacts – all provision.

2. Actions

Actions for CQAEC next year (2020/21).

- Work planned on moderation guidance and sharing of practice across the College
- Last year's PGR actions to continue
- Work planned to enhance support for reps on college committees and enhance online student representation
- Gather updates from College committees on **Actions requested of the College** which are out-with the remit of CQAEC.

Actions requested of the College: not directly within CQAEC remit but other College groups.

The CQAEC will discuss these to determine where these requested actions should be directed.

- Staff numbers – academic and professional services. A year on year concern and significantly exacerbated now:
 - Rise in student numbers needs to be matched by an increase in staff numbers – UG and PGT.
 - Provision of sufficient teaching spaces and clinical placements.

- Review capacity required to grow the programme while retaining the quality of educational experience that it is known for. Follow-up on status of recommendations made in the PGT report by Simon Horrocks.
- Look at School/College admissions support in the light of anticipated increased load in coming year.
- A focus on staff welfare and support, especially mental health and well-being.
- Consider streamlining/modifying PGT programme/(course) handbook template.
- Consider a College registry for PhD students and post-docs to express an interest in teaching thus helping people find opportunities – similar to the Talent register.
- Support, at university level, the desire for MSc Programmes to Offer an all-taught structure in the final year.
- Look into the feasibility and benefits of a College MSc project ethical review board as a shared resource across the College.
- Reduce College level requests to programme staff where possible - added pressure to staff.
- PGR – guidance on separating academic and support provision to students (College PPR recommendation).

Actions request of the University (key themes identified from School/Deanery reports and any additional actions identified by the College):

- An increase focus on staff welfare and support, especially mental health and well-being.
- Consider processes to enhance the co-ordination of requests for information/data from central university to reduce workload in local areas.
- A commitment to protect staffing levels for those involved in delivering teaching and supporting students. Uncertainty about post replacement is adding to degree of stress among staff.
- Review of the new centralised Extensions and Special Circumstance (ESC) service with a view to addressing the impact of increased workloads for staff locally and student experience currently being experienced.
- Survey fatigue. With the advent of Pulse Surveys, whilst acknowledging their purpose, there is concern that this may lead to survey fatigue among our students and potentially impact on highly valued responses to more locally-gathered student feedback (MCF, CEQ, SSLC meetings (some student reps survey their classmates for these)). Any reduction in course- and programme-level feedback could hamper our ability to improve our courses.
- Review guidance to facilitate the ability of MSc Programmes to Offer an all-taught structure in the final year (also included in College action request).
- Careful consideration of external messaging to avoid the implication that online or hybrid models are inferior to in-person, on campus approaches for learning and teaching.
- Consider a broad (university-level) reflection on No-detriment policy including any impact/unintended consequences which may result in an uplift of awards. Provision of data: content, availability, granularity. Whilst acknowledging the welcome progress with data provision:
 - Schools/Deaneries have access to less of the student survey responses. There is no information from courses with fewer than 10 responses. Applies to many of our courses.
 - The course mark apps only provide average course mark and pass rate.
 - Demographic data is limited in granularity. Restricting ethnicity to “BAME” and “white” is likely to miss lots of information due to differences in attainment between groups within BAME grouping. More detailed statistics would be of real benefit.
 - PTES free-text responses are not specific to programme. Data for online and on-campus programmes separately and MSc by research under taught regulations as well as standard taught MScs would assist with local interpretation and planning.

1. Reflection on School/Deanery reports

All Schools worked incredibly hard to address the challenges posed by Covid-19, taking particular care to maintain high quality academic provision during the pivot to online learning and teaching and assessment. We echo in this Report the College Learning and Teaching Committee's recognition of, and thanks for, the significant efforts of academic and professional services colleagues in this complex and demanding environment.

1. Update on Progress from Previous QA Reports

Unsurprisingly, many schools were unable to progress actions identified in the previous year's QA Reports due to the impact of Covid-19. This being said, we note that the following developments have taken place and congratulate schools for their ability to progress actions in a complex year:

- Biological Sciences completed all identified actions relating to PGR activity from the previous year's report, except requiring compulsory attendance at the school Ethics Day which was cancelled due to Covid-19 and roll-out of Charlie Waller Trust training to PGR student/staff members.
- Chemistry completed its move to a common structure for in-house, study abroad and industrial MChem students, with all streams now completing final year research projects in their chosen location which has been positively received by students. The School also increased the duration of PhD stipend from 3 years to 3.5 years, bringing it in line with other Schools in the College, which will allow students 3 full years to spend doing lab work, with a further 6 months to write up their thesis full-time.
- Engineering accelerated its curriculum review, in consultation with professional bodies and the College Curriculum Approval Board, as Covid-19 and the move to hybrid teaching presented an opportunity to accelerate this work.
- GeoSciences created new social space in the Grant Building for students, and began using teaching panels as part of academic recruitment activities. We also note the School's use of Student Chairs in the Student-Staff Liaison Committee, and the PTAS project that is investigating the experiences of students entering the University from Widening Participation (WP) Backgrounds, with the aim of enhancing support offered to WP students.
- Informatics' PTES overall satisfaction score was 14% up on the previous year. The school attributes this to a lower intake in 2019/20 at 270 students, compared to over 400 students in 2018/19, a figure the School considered to be unsustainable.
- Mathematics refined its moderation policies for summative coursework, and has implemented a moderation form which provides sufficient detail to allow full scrutiny by External Examiners.
- Physics and Astronomy has updated its Careers and Study Abroad Wiki to reflect the Careers Compass Format, and is working with the Careers Service to update a regular blog and provide regular information to students on career fairs, alumni Q&A and other careers-related

information. The School also addressed specific issues arising in the Introduction to Condensed Matter Physics course by changing the syllabus, which has improved student feedback and satisfaction dramatically, with a positive impact on pass rates. We also note the good practice in the School in supporting WP students to engage with post-offer visit days and the care taken around induction and support of the WP cohort.

2. Responses to Covid-19

All schools reflected on the rapid response to Covid-19 as requested.

Good Practice

- All schools reflected on their prioritisation of communications with students during the pivot to online delivery at the end of Semester 2, which has clearly been appreciated by students. Good practice included the provision of town hall meetings, newsletters and bulletins, online drop-in sessions and Q&A sessions, and regular circulation of FAQ answers. We commend schools for their focus on reassuring students and actively promoting a personable approach to student support.
- All schools actively reviewed their delivery in advance of the 20/21 academic year with a view to pivoting to hybrid and minimising the negative academic impact of the situation, and there is clear evidence that this encouraged strong reflection on pedagogy, as colleagues worked out the best way to deliver learning and teaching in a hybrid format. In some schools such as Engineering this led to accelerated introduction of curriculum developments that had been intended for implementation over a longer timescale; in some such as Informatics it led to a rationalisation to ensure resilience of delivery in staffing of compulsory courses.
- Discussions are actively underway via the College's Planning for Curriculum Review (PCR) Group to learn lessons from the situation and consider how they will affect future learning, teaching and assessment; and furthermore how this can feed into the University-wide curriculum review. Schools have indicated they are deeply reflecting on future provision; for example Chemistry reported that the move to open book examinations worked surprisingly well, inducing a deep rethink of future examination policy.
- Several schools reflected on, and we have observed as a College, a welcome climate of openness, inclusivity and a willingness to work together to tackle common challenges. Most schools introduced working groups to tackle challenges around structure, delivery and assessment; and good practice included the introduction of teaching cafés, bespoke workshops, discussion boards, School Forums, and reinvigorated teaching resources to enable colleagues to reflect on provision. At College level, schools proactively engaged with Forums (Directors of Teaching, Student Support) and the College's Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Project which enabled coordination over aspects of the pivot to hybrid delivery and allowed quick communication and escalation of issues.
- We particularly note the School of Mathematics' employment of Honours UG and PGR students in supporting the transition to hybrid delivery by providing support to Course Organisers in development of materials. The School has indicated it would like to look at how this model can be employed in future to the mutual benefit of staff and students.
- Delivery of lab-based courses and access to labs for postgraduate research activity faced significant challenges, firstly because of lab closures, and subsequently due to social distancing requirements in labs. Schools worked closely with PGR students to support continuation of non-lab-based elements of their work during lockdown, but unsurprisingly, all

Schools note this had an impact on PGR student progress with many students accessing extensions. There are ongoing concerns regarding the impacts on progression and student mental health as a result.

- Post-lockdown, Schools prioritised the reintroduction of PGR students into lab environments and in relation to 20/21 taught provision, it has been necessary for all schools to prioritise lab teaching to deliver core content. This has been challenging in the context of hybrid delivery and we commend schools for their innovative approach to tackling this issue – for example in Physics, where ‘remote students could still take part in lab work by being paired with a student in the lab: the remote student was able to connect to the Raspberry Pi computer used in the lab, writing and executing their own code to collect data using the equipment assembled by their partner.’
- Schools demonstrated significant flexibility and innovative practice in accommodating industrial placements and fieldwork, or organising desk-based research alternatives where such activity could not be accommodated. Almost all UK-based industrial placements in Chemistry were honoured with industrial partners working hard to facilitate placements in difficult circumstances. In terms of field trips, significant steps were taken by GeoSciences and Biological Sciences to find local alternatives to trips that would have been further afield. Where an alternative field trip experience could not be provided, online resources and experiences were developed.

3. Outstanding Issues and Learning Points

- Lab access remains a challenge due to social distancing requirements, and some schools such as Engineering and Chemistry are actively reviewing the delivery of programme learning outcomes to ensure that students do not ultimately miss out on core outcomes. We expect this will require some further structural changes to programmes in 21/22 to ensure accreditation requirements are fully met.
- The stability of the University’s IT infrastructure and the reliability and suitability of learning platforms, along with integration of products such as Teams, Zoom, Piazza, etc., remain a concern for all Schools.
- There is ongoing concern at the impact of the pandemic on early stage PhD students – many feel that they will need extensions due to significant disruption to progress this year, but there is likely to be a lack of funding in this area by research councils. Many schools are already looking at offering in-house funding where such extensions are required.
- Significant thought has been given to how to ensure academic integrity in the hybrid context and the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) has worked with the CAMOs from the other Colleges to make a series of recommendations in this area, including provision of guidance around affirmation meetings.
- There was, ultimately, one delay in relation to accreditation activity – the Engineering JBM was delayed until April 2021 because of Covid-19 restrictions.
- Staff workload, resilience and morale remains a concern, with evening and weekend working common, for staff of all types and at all grades, with a sense that it is very difficult to deprioritise any tasks as there is a feeling that everything is urgent and important, exacerbated by late policy changes (e.g. by Government). We have also particular pressure on office bearer roles such as Directors of Teaching, DSTI Programme Director, etc. We have

regularly highlighted these concerns in Barometer Reports and feedback to the ART RSAS/DCR groups, but feel it is also important to note this ongoing concern in this QA Report.

4. Attainment and Progression

Schools were asked to reflect on attainment and progression in the context of Covid-19.

- Biological Sciences noted that the No Detriment (ND) rule did not appear to have had any effect on attainment or progression for undergraduate students. It was noted that the ND rule appeared to have favoured overseas and RUK female students, but there was no clear explanation as to why.
- Chemistry reported an increase in attainment in 2020, with 93% high degree classifications, up from 87% in the previous year. This could partly be attributed to the ND rule, with BSc Hons students benefitting due to research project marks largely becoming the baseline for this cohort. MChem students showed improved performance but this was difficult to attribute to ND as the final year consists of a research project.
- Engineering reported a modest increase in the award of 1st class and 2.1. For PGT distinctions in dissertations were slightly increased.
- GeoSciences - no specific observations were made in relation to attainment and progression as a result of Covid-19.
- Informatics noted an increase in the percentage of high degree classifications which was attributed to Annex A; however it was noted that ND appeared to benefit students at programme level rather than for specific courses, as there was no significant increase in average course marks based on previous years. The School commented that with regard to the more general trend in high degrees awarded over recent years, it believes that degree classifications are appropriate for the quality of students in the School and are supported by External Examiners in this view.
- Mathematics reported that the ND policy undoubtedly buoyed classifications in 2019-20, with an increase by 11% in the number of 1st class degrees awarded. Given the already high baseline in the School, Mathematics will actively explore options for redressing that increase in the coming year, in particular emphasising the consistent and robust implementation of existing policies on moderation and scaling.
- Physics & Astronomy – no specific observations were made in relation to attainment and progression as a result of Covid-19.
- Across the College, the progression of Scottish students regardless of gender remains a significant concern across undergraduate programmes, and this is an area we wish to explore further. In one School the differential attainment between Scottish and RUK students in year 1 was highlighted at ~14%. Across the College it is ~12%. The gap narrows to <10% in year 2 and is closed by year 3. Note this trend is mirrored in the other Colleges but less developed. We also wish to explore further issues relating to progression attainment of WP students, and those from BAME backgrounds.

5. Other observations

- There is a significant amount of ongoing curriculum development across the College, with developments underway in Mathematics, Informatics, Engineering, GeoSciences, Biological Sciences and Physics and Astronomy. We note these developments – many of

which have been planned for some time - are taking place in the broader context of University-wide Curriculum Review, and with the introduction of the College's PCR Group we hope to encourage alignment to avoid requirements for significant re-design.

- Multiple schools mentioned the lack of clarity in terms of future plans for the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review.
- Based on the School Reports and our discussions with Directors of Quality, we believe there is further work that could take place to better embed the Director of Quality Roles and reports within School governance structures. This draws on the Good Practice document related to the Director of Quality role shared by the Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture in 2019.

6. Actions

Actions identified for the College:

- 1) Progression and classification rates - investigate reasons for differences in the Scottish student cohort and identify strategy to close differential attainment based on ethnicity between all groups.
Assigned to: Dean of Learning and Teaching, College of Science and Engineering
- 2) EDI and Decolonising the Curriculum – learning from best practice in CAHSS and CMVM (Deanery of Biomedical Sciences) embed consideration of EDI in Curriculum Approval Processes. Link more closely with work being carried out by University-level committee on decolonising the curriculum (led by Rowena Arshad).
- 3) Need for continued development/ clarification of preferred online learning platforms. Ongoing issues around GradeScope implementation, reliability of Collaborate and TopHat, integration of MS Teams and/or Zoom, captioning issues, etc. Teaching tools need to be fairly stable and robust during the semester without regular changes to interface and behaviour.
Assigned to: College IT Engagement and Strategy Manager / College Library and Information Strategy Committee **and University**
- 4) Action for College Admissions – improve flow of information to schools relating to WP recruitment, so that improved support can be identified and provided for students joining the University with a WP background.
Assigned to: CSE Head of Recruitment and Admissions
- 5) Clarify processes around collaboration and exchange due diligence and approval.
Assigned to: Academic Affairs Team, Edinburgh Global, Governance and Strategic Planning, Academic Services, Study and Work Away Service.
- 6) Develop and disseminate PGR MScR Marking and Assessment Guidance.
Assigned to: PGR Team, Doctoral College

Actions requested of the University (key themes identified from School/Deanery reports and any additional actions identified by the College):

- 1) Clarity is required over the plans for implementation of recommendations from the Personal Tutor and Student Support Review, including timescale for intended implementation.
- 2) Provision of further training in mental health support for student support teams, to enable them to deal with School-level mental health support needs (e.g. via named contacts).
- 3) Need for improved channels of communication on key decisions coming out of core governance structures.
- 4) Move forward improvements associated with PGR annual review process as identified via SEP.
- 5) Establish processes around the Student Systems Partnership Prioritisation Board to enable more visible prioritisation of EUCLID Developments.
- 6) Prioritise developments to the built environment where quality of estate is poor (e.g. Engineering, Biology, GeoSciences). The delay in building projects are negatively impacting student recruitment and experience. Consideration of transport options for KB campus and reinstatement of the shuttle bus are a priority for students accessing campus.

Professor Linda Kirstein, Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, CSE
Heather Tracey, Deputy Head of Academic Affairs, CSE
10 December 2020

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

MOOCs
Annual Update on the Portfolio

Executive Summary

The MOOC strategy group approved 8 applications in May 2019, and a further course was approved by email in November 2019 (In Silico Breeding). Three of these courses were launched in the first half of 2020 (Data Ethics, AI and Responsible Innovation; COVID-19 Critical Care: Understanding and Application; Making Blended Education Work), two are in their final stages of development (Christian-Muslim Relations: History, Scripture, Theology, Politics; Chronic Respiratory Diseases in Primary Care Settings) and will launch in early 2021, one is on hold (In Silico Breeding) and three were withdrawn due to funding and resourcing issues relating to Covid-19 (Tackling Violence Against Children; Data Literacy in GeoSciences; Social Anthropology).

As with other areas of University activity, Covid-19 has had an impact on our activities. Early in the pandemic Learning, Teaching, and Web Services were able to help the Critical Care team in MVM respond to a global shortage in health professionals trained to work in critical care settings by redeveloping teaching materials from an online masters degree into a MOOC delivered on FutureLearn. The course was launched in early April and rapidly achieved 46,138 enrolments worldwide, filling an essential gap in training for frontline workers.

Over the summer, in response shift to hybrid teaching and the need to support new students with the information and study skills they would need for this new way of learning in higher education we delivered 5 new student-facing courses on Learn to help our new and returning students transition to hybrid teaching. These courses were designed to scale, making them available as cross-cutting, institution-wide courses for all students.

We anticipate capacity to develop new courses in early 2021 and will work with the MOOC strategy group to align with emerging adaptation and renewal strategies.

How does this align with the University/Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

In the last year MOOCs have had direct links to University strategies including;

- Data Driven Innovation: offering pathways into using data for development and growth
- Sustainability: Tackling climate change and sustainable food production

- Public Engagement for Research: openly communicating research outputs, and
- Widening Participation: encouraging a culture of lifelong learning and offering accessible education

The global pandemic has shifted many of the University's strategic plans and priorities, in April 2020 the MOOC "*COVID-19 Critical Care: Understanding and Application*" was rapidly produced to facilitate sharing of resources as part of the University's response to the global pandemic. The fact that the materials have been developed in conjunction with the OER service in ISG ensures that we are able to support the university's strategic goals in delivering open educational resources easily, across global platforms.

Looking forward, the MOOC Strategy Group will be asked to consider how MOOCs can support the University's adaption and renewal work. Recommendations will include 1) closer alignment between MOOCs and online masters programmes, 2) enabling opportunities for recruitment and sustainable repurposing of teaching materials and resources and 3) closer alignment of MOOC production to the work being done in curriculum review and values-based education in the Edinburgh offer, 4) contribution to the global demand for staff/faculty development support for online learning through the sharing of an Edinburgh model for online teaching.

MOOCs continue to be a recruitment tool which gives the University a visible and high quality presence on global platforms where learners search for online courses. The numbers of people worldwide who have been searching for online learning during the global pandemic lockdown has increased hugely. Our data notes that where Edinburgh PG students respond to the survey question "where did you first hear about this degree" around 1% of students across all online masters degrees cite "via MOOC/free online course". This percentage rises significantly where MOOCs are closely aligned to a masters programmes, for example as high as 10% for applicants to the online philosophy masters. This is an area of recruitment activity which is ripe for further investment.

The LTW teams continue to work with academic colleagues to get the best value for money and return on investment from MOOC materials. The Fundamentals of Music Theory MOOC continues to be a popular course running on Coursera. The academic team have already repurposed the core materials of the course into a 20 credit level 7 foundation course for UG applicants to the music programme who do not have A pass marks at A-Level or Advanced Higher (or have passed the MOOC). The team also have a pending student experience grant application proposal to further repurpose the materials as an eBook. This is an excellent example of how the investment in high quality teaching materials can be maximized by ensuring activities are aligned. The course 'Learning for Sustainability: Developing a Personal Ethic', which has not run since 2015 is being updated and will be relaunched on FutureLearn soon.

Globally there has been an increased interest in online education and the demand has continued for flexible lifelong learning that supports changes in the workplace. Discussions about microcredentialling continue at national level within the SFC and internationally via UNA Europa. To enable this flexibility there is growing interest in both stand-alone for-credit courses and microcredentials. The idea of bundling short courses to provide micro-programmes and microcredentials is something each of our MOOC platform partners are working on, developing new products that work for both universities and the lifelong learner. We have been working with partners on a number of experiments in this area, keeping Edinburgh at the forefront of this innovation.

We prioritised linguistic accessibility during the production of 'Nitrogen: A Global Challenge' MOOC on edX. To truly make an impact, the course would have to reach practitioners whose daily work is directly affected by nitrogen, such as farmers around the world. One of the goals of team is to create translations and it is currently available in seven languages (English, Hindi, Sinhalese, Urdu, Nepalese, Dari, and Hungarian) three more translations (Bengali, Maldivian and Dzonghka) are on the way. In future, we plan to translate the course to several other major world languages such as Spanish and Chinese to cover the four most spoken languages of the world (English, Hindi, Spanish and Chinese).

In 2019 the University's Business School launched its first credited microcredential, a MicroMasters in Predictive Analytics, on edX as part of Distance Learning at Scale (DLAS) programme. In October 2020 the Business School launched a further Professional Certificate in Marketing Fundamentals, a not-for-credit, two course CPD programme also delivered on edX. We are currently working with the Vet School to bundle three existing MOOCs as a 'Specialisation' on Coursera (also not-for-credit), with a launch date early in the first half of next year. These experiments will provide valuable feedback on the demand for different types of microcredentials on our different partner platforms, helping the University to make informed decisions for targeted future activities.

Appendix 1 MOOC Portfolio Overview, provides detailed statistics of the MOOC Portfolio enrolments and certificates along with details of new MOOCs and those currently in production.

Action requested

SQAC is invited to review the information in the accompanying executive summary, which includes details about the current MOOCs and their learner numbers. The online course production team in ISG would be pleased to answer any questions about MOOCs and strategic priorities.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

Academic Services are in the process of integrating, or mainstreaming, the University position around online courses and MOOCs into policy covering the delivery of all University programmes and courses. This is designed to cover

processes not only new types of online, for-credit programmes, such as Distance Learning at Scale (DLAS), and MOOCs, but also new not-for-credit offerings such as Executive Education.

Resource/Risk/Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

MOOCs are now fully costed and Information Services Group have developed costing models for courses and programmes at varying levels. These models are based on prior experience of delivering MOOCs and have factored in new approaches aiming to standardise and increase efficiency in production tasks.

2. Risk assessment

In its current form, MOOC activity is low risk for the University, being part of an ongoing service offered to support Schools and Colleges in online learning and research dissemination.

3. Equality and Diversity

There are no equality Impacts arising from this paper.

4. Freedom of information

The paper is **open**

Key words

MOOC, massive open online courses, ODL, OER, online distance learning, global, Adaptation and Renewal, local, UN Sustainable development goals, curriculum review, recruitment, study support.

Originator of the paper

Melissa Highton

Director of Learning, Teaching & Web Services & Assistant Principal Online Learning
2 December 2020

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

Analysis of the Impact of No Detriment Policy

Description of paper

1. Provides information on and analysis of the outcomes of the University's "no detriment" policy implemented for taught programmes in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee is asked to consider the information presented in the paper and identify any action.

Background and context

3. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and taking account of guidance from sector bodies and organisations, the University made changes to teaching and assessment and implemented a "no detriment" policy to take account of the profound impact of the pandemic on students.

Discussion

4. The paper is presented in three parts:
 - Part 1 outlines the University's response to the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to assessment, including the "no detriment" policy.
 - Part 2 provides an analysis of External Examiner Reporting System comments on undergraduate reports for 2019/20.
 - Part 3 provides an analysis of degree classifications (both undergraduate and taught postgraduate) in 2019/20. The paper doesn't include a detailed analysis of course marks; ongoing analysis of the impact of no detriment on course marks that feed into future degree classification outcomes is being taken forward in annual quality monitoring.

Resource implications

5. Further analysis of the differential levels of attainment between student groups for first class degrees will have resource implications. No further resource implications are evident in the paper, however, there may be implications for annual monitoring, review and reporting processes.

Risk management

6. The intention of the policy was to mitigate the risk to student performance arising from the impact of Covid-19, whilst also minimising the impact on the student experience and assuring academic standards. Any future similar policy should take account of potential risks or unintended consequences arising from the policy, especially in relation to equality and diversity.

Equality & diversity

7. The Part 3 degree classification analysis notes:

- Some of the key attainment gaps (BAME and Widening Participation) appear to have narrowed when looking at high classification awards however gaps have widened (to a greater extent) for first class awards
- More analysis is required to try and understand what has driven the differential levels of attainment between student groups for first class degrees

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

8. The Committee is asked to consider these aspects as part of their discussions. The paper and any outcomes will be shared with Senate Academic Policy and Regulations Committee and the Adaptation and Renewal Team. The Committee will consider sector benchmarked degree classification data as usual at its April meeting.

Author

**Dr Adam Bunni and Susan Hunter
(Academic Services) and Paula
Webster (Student Analytics, Insights
and Modelling)**
December 2020

Presenter

Professor Tina Harrison
Assistant Principal Academic Standards
and Quality Assurance
December 2020

Freedom of Information

Open

Part 1 – University response to Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic

In responding to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic upon taught programmes at the University, we took account of guidance provided by sector bodies such as the QAA, as well as harnessing the experience of other institutions via sector organisations such as Universities UK, Universities Scotland, and the Russell Group. Our initial response to the pandemic with regard to teaching and learning was led by an Academic Contingency Group with membership from each of the University's Colleges, the Students' Association, and relevant support departments. Where the group proposed significant changes which would impact upon the University's academic policies and regulations, these were considered and approved by Academic Policy and Regulations Committee.

Online teaching

As the UK moved towards social distancing and ultimately lockdown measures, the University transitioned to an online-only mode of delivery for teaching for the latter part of Semester 2. Teaching material was delivered remotely, primarily asynchronously. The focus was not on replicating like-for-like the teaching contact students would have experienced on campus, but on providing the material needed to support students in meeting the learning outcomes for their courses.

Assessment

Given the considerable additional burden this placed on academic and professional services staff, we made some pragmatic changes to assessment, in order to focus efforts on students at crucial stages of their programmes. Where final examinations had been scheduled on courses for students at the pre-Honours stages of undergraduate programmes (SCQF levels 7 and 8), these were cancelled wherever course outcomes could be determined based on completed in-course assessment. For students at Honours stages of undergraduate programmes (SCQF levels 9 and 10), and on postgraduate Master's programmes, scheduled examinations were replaced either with additional coursework assessment, or "take-home", open-book examinations. Open-book examinations were offered for a 48-hour period, with the exception of those in some, primarily quantitative subject areas, where a shorter period (two hours, with an additional hour for submission of work) was offered in order to mitigate the risk of students finding solutions to questions online.

"No detriment" and Annex A

In order to take account of the profound impact of the pandemic upon students' ability to study as they would normally, we provided assurances to students that their assessments undertaken during the pandemic would not have a detrimental impact on their programme outcomes. We produced detailed guidance for Boards of Examiners ("Annex A"), which provided them with a range of options to ensure that the impact of the pandemic on students' degree outcomes was mitigated appropriately, while maintaining the integrity of our awards. Annex A focussed primarily on students in the Honours years of undergraduate programmes, and on postgraduate taught programmes. The key elements of the approach were:

For courses

- Boards of Examiners should seek to disregard components of assessment affected by the pandemic from course outcomes, where this was compatible with students demonstrating learning outcomes for the course and it would be to a student's benefit;

- For primarily pre-Honours courses, where cancelled assessment made it impossible to assign a secure mark to students against relevant learning outcomes, Boards of Examiners were empowered to assign a Pass or Fail result only;

For programmes

- Boards of Examiners were empowered to award more than the usual volume of credit on aggregate for failed courses, based on performance in other courses; for example, students in Honours years or on PGT Master's programmes could be awarded up to 60 credits on aggregate, as opposed to the usual 40 credits; exceptionally, students in pre-Honours years could be awarded up to 40 credits on aggregate for courses not considered "core" to a student's programme;
- Where it was not possible to disregard components of assessment affected by the pandemic in deriving course marks, Boards should remove these course marks from the average used for classification, progression, or award purposes, where it would be to the student's benefit;
- Where a student's final average for classification purposes landed in a borderline (i.e. up to two percentage points below a boundary), the Board could take account of the impact of the pandemic and apply the higher class of award, if it considered this appropriate;
- Students on PGT Master's programmes were permitted to progress from the taught component where they had been awarded credit for the full 120-credits worth of courses, achieved marks of 50% in at least 60 credits of courses (as opposed to the usual 80 credits), and achieved an average of 50% in any courses not discounted due to the impact of the pandemic.

Special Circumstances

The provisions of Annex A were designed to take account of the general impact of the Covid-19 pandemic upon students, but there were still likely to be situations where students suffered a unique impact, which warranted specific consideration. In view of this, the University agreed an extension to the grounds for applying under the special circumstances process, including grounds such as the impact of being required to undertake more paid work than usual as a key worker. The requirements for evidence to support applications were also relaxed to take account of the fact that medical documentation would be much more difficult to obtain than usual.

Summary

Higher education institutions took a similar approach to assessment in 2019/20, with most incorporating a "no detriment" policy regarding assessments undertaken during the pandemic. We expected that this would have a positive impact on degree outcomes, but the sector regarded this as acceptable, given that the alternative was to unreasonably penalise students in their degree outcomes due to the impact of Covid-19. Our approach was taken in line with guidance from sector bodies and organisations.

Classification is always based on an aggregation of course marks, which are themselves an aggregation of assessment marks, and no individual assessment mark was inflated. No student will have been awarded a specific classification where they had not demonstrated a significant volume of performance at that level.

Part 2 – Analysis of External Examiner Reporting System comments on undergraduate reports for 2019/20

- External Examiners were satisfied with the Academic Standards (130 of 131 entries) 99%; and with the Assessment Process (349 of 357 entries) 98%.
- In total, there were 36 instances where External Examiner specifically identified the no detriment policy in positive comments, that is 2.5% of the total entries and 8% of the total Covid-19 related entries. A further 5 were negative or neutral with no commonality and therefore, while important to note, do not represent a significant proportion of the overall comments.
- A selection of some positive comments for you to choose from for adding to the report:
 - “I thought the policy this year of "no detriment" to students on account of the COVID-19 pandemic was a particularly honorable way of dealing with the situation”
 - “The decision to conduct at-home assessments on a non-detrimental basis appeared to have been taken with careful consideration of the welfare of staff and students, maintaining educational standards, quality control and the attainment of learning outcomes.”
 - “I'm pleased to report that the sensible 'no detriment' policy in particular was systematically and fairly applied”
 - “The no detriment policy adopted by the university in response to Covid-19 was welcome, but mostly not required which was encouraging.”
- Overall, External Examiners appeared confident that the no detriment policy was consistently and fairly applied and that no students were disadvantaged. They noted that there was an increased workload and complexity in considering marks under no detriment, but that consideration was carefully undertaken by Boards of Examiners.

Part 3 – No Detriment and Degree Classifications

Executive summary:

- Some Schools have seen increases in the proportion of undergraduate students achieving a first class or upper second class degree however at a University level the increase is modest
- The proportion of students achieving a first class degree has increased – this trend should be benchmarked when sector data are released
- Some of the key attainment gaps (BAME and Widening Participation) appear to have narrowed when looking at high classification awards however gaps have widened (to a greater extent) for first class awards
- More analysis is required to try and understand what has driven the differential levels of attainment between student groups for first class degrees

Introduction

This paper provides an analysis of degree classifications (both undergraduate and taught postgraduate) in the 2019/20 academic year. As a result of the pivot to online learning in Semester Two of 2019/20 the University implemented a 'No Detriment' policy to ensure that no students were disadvantaged as a result of the change.

The narrative in this paper highlights key findings but full data tables are provided in the Appendix.

Undergraduate high classification awards

There was a small increase in the proportion of undergraduate students who were awarded a first or upper second class degree between 2018/19 and 2019/20 (from 89.8% to 92.2%). This masks some bigger shifts at School level:

Table 1 - % High classification awards by School

School	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
MED	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0
VET	100.0	99.4	99.3	0.0
LLC	93.2	96.5	98.0	1.5
HEA	89.2	97.6	97.3	-0.3
BUS	90.9	92.4	95.4	3.0
BMS	93.1	97.2	94.9	-2.2
PPLS	93.8	94.9	94.9	0.0
HCA	88.9	90.7	94.0	3.3
CHE	86.3	86.6	93.2	6.6
SPS	89.3	90.1	92.9	2.8
ECO	87.4	84.9	91.5	6.6
MAT	85.8	87.4	91.2	3.8
LAW	86.3	91.1	90.7	-0.4
DIV	96.5	98.6	89.8	-8.9
GEO	88.0	85.8	89.0	3.2
INF	88.4	84.5	89.0	4.5
ECA	84.6	86.4	88.5	2.1
BIO	79.3	88.2	88.5	0.2
ENG	85.9	84.3	88.0	3.6
PHY	81.2	81.1	87.3	6.2
EDU	78.4	75.4	84.7	9.3
CSE	65.0	80.0	73.9	-6.1

School	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
Edinburgh	88.7	89.8	92.2	2.4

Care needs to be taken with these year on year comparisons - whilst Divinity have seen a large decrease in the proportion of high classification degrees awarded the number of students awarded has also decreased and the population is small so larger changes in proportions may not be statistically significant. Moray House School of Education and Sport experienced the greatest increase in the proportion of firsts and upper second class degrees awarded however the School has awarded fewer high classification undergraduate degrees than other Schools in the past and awards fewer high classification degrees than other comparative Russell Group institutions.

The majority of the Schools that saw increases in the proportion of high classification degrees awarded were in the College of Science and Engineering.

The attainment gap between male and female students has increased (from 4.2 percentage points to 5.3 percentage points) in 2019/20. It is unclear what has driven this increase and more analysis needs to be undertaken to investigate this.

A higher proportion of Widening Participation students gained a first or upper second class degree in 2019/20 than in 2018/19 (from 87.9% to 91.0%). This gain has helped to close the gap in attainment between students from widening participation backgrounds and those not from widening participation backgrounds but the gap remains at five percentage points.

The BAME attainment gap also appears to have reduced from 5.4 percentage points to 2.6 percentage points. More detailed analysis needs to be done to understand the relationship between this change and the change in the widening participation attainment gaps and the variance at School level.

Undergraduate first class awards¹

In 2019/20 Edinburgh awarded 43.7% of students with a first class degree. This is an increase of 12 percentage points since the previous year.

Table 2 % First class awards by School

School	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
MAT	56.0	54.3	66.9	12.6
CHE	37.9	38.4	63.2	24.9
INF	65.9	60.0	62.6	2.6
LLC	35.2	37.9	59.4	21.5
HEA	37.8	43.9	54.1	10.2
PHY	35.0	37.8	51.7	13.9
PPLS	34.4	36.3	48.8	12.5
ECA	33.7	32.3	46.6	14.3
BUS	30.5	31.1	43.1	12.0
ECO	29.5	26.7	42.9	16.1
HCA	19.9	24.7	41.3	16.6
LAW	26.8	20.6	37.9	17.3

¹ All analysis of first class awards excludes students on Medicine (MBChB) and Clinical Veterinary Medicine (BMVS). First class awards include students who achieved distinctions on some awards.

School	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
SPS	27.2	24.7	37.4	12.7
ENG	26.6	26.4	36.9	10.5
BMS	26.2	32.4	35.6	3.2
BIO	31.1	35.3	33.7	-1.6
DIV	21.2	16.2	32.7	16.4
GEO	20.5	28.0	29.4	1.5
EDU	20.4	19.5	24.6	5.2
CSE	10.0	20.0	8.7	-11.3
Edinburgh	31.0	31.6	43.7	12.2

The majority of Schools awarded more first class degrees and increases were over 10 percentage points.

Whilst a greater proportion of Scottish students were awarded first class degrees; the attainment gap between RUK students and Scottish students has grown (from 11.1 percentage points in 2018/19 to 14.1 percentage points in 2019/20).

Likewise, the widening participation and BAME attainment gaps have increased. Just under 45% of UK White students were awarded a first in 2019/20 whilst a third of UK BAME students were awarded a first. This increases the BAME attainment gap from 4.3 percentage points to 10.2 percentage points. More analysis needs to be undertaken to understand what has driven this increase.

The impact of only counting final year course results

School Directors of Quality requested SAI&M to investigate whether there was a difference in the outcomes for students whose final award was calculated on the basis of their final years and those whose final award was calculated on the basis of all their honours courses. The tables below show the trends for high classification awards and first class awards.

Table 3 % High Classification degrees by degree calculation method

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
Final year only	95.2	95.5	97.3	1.8
Others	87.4	88.6	90.9	2.3

Table 4 % First class degrees awarded by calculation method

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
Final year only	49.5	47.9	66.3	18.4
Others	26.6	27.6	38.1	10.5

There has been minimal change in the proportion of high classification degrees awarded however students who received a degree on the basis of their final year only in 2019/20 are almost twice as likely to achieve a first class degree. More work needs to be done to unpick this, School and other factors.

Taught Postgraduate Awards²

The proportion of high classification taught postgraduate degrees awarded has increased slightly (from 74.7% in 2018/19 to 76.1% in 2019/20). The picture is more complex at PGT level as some of these degrees will have been awarded before Semester two in 2020. More detailed analysis will be required at the end of this academic year.

Table 5 % High classification PGT degrees

School	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
DIV	80.6	88.4	92.3	3.9
LLC	85.4	87.5	90.8	3.3
BMS	82.4	92.0	89.7	-2.3
BUS	87.0	87.0	88.1	1.1
GEO	76.9	86.7	83.0	-3.6
ECA	75.5	79.6	82.0	2.4
CHE	88.9	72.2	81.8	9.6
HEA	76.9	77.7	81.6	3.9
BIO	80.6	75.5	81.4	5.9
PPLS	82.6	82.0	80.7	-1.3
SPS	72.5	70.8	78.4	7.6
INF	72.2	69.8	78.2	8.5
HCA	75.5	71.8	77.8	6.0
MAT	77.5	65.9	76.1	10.2
ECO	65.4	66.7	73.2	6.6
VET	76.1	59.0	73.0	14.0
MGP	76.8	70.9	72.1	1.2
PHY	88.0	70.6	69.4	-1.1
ENG	62.8	62.5	66.7	4.2
CLI	70.4	82.7	64.7	-18.0
LAW	56.1	62.7	62.9	0.2
EDU	51.4	63.2	58.8	-4.4
MED	45.8	60.6	45.5	-15.2
Edinburgh	72.9	74.7	76.1	1.5

² Awards made in the 2020/21 academic year have not been counted in this analysis but work will need to be done to examine these numbers at the end of the academic year.

Appendix

Undergraduates – high classifications

Percentage of high classification degrees awarded by fee status

Fee status	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
EU	93.6	93.3	95.6	2.3
GEP	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0
Overseas	83.9	85.4	88.3	2.9
RUK	93.4	94.5	95.7	1.2
Scotland	85.1	86.6	89.6	3.0

Percentage of high classification degrees awarded by sex

Sex	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
Female	89.9	91.5	94.3	2.8
Male	87.0	87.3	89.0	1.7

Percentage of high classification degrees awarded by disability

Disability	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
N	89.1	89.9	92.7	2.8
Y	86.3	89.4	89.7	0.3

Percentage of high classification degrees awarded by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
White	89.6	90.9	93.0	2.2
BAME	84.8	85.5	90.4	5.0
Not UK	87.8	88.4	91.1	2.7

Percentage of high classification degrees awarded by widening participation

WP	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
N	94.6	95.1	95.9	0.7
Y	85.8	87.9	91.0	3.1

Percentage of high classification degrees awarded by age on entry

Age	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
17 or under	85.3	87.3	91.5	4.2
18 to 20	89.6	90.6	92.5	1.9
21 to 24	87.9	88.6	92.8	4.2
25 or over	79.5	79.7	84.6	4.9

Undergraduates – first class honours

Percentage of first class degrees awarded by fee status

Fee status	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
EU	50.2	53.5	63.1	9.7
Overseas	25.2	26.5	33.1	6.6
RUK	33.9	34.7	50.0	15.3
Scotland	24.1	23.6	36.0	12.4

Percentage of first class degrees awarded by sex

Sex	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
Female	31.3	32.2	44.7	12.5
Male	30.6	30.4	42.1	11.7

Percentage of first class degrees awarded by disability

Disability	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
N	31.6	32.4	44.4	12.0
Y	27.0	26.4	40.2	13.8

Percentage of first class degrees awarded by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
White	29.2	29.3	44.1	14.8
BAME	24.8	25.0	33.9	8.9
Not UK	35.7	37.1	45.2	8.1

Percentage of first class degrees awarded by widening participation

WP	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
N	33.4	35.9	50.5	14.5
Y	26.1	26.1	39.4	13.3

Percentage of first class degrees awarded by age on entry

Age	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
17 or under	25.7	26.7	35.0	8.2
18 to 20	31.9	32.5	45.2	12.6
21 to 24	32.0	34.8	38.8	3.9
25 or over	26.5	15.2	37.5	22.3

Taught postgraduates – high classifications

Percentage of high classification degrees awarded by fee status

Fee status	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
EU	85.4	84.2	89.5	5.3
Online	68.6	69.6	68.3	-1.3
Overseas	69.7	71.8	72.3	0.6
RUK	84.4	87.5	88.5	1.1
Scotland	60.7	65.5	67.8	2.3

Percentage of high classification degrees awarded by sex

Sex	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
Female	72.7	75.0	75.4	0.4
Male	73.2	74.0	77.7	3.6

Percentage of high classification degrees awarded by disability

Disability	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
N	72.9	74.6	76.0	1.4
Y	72.7	75.6	77.8	2.2

Percentage of high classification degrees awarded by ethnicity

Ethnicity	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	18/19 - 19/20
White	73.1	75.4	78.3	2.9
BAME	62.1	75.3	70.0	-5.3
Not UK	73.3	74.5	75.9	1.4

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

Undergraduate Taught External Examiner Reports: Thematic Analysis 2019/20

Description of paper

1. An analysis of data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS). Covers undergraduate programmes for academic year 2019/20, provides comparison with 2018/19 and trend analysis over the past five years.

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee to note the report and identify any University-level actions (assigning to specific areas as appropriate). The Committee to note the comments in relation to resource implications.

Background and context

3. The University's External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy states that the Senate Quality Assurance Committee uses information from External Examiners reports to identify common themes to help shape the strategic approach to quality assurance, quality enhancement and to enhance student experience.
4. The UK Quality Code guiding principles on External Expertise state, "Providers have effective mechanisms in place to provide a response to input from external examiners and external advisers." The University's mapping to the Quality Code states in response that Academic Response coordinators in Schools are responsible for responding to External Examiner reports and that the Quality Assurance Committee receives a thematic report from Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught external examiner reporting in November and February respectively. The Committee identifies any institutional actions.
5. Reporting deadlines for undergraduate External Examiner reports were extended to 30 September 2020 due to exceptional changes to assessment and Boards of Examiners processes implemented by the University in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Discussion

6. Analysis includes major themes arising from commendations, suggestions, issues, comments identified for institutional escalation in the External Examiners' reports and summarises report status. Analysis was conducted based on data available on 27 November 2020. Full analysis is attached as Appendix 1.

Resource implications

7. The paper is a report on activity therefore there are no resource implications associated with it. The Committee requested more contextual analysis to determine if any patterns or clusters of issues have emerged in specific local areas (see section 2.1). Analysis is going on at course, programme, School and College level and report outputs are considered through annual monitoring and Internal Periodic Review. Any actions taken by Schools and Colleges as a result of External Examiner reports are expected to be met from within existing resources. There continue to be very small numbers associated with themes emerging from additional analysis (see section 3). Further contextual or cluster analysis is unlikely to be achievable within current Academic Services resources. There may be more value in targeted analysis of External Examiner reports at an institutional level – such as the no detriment analysis (see separate paper).

Risk management

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

Equality & diversity

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

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

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

Author

*Susan Hunter, Academic Services
8 December 2020*

Presenter

Nichola Kett

Freedom of Information

The paper is **open**.

Undergraduate External Examiner Reports: Thematic Analysis 2018/19

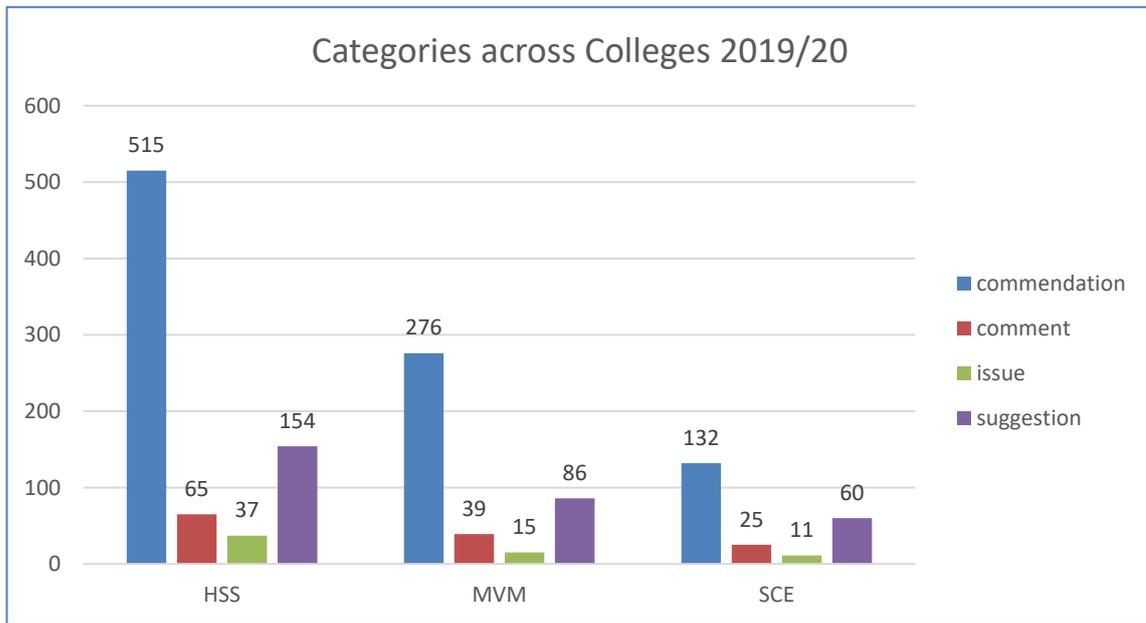
1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides a thematic analysis of External Examiner reports for undergraduate programmes. Analysis was conducted based on data available on 27 November 2020.
- 1.2 **Action requested** The Committee to note the report and identify any University-level actions (assigning to specific areas as appropriate).

2. Analysis of major themes

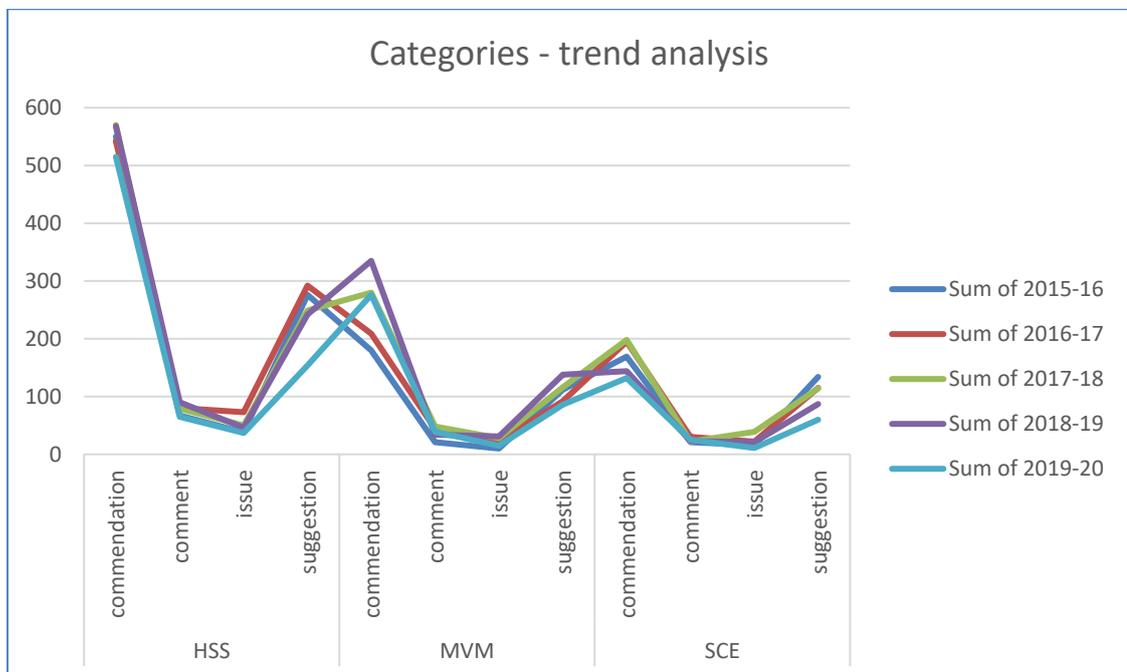
- 2.1 In December 2019, the Committee requested more contextual analysis to determine if any patterns or clusters of issues have emerged in specific local areas. As 2019/20 was an exceptional year, it may be difficult to draw any conclusions from analysis of patterns or clusters of issues that have emerged in specific local areas. Therefore, the analysis focuses on high level themes across the University. (See also points raised under “Resource implications” on the coversheet of this paper.)
- 2.2 Analysis continues to show a high number of commendations across the University and a low number of issues (see Figure 1). It is interesting that External Examiners have reported significantly fewer issues across all three Colleges in 2019/20 than in 2018/19 (see section 2.5); around 50% fewer in the Colleges of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) and Science and Engineering (CSE), and just over 20% fewer in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS). It is unclear whether this is part of a downward trend, or whether External Examiners were less willing to make negative comments in such a challenging year. Apart from the total comments in CSE, totals in all categories have fluctuated in all three Colleges when compared with the previous year. The total number of reports have fallen slightly in CSE and CAHSS and risen slightly in CMVM.
- 2.3 The majority of Schools have a higher number of commendations than suggestions, comments or issues from their External Examiner reports. The majority of Schools received more than 55% of total remarks as commendations.

Figure 1



HSS (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), MVM (College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine), SCE (College of Science and Engineering). The number of issues, commendations, suggestions and comments are in the context of the relative size of each college. It should be noted that categories are assigned in the reporting system dependent on the space in which an examiner chooses to enter free text comments.

Figure 2 Categories trend analysis over past five years



HSS (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), MVM (College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine), SCE (College of Science and Engineering). The number of issues, commendations, suggestions and comments are in the context of the relative size of each college.

2.4 Commendations

Consistent with the previous four years, External Examiners most often commended the main theme of “The Assessment Process” across all three Colleges (271 of a total of 923 commendations). The most commendations of a single sub-theme were in “Good practice and innovation” (in the Programme Development theme – total of 166 commendations). Some examples of External Examiners’ comments from that sub-theme are:

“Generally: recording of presentations (available via external examiner tab on Learn) is best practice in the sector. Essay questions are provocative, thought provoking and challenging; yet allow enough scope for the students to demonstrate independence, creativity and scholarship.”

“The course benefits from having active leading researchers directly involved in both the design and delivery of the teaching. This is not always the case in other institutions and is a model that should, in my view, be followed.”

“The synoptic skills is a great example of innovative teaching and the inclusion of the data interpretation is very much appreciated by the students. Molecular Biology of the Disease is combining standard and specialised lectures with excellent balance of breadth and depth. Generally having a combined approach for assessment by testing a set of skills (i.e. oral presentation, poster presentation, data analysis and interpretation, etc) rather than just straightforward knowledge of course material is very valuable and give the opportunity to the students to developed different skills..”

2.5 Suggestions

The Programme Development sub-theme “Enhancing student learning experience” attracted the highest number of suggestions (117 of a total of 300 suggestions across all themes). External Examiners made suggestions in all Colleges. The majority of suggestions were specific to courses or programmes. There were no significant, common themes across the range of suggestions in that sub-theme.

2.6 Issues

- 2.6.1 Overall, 63 issues were raised (36% fewer than the previous year). As noted above, it is unclear whether this is part of a downward trend or that External Examiners were unwilling to raise issues in what has been a challenging year across the sector.
- 2.6.2 As in past three years, the main theme was “Provision of Information” with 23 comments made across all Colleges. Once again, the sub-theme of “Issues Raised in a Previous Report” had the most points raised at 16. These related to a variety of programme specific topics; however, 38% (or six of 16) of these remarks state that as this was their first year in post or that they would have chosen “not applicable” to answer this question if the system allowed. Further analysis across the full range of issues raised suggests that some External Examiners have found communication and conduct of online Board of Examiners meetings to be problematic this year (17% of total remarks or 11 of 63). This is largely attributed to changes necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. Additional analysis of commendations, issues, suggestions and comments

As this was an exceptional year, initial analysis of additional themes included commendations. It should be noted that External Examiners can, and do, include more than one point in a report entry related to a commendation, issue, suggestion or comment and these can also be conflated (for example an issue can include a suggestion, comment or commendation). Therefore, although total numbers of points raised are given below in 3.2, it is not possible to provide a percentage.

3.1 Covid-19 adjustments

It is unsurprising that around 426 of a possible 1415 (30%) report entries¹ related to changes in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall, External Examiners remarks were positive, and they recognised the huge additional effort by colleagues under difficult circumstances. They commented positively on adjustments to learning, teaching and assessment (73 points), thought that digital Boards of Examiners had operated well (70 points) and felt that they had been kept well informed of changes and adjustments (66 points). Analysis of External Examiner comments in relation to the University’s no detriment policy are included in a separate paper. No significant negative themes emerged from this analysis.

3.2 Analysis excluding Covid-19 and commendations

Further analysis of (382) report entries, disregarding commendations and other entries solely related to Covid-19, showed two additional themes emerging consistently across Schools and Colleges. The numbers are not statistically significant but show the themes that had the most points made.

¹ Report entry relates to a report component that is flagged as a commendation, issue, suggestion or comment.

3.2.1 Feedback to students

External Examiners made 20 points regarding improving feedback. These mainly related to ensuring feedback consistency, suggesting training for tutors and sharing existing good practice. Twelve points were made in relation to areas of good practice and enhanced feedback practice.

3.2.2 Support for External Examiners

External Examiners were generally appreciative of the support they received from both academic and professional service staff. They made 14 points in relation to timely provision of advice, information and responding to enquiries. There were 11 points made in relation to difficulties in communicating with School staff and slow receipt of information. It is likely that this was due to completing demands on staff time in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

4. Overview of the number of External Examiner Reports

- 4.1 Table 1 shows the total number of undergraduate reports by College compared with the previous academic year.

Table 1: Number of undergraduate reports

	2019/20	2018/19
College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)	157	166
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)	72	68
College of Science and Engineering (CSE)	40	43
Total number of reports	269	277

- 4.2 Table 2 shows the number and stage of undergraduate reports in each College for 2019/20 and 2018/19.

Table 2: Number and stage of reports

	Report Stage	2019/20	2018/19
AHSS	Response Submitted (complete)	74	107
	Draft Response (response outstanding)	44	43
	Draft Report (report outstanding)	33	9
	Allocation	6	4
	Cancelled	0	3
MVM	Response Submitted	56	52
	Draft Response	6	12
	Draft Report	6	3
	Allocation	0	0
	Submitted Offline	2	1
	Cancelled	2	0
CSE	Response Submitted	19	33
	Draft Response	12	6
	Draft Report	8	1
	Cancelled	0	3
	Allocation	1	0

- 4.3 In this challenging year, there are likely to be a variety of reasons for delays in reporting. Colleges advise that some reports included in the figures above will not be received as they are either duplicates, have been submitted offline or the External Examiner is no longer in their role (these will include reports at allocation stage). Colleges and School Directors of Quality are continuing to explore reasons for outstanding reports and issuing reminders when appropriate. Academic Response Co-ordinators are also being reminded to respond to submitted reports as soon as possible. All College keep their External Examiner processes under review and identify enhancements to help ensure timely submission.

5 Comments identified by Academic Response Coordinators as Institutional matters

- 5.1 Academic Response Coordinators can flag comments for School, College or Institutional escalation. The Committee's primary interest in institutional escalations is to identify any issues that require institutional action. In 2019/20, there was one **commendation** flagged for institutional escalation in relation to good practice and innovation. It is unclear from the comments made by the External Examiner what would require institutional action and the School's response is pending. This commendation may have been flagged for institutional escalation in error and the School will investigate further.

Table 3: institutional escalation themes 2019/20

Programme Development and Enhancement, sub-theme Good practice and innovation (commendation)	1
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Table 4: Institutional escalation themes 2018/19

The Assessment Process (2 issues, 1 suggestion and 1 commendation)	4
Academic Standards (1 commendation and 1 suggestion)	2
Programme Development (2 suggestions)	2
Board of Examiners Meetings (suggestion)	1
Issues raised in a previous report (commendation)	1
Provision of information (commendation)	1

Susan Hunter
Academic Services
8 December 2020

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

Annual report on complaint handling, 2019-20

Description of paper

1. In line with the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the University's Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP), this paper reports on the handling of complaints to the University for the academic year 2019-20.

Action requested

2. College representatives are asked to ensure that the outcomes of the Committee's discussions are made available to and considered by the relevant College committee(s).

Recommendations

3. Efforts need to be made to improve the logging and reporting of complaints received at School and support service level, and College representatives are asked to stress to colleagues the vital role of regular reporting in delivering improvement and the 'learning from' complaints received. The importance of accurate data collection is also mentioned in sections 16 and 17 below.

Background and context

4. The CHP has two stages. Stage 1 Frontline Resolution should be used in the majority of cases, with likely outcomes being an on-the-spot apology, an explanation or other action to resolve the complaint very quickly (within five working days). Stage 2 Complaint Investigation is appropriate where attempts at Frontline Resolution have failed, or where the issue is sufficiently complex, serious or high risk from the outset that Frontline Resolution would not be appropriate. The CHP specifies that the following will be reported internally:

- 1) 'performance statistics detailing complaint volumes, types and key performance information, for example on time taken and stage at which complaints were resolved'
- 2) 'the trends and outcomes of complaints and the actions taken in response including examples to demonstrate how complaints have helped improve services'

Discussion

5. For the purposes of complaint reporting, the University has around 50 'areas' – each of the Schools, College Offices, and designated support services. Areas report quarterly on complaints resolved at Frontline. All Stage 2 complaints are managed centrally by the Investigations Manager.

6. The report this year follows a different format from previous years due to the turbulence caused by a number of factors. Year-on-year comparisons are largely meaningless due to the vast increase in complaints logged due to the pandemic, and in addition many areas have dealt with so many complaints at frontline they have been unable to log them consistently due to pressure of work. The challenges of working from home have also impacted the ability of area contacts to collect reliable data from colleagues in some cases.

What is clear is that complaints traffic generally has increased very significantly, and the figures for complaints received centrally (section 8, below) bear that out.

Due to difficulties in collecting reliable data for the AY, this report adopts more of a narrative format. The narrative also covers AY 2020-21 to date, in order to give committees an up to date picture of issues leading to complaints.

7. It is believed that the majority of Frontline cases were resolved within the five-day time limit, but data on this was not being recorded consistently by areas. Mechanisms for logging complaints have still not been improved as we had hoped. Work on developing systems is on hold at present.

8. In total, 818 'complaints' were raised through the central complaints@ed.ac.uk mailbox, showing a very significant increase over the previous year (531). In AY 20/21 to date, we had already received 530 complaints by 7 December 2020, when this report was finalised; to put the year to date in context, we have received more complaints from 1 August – 7 December this AY than were received from 1 August 2019 – 31 March 2020. The current spike in complaints exceeds the increases we have seen year on year. Previous years' figures were as follows: 437 in 2017-18, 342 in 2016-17, 294 in 2015-16, 205 in 2014-15 and 156 in 2013-14.

Of the 818 complaints logged in 2019/20:

- *158 (149 in previous year) cases were referred to the appropriate areas for Frontline resolution and will thus also appear in the area totals when those become available.*
- *In 158 cases (55) the 'complaint' was resolved through an explanation.*
- *113 (23) complaints were not considered – 60 because they were requests for compensation only, which is not covered by the CHP. 37 cases were not taken forward because of 'unacceptable behaviour' on the part of the complainants, 6 because they were time-barred and 10 because they were attempts to re-open complaints which had been completed through the University's procedures.*
- *The SPSO contacted the office regarding 39 (26) cases, of which 19 were complaint-related and 20 were appeal cases.*
- *Some cases were referred for investigation under another procedure – student conduct (24), staff capability/disciplinary (14), or academic appeal (7).*

- 37 (41) cases were referred back to complainants for more information or for third party DPA clearance.
- 32 complaints were raised about matters which were not the responsibility of the University, most of these coming from members of the public and a significant number of them coming from just two complainants.

The number of requests under FoI or DPA legislation remained steady at 31 requests this year.

Complaint trends/themes August 2019 – November 2020

9. What has been marked about the period under review is the number of events which have led to significant volumes of complaints on similar themes; the 60 'compensation only' cases referred to above all related to industrial action and/or Covid. Themes have been as follows:

September 2019 – hosting of a conference on 'Resisting Whiteness'

November 2019 – industrial action

February 2020 – industrial action

March 2020 – Covid19 starts – many complaints, noticeable themes as follows:

- *Complaints about online teaching/ 'cessation' of teaching*
- *Lease breaks*
- *Refund requests*
- *Compensation requests*
- *Parental concerns about care of students/calls to close the University*

May 2020 onwards – themes:

- *Exam arrangements*
- *Quality of teaching*
- *Absence of study facilities e.g. libraries, labs, studios*
- *More refund and compensation requests*

August 2020 – themes:

- *Admissions issues*
- *Study abroad cancellations*

September 2020 onwards – themes:

- *Teaching issues such as balance of online/in-person, absence of timetables*
- *Accommodation – safety, security, 'policing', isolation*
- *Food and catering concerns*
- *Many parental concerns, both about practicalities and about pastoral support*
- *Lease breaks*
- *Refund requests (fees and accommodation), reductions sought, compensation sought*
- *Complaints from members of public about student behaviour, especially parties*
- *Non-Covid – renaming of the David Hume Tower*

In October 2020 the Enquiry Management Team made some staffing available for a period of four weeks, primarily to handle complaints coming in via the webform, which is used principally by members of the public. Around the same time, the Good Citizen Guide was published together with a reporting mechanism for concerns about student behaviour. The multiplicity of different routes caused some confusion for staff and led to delays in response times; all *complaints* are now being routed once more to complaints@ed.ac.uk which has improved response times.

November 2020 – themes:

- *Online/in-person teaching*
- *Fee refunds/compensation*
- *Students complaining about student behaviour*
- *Public complaining about student behaviour*

Complaints investigated at Stage 2

10. Despite the huge increase in complaints received, the number of cases going to Stage 2 investigation remained relatively low at 24 for the AY, the same figure as the previous year. As noted last year, Stage 2 numbers showed an increase that year over previous years due to changed guidance from SPSO which meant that more cases were taken through Stage 2. Of the 24 cases considered at Stage 2 during 2019/20, 5 were partially upheld (including one complaint from a member of the public); 3 were withdrawn; and 7 were not proceeded with, either because they were resolved by other means (e.g. being referred back for discussion elsewhere or through a different procedure) or because the complainant failed to respond to correspondence. The remaining 9 complaints were not upheld. No complaints were upheld in full; the low ‘uphold/partial uphold’ rate indicates that in the majority of cases, frontline consideration has arrived at an appropriate outcome for the complainant.

11. Investigations should be completed within a maximum of 20 working days, unless an extension is given for good reason. Previous years have indicated that we are rarely able to complete a full investigation within the time limit specified by the SPSO but our performance in the year under review has been particularly badly hit by Covid. Of the 14 cases where investigations were completed, 5 were done within 20 working days, 2 within 10 weeks, 3 within 20 weeks and 4 took over 20 weeks. Delays arise for many reasons but are often in response to requests by the complainant who may wish an investigation to be put on hold for a time. However, this year an additional factor was that interview arrangements were difficult to make because it was not clear whether or when meetings in person might be possible; and following lockdown in March, staff investigating complaints had to prioritise their arrangements for online teaching over other tasks.

Cases considered by SPSO

12. Of the 39 cases queried with us by the SPSO, 19 related to complaints and the remainder to appeals. One complaint case (which dated back to early 2018) was upheld in part by SPSO. Importantly, the SPSO has so far endorsed the University’s stance on a number of policy issues this year, notably our rejection of requests for

compensation in respect of industrial action and/or Covid, and our implementation of the 28-day notice period for lease breaks in March.

Launch of the revised CHP and Expected Behaviour Policy

13. The SPSO published the revised Model CHP for the sector at the end of January 2020 with the instruction that all institutions must adopt it by April 2021. As previously, the Model gave little scope for any local adaptation, and so we moved to adopt it with effect from 1 October 2020. Although this report indicated last year that the changes were expected to be significant, the content of the revised CHP is substantially the same as the previous CHP. SPSO has however published it as five separate 'parts', one of which comprises information for complainants. The other sections are for the use of staff, though most staff only need to know about handling complaints at frontline. In terms of presentation the revised CHP therefore looks quite different from the previous version, though in key points and operational terms it is largely unchanged:

- There are just two stages to the University's CHP
- Complainants are advised to try resolving matters locally first, at 'Stage 1/frontline'
- If still dissatisfied, complainants can ask for a 'Stage 2 investigation'
- Most staff will deal only with cases at Stage 1
- Stage 2 cases are managed centrally by Academic Services

14. One significant change has been that the new Model anticipated that institutions would have a separate 'Expected Behaviour Policy' or similar, setting out actions which could be taken where behaviour of a complainant is problematic. Academic Services took this opportunity to produce a new Expected Behaviour Policy for use primarily in relation to Appeals, Complaints and Conduct procedures. This was approved by APRC in October 2020. As examples of why such a policy is necessary, we have received over 80 complaints from one member of the public in the period from 1 August 2020 to date, and have received multiple emails containing quite seriously abusive language from a further two members of the public and one former student.

Resource implications

15. Previous reports, and indeed internal audit reports, have highlighted the vulnerability of the 'Complaints Department' due to absence of robust cover arrangements for the Investigations Manager. This was partially addressed by the move – w.e.f. August 2019 – of the complaints function into Academic Services. Restructuring enabled the appointment in May 2020 of a full-time Casework Coordinator whose remit would cover complaints and also the coordination of appeals and conduct casework. Subsequent developments and the continuing lockdown have led to further restructuring within the department, with recruitment to a new post currently under way.

16. Recent requests for management information, especially in relation to Covid-related complaints, have highlighted a known deficit in data collection methods. No resource was made available for systems when the original CHP was launched in 2013, and central complaint handling staff have therefore been dependent on a simple spreadsheet for data collection. Whilst this has largely met the day-to-day case management needs of the staff involved, it was never designed with management data in mind and has proved totally inadequate for meeting recent data requests. Similarly, areas each complete a separate [different] spreadsheet on a quarterly basis as no resource was available for design of a University-wide system; compilation of 200 spreadsheets (50 areas x 4 quarterly returns) on an annual basis makes meaningful analysis extremely difficult and time consuming, and additional pressures on areas this year have delayed their returns significantly. We **recommend** that resource is made available for procurement of a suitable data management system as a matter of some urgency. Further reference is made to this in Risk Management, below.

Risk Management

17. There are no risks in the report *per se*, which is for information only. Risk management is a key element in the successful handling of all complaints, especially those which carry the potential for reputational damage to the University and/or claims for compensation. The year under review (and the current year, 2020/21) carry significant risk due to Covid, in particular with ongoing requests for fee refunds, accommodation refunds and other concessions, and risks to community relations with local residents. The absence at present of robust data collection mechanisms poses some risks. Inability to analyse and quantify types of cases a) inhibits our ability to spot trends and learn from complaints at this time of high complaint volumes; b) makes quantification of financial or reputational damage impossible; and c) fails to comply fully with SPSO requirements on data collection.

Equality & Diversity

18. SPSO carried out an EIA before publishing the original model CHP. This report covers complaints received, some of which relate to matters where equality and diversity is a consideration. An internal EIA was carried out prior to the launch of the updated CHP.

Next steps/implications

19. The Head of Investigations and Student Casework will be responsible for taking forward points arising from this report.

Consultation

20. The information in this report will also be provided to the University Executive.

Further information – and a personal note

21. Author

Jean Grier

Head of Investigations and Student Casework / Investigations Manager

7 December 2020

This will be my final report to SQAC; I shall be retiring from the University on 28 February 2021 after 36+ years in various posts, 10 of them in complaint handling. I would like to record my thanks to the very many colleagues across the University who have made a difficult and sometimes thankless (but never boring) job so rewarding. The willingness of colleagues to resolve problems where they should be resolved – at local level – has kept our stage 2 numbers commendably low whilst delivering a range of improvements for our students. Senior colleagues have impressed me with their thoroughness, compassion, and attention to detail when working as complaint investigators on stage 2 cases, and I am grateful to them too for their help.

Freedom of Information

22. This paper is open; data from it will be published on the University's complaint handling web pages.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

**Report on the
Annual Review of Student Support Services**

Description of paper

1. Report on the review of Student Support Service annual reports for 2019/20. The paper highlights areas of good practice, themes arising from the service reports and summarises the service reports.

Action requested / recommendation

2. To discuss and approve areas of good practice (section 2). To consider whether any further actions are required in relation to the themes discussions (section 3).

Background and context

3. Student Support Services reporting is part of the University's quality assurance framework. Services report on student-facing activity and its impact on student experience. Sixteen reports were submitted this year with Residence Life submitting a separate report for the first time and Edinburgh Global providing a report on international recruitment activity and a separate Study and Work Away service report.

Discussion

4. The paper, attached as Appendix 1, reports on the 2019/20 reporting process including report reviewers' commendations. This year's process was streamlined to focus on impacts on the student experience related to industrial action and the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, it was not possible to include peer reviewing as part of the process this year, but Academic Services proposes to reinstate peer reviewing as a standard part of the Student Support Services Annual Review process for 2020/21.
5. The paper also covers the good practice examples and common themes identified by the reviewers and Academic Services across Student Support Service reports. Further information is included in the appendix.

Resource implications

6. No resource implications are directly associated with the paper which is a report on activity. Resource implications are implicit in existing planning by support services.

Risk management

7. No risk assessment is included in the paper. Services carry out risk assessment on areas for development.

Equality & diversity

8. No equality and diversity implications are directly associated with the paper. Services consider equality impact as part of the annual reporting process.

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

9. Academic Services communicated reviewer comments to Student Support Services. The Committee should consider communication, implementation and evaluation of any actions resulting from the paper.

Author

*Susan Hunter, Academic Services
8 December 2020*

Presenter

Professor Tina Harrison

Freedom of Information

The paper is **open**.

Report on the Annual Review of Student Support Services

1. Reporting process

1.1 2019/20 annual reporting process

In May 2020, Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) agreed that Student Support Service Annual Review (SSSAR) reporting for 2019/20 should be streamlined to focus on impacts of industrial action and Covid-19. This reduced the reporting burden on services and fulfilled expectations for compliance, including expectations on externality and student voice set out in the UK Quality Code.

Services were asked to submit their reports during a flexible reporting period from the end of August up to 13 November 2020. Academic Services set up a [SSSAR SharePoint](#) site with restricted access and all service reports can be viewed there.

All reports were reviewed by the SSSAR sub-committee external member, the Students' Association Vice-President Education and Academic Services. Reviewing focused on highlighting areas of good practice for sharing.

No formal SSSAR sub-committee meetings were held for this reporting cycle. However, it is proposed to hold an event, to celebrate the effort of Student Support Services during the pandemic and share good practice, after the reporting process is complete.

2. Summary of service reports

Reviewers identified much to commend across the reports. Key commendations and good practice are highlighted below. Detailed comments are provided to each Service in their individual reader reports. Services reported little or no impact on the student experience of their provision due to industrial action. Unsurprisingly, the Covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on all services.

2.1 Accommodation Catering and Events (ACE)

Readers commended ACE for its response to supporting students during lockdown and allowing students to terminate leases early on a "no fault" basis. ACE took a student-focused approach in supporting students and established a dedicated student communications team to respond to Covid-19 implications.

2.2 The Advice Place

Readers commended the Advice Place for adopting a variety of technologies to maintain integrated student support. The Advice Place played a key role in responding to the needs of students' and their families making telephone contact with the University when other areas were not set up with this facility.

2.3 Careers Service

Readers commended the Careers Service's initiatives on supporting graduates through the Class of 2020 campaign and particularly the alumni mentoring scheme for widening participation graduates. Careers also hosted the first Scottish online graduate fair which increased accessibility for this event. Digital presentation of Employ.ed also saw an increase in intern placements and in the number of interns completing the Edinburgh Award.

2.4 Chaplaincy

Readers commended the Chaplaincy on expanding its provision through the Listening Service's 24/7 availability and the range of digital resources developed to support both students and staff in response to Covid-19. The Chaplaincy's provision continues to be valued by students and staff and this year Chaplaincy provided additional specific support to Residence Life staff and management team.

2.5 Edinburgh Global: International recruitment

Readers commended Edinburgh Global's development of recruitment and adaptation plans and stimulating collaboration and knowledge sharing between services, Schools and Colleges. The development of the Unibuddy peer-to-peer platform for prospective students was a positive pilot scheme in promoting a sense of belonging.

2.6 Estates

Readers commended Estates' for their student-centred strategic approach, prioritising health and safety as well as the student learning experience. Estates showed a resilient, integrated team approach in response to Covid-19, ensuring campus safety and innovations in repurposing buildings.

2.7 Finance

Readers commended Finance for moving to secure online provision of streamlined and easier to navigate services. Finance also provided bookable Teams appointments for students and EdHelp service for student finance issues.

2.8 Information Services Group (ISG)

Readers commended ISG's significant upscaling to support digital service delivery and hybrid learning and teaching. This included reskilling ISG staff and providing student and staff training to support digital teaching through the Edinburgh Model for Online Teaching. Virtual classroom and library click and collect were positive initiatives to support inclusivity during the pandemic.

2.9 Institute for Academic Development (IAD)

Readers commended the IAD's activities to support hybrid teaching including the Edinburgh Hybrid Teaching Exchange and learning and teaching hang outs. IAD also provided online support tools for tutors and demonstrators and PhD student-led dissertation writing sessions for postgraduate taught students.

2.10 Residence Life

Readers commended Residence Life's bespoke training for wardens and residence assistants. Staff were upskilled with support from Student Counselling Service and Residence Life appointed a Student Mental Health Coordinator to ensure adequate support for student mental health and wellbeing, operating a remote and in-person model of assessment checks.

2.11 Student Counselling Service

Readers commended the Student Counselling Service for implementing a crisis intervention model to prioritise key support. The Service is at its most accessible with mixed delivery of counselling sessions (digital and in-person) enabling students to access services irrespective of their location. Counselling continues to have a significant positive impact and is valued by students who use the service.

2.12 Student Disability Service

Readers commended the Student Disability Service's new registration portal which allows students to track progress of their case. Online disability awareness training has reached a wide audience and the move to online student appointments increased provision. The Service also introduced 'walking appointments' to allow socially distanced sessions with mentors.

2.13 Student Recruitment and Admissions

Readers commended Student Recruitment and Admissions' collaboration on short Learn courses for matriculating students. The move to online Hub resources for course options generated more than twice the engagement than with the Course Options Fair run in previous years.

2.14 Student Systems and Administration

Readers commended Student Systems and Administration for key student support activity including the hardship fund to support students disproportionately affected by Covid-19, laptop loan service and streamlined Have Your Say service to ensure the student voice is heard. Students appreciated the implementation of 'no detriment' support and guidance, including systems development.

2.15 Study and Work Away Service

Readers commended the Study and Work Away Service for transitioning to an out of hours service to provide an emergency response for students in distress overseas. The service extended its reach to prospective students through virtual study abroad fairs and, by digital mechanisms, achieved more outreach with organisations to set up placements.

2.16 University Sport and Exercise

Readers commended University Sport and Exercise for its provision of online activity to support student fitness and wellbeing. Streamlining membership to prioritise student and staff existing members and introducing a 30-day option to build user trust were positive initiatives. Sport and Exercise also introduced comprehensive Covid-safe arrangements for service operation.

3. Themes arising from service reports

3.1 Staff response to challenges

Services unanimously showed an impressive response to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. This was only possible due to the commitment, flexibility and creativity of staff. Staff adapted quickly and responsively to the huge changes necessitated by lockdown, enabling provision to continue for the most part uninterrupted. Heads of service praised the "inspiring attitudes" and "commitment and passion" of their teams, while also acknowledging the huge pressure the pandemic and resulting challenges

have placed on colleagues. The majority of services reported that staff had adapted well to working from home, although this was more challenging for a few services where some key provision relies on in-person interaction (for example Student Disability Service and the Advice Place).

“All services should be commended on their response to an exceptional and challenging year, and have positively commented on the benefits that the necessity of the COVID response has engendered.” (Joanna Morrow, University of Stirling – External Reviewer)

3.2 Working across boundaries

Nearly all services reported on the benefits of improved and closer working with other areas. There was an increase in collaborative working with other teams, services and with Colleges and Schools to ensure appropriate responses to challenges and to support rapid change. This resulted in strengthening existing relationships and forging new ones.

“a number of areas spoke of enhanced integration and collaboration that the emergency response stimulated, and the benefit of the overall co-ordination provided by the institutional groupings such as the COVID-19 group and the COVID welfare and response group.” (Joanna Morrow, University of Stirling – External Reviewer)

3.3 Digital processes for enhancement

Out of necessity, many processes had to be pivoted to digital provision. Services found much of this resulted in improved and streamlined processes which they intend to maintain and build upon. For some, the rapid change to digital processes meant implementing planned changes sooner. For others, digital processes remain more challenging in some areas, for example where key provision relies on in-person interaction. The Director of the Careers Services notes, “Just because we can deliver an effective service digitally doesn’t mean we should.”

“It is particularly commendable that significant service improvement has been achieved through this period, and a strong theme of student support being a central focus came through many reports, along with team working and staff resilience/wellbeing.” (Joanna Morrow, University of Stirling – External Reviewer)

Action: QAC to consider any further actions in relation to the themes.

Susan Hunter, Academic Policy Officer
Academic Services
8 December 2020

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC)
Operational Guidance – change to membership

Description of paper

1. The paper outlines a change to the membership of Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLC)

Action requested / recommendation

2. To approve the changes to the membership.

Background and context

3. The Operational Guidance sets out membership details for SSLCs.
4. The current guidance states 'where appropriate, presidents of relevant academic societies within the School or subject area may attend SSLC meetings'.
5. In partnership with the Students' Association we are proposing that the wording is changed to include 'Society Office Bearers within the School or subject area may attend SSLC meetings'.

Discussion

6. Each society is led by Office Bearers elected by members, including a President, Secretary and Treasurer.
7. While Society Office Bearers are not expected to attend SSLC meetings, Schools may wish to invite a representative from each relevant academic society associated with the School to attend, provide an update on their activity, and share feedback on behalf of their members.
8. As such, we believe that relevant student society representation at SSLCs would be extremely contributory to the student experience, providing an opportunity for conversation, cooperation, and collaboration between School staff, student representatives, and societies. We believe this will greatly enhance the overall sense of community within Schools that spans both academic and extra-curricular School life.
9. Society Office Bearers are encouraged to work with Programme and School Representatives to gather feedback, identify areas of good practice and development across programmes, and communicate key messages from Representatives and staff back to their member

Resource implications

10. Full student engagement is essential to the enhancement of the student experience. Schools would be encouraged to invite Societies where this doesn't happen already.

Risk management

11. There are risks associated with ineffectively responding to student feedback

Equality & diversity

12. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the normal process. No additional equality and diversity implications have been identified as a result of the proposed changes.

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

13. The guidance will be made available on the Academic Services and Student Voice webpages. A communication will also be sent to key stakeholders to notify them of the update and to encourage Schools to invite Societies where this doesn't happen already.

Author

*Gillian Mackintosh
December 2020*

Presenter

Academic Services

Freedom of Information

14. Open

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC)

Operational Guidance

(includes guidance to support the Hybrid Teaching Model)



THE UNIVERSITY
of EDINBURGH

Purpose of Guidance

This guidance sets out the principles and operational notes for Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs). The guidance was developed in partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association as one of the ways to support and promote the engagement of our students in their learning and to strengthen the value of SSLCs.

Additional guidance is included to support Schools running SSLCs digitally during the period of hybrid teaching.

Approaches to be taken and items for consideration are noted against each principle.

A resource list is available at the end of the document.

The guidance supports the Student Voice Policy.

Scope: Guidance is not Mandatory

The guidance applies to all students and staff involved in SSLCs.

Contact Officer

Gillian Mackintosh

Academic Policy Officer

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Document control

Dates	Approved:	Starts:	Equality impact assessment:	Amendments:	Next Review:
	03.09.15	01.07.13	11.09.15	<u>17/12/2020</u> <u>24.08.2020</u>	2021/2022

Approving authority

Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

Consultation undertaken

The Students' Association, current School Directors of Quality, a group of Academic and Administrative staff supporting SSLCs,

Section responsible for guidance maintenance & review

Academic Services

Related policies, procedures, guidelines & regulations

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/externalexaminerstaught.pdf>
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting>
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/iprsubjectareasschoolsstudentinvolvement.pdf>
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/guidance/enquiry>
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/guidanceschoolcommsrep.pdf>
<https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation/yourrepresentatives/programmereps/>
https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog_course_approval.pdf

UK Quality Code

UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance : Student Engagement

Guidance superseded by this guidance

Principles and operational notes for Student-Staff Liaison Committees

Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format please email Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 651 4490.

happen

SSLC, Student-Staff Liaison Committee, Student Representation, Edinburgh University Students' Association, External Examiners.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) are held in every School and are the main forum for Staff and student representatives to discuss matters relating to degree programmes and the student experience. Staff and student representatives are responsible for ensuring that students are made aware of how their feedback is acted upon after the SSLC meeting.

The following principles outline how SSLCs operate:

1.	Role	SSLCs provide a formal mechanism for communication and discussion between academic and administrative staff and representatives of the student body, relating to all matters connected with improving the degree programmes (at all levels of study including Undergraduate (UG), Postgraduate Taught (PGT) and Postgraduate Research (PGR)) and the student experience. In addition it provides a mechanism to escalate issues that are out with the remit of the SSLC to resolve, to School, College, University or Support Service for further action. No modification under hybrid teaching model
2.	Remit	<p>SSLCs should have a formal written remit which sets out the operation and governance of the SSLC, including where the SSLC sits in relation to other Committees in the School.</p> <p>The remit should also detail the mechanism for escalating issues out with the remit of the programme or School and how actions are reported back to the SSLC.</p> <p>Staff and student representatives are responsible for ensuring that students are made aware of how their feedback is acted upon after the SSLC meeting.</p> <p>The remit should set out the mechanism by which students will be notified on actions taken and expected response timelines. Schools are strongly encouraged to respond to issues in a timely manner, ideally within the same semester as the SSLC.</p> <p>The remit should be published on the School/Subject area/Research Centre/Institute website or equivalent and staff and students notified of its location. No modification under hybrid teaching model</p>
3	Membership	<p>Meetings should be attended by programme representatives for the programmes being discussed, and staff responsible for the leadership and organisation of the programme, including professional services staff as appropriate and relevant to school structure.</p> <p>Please note item for consideration under hybrid teaching model</p>
4	Frequency of meetings	<p>At least one formal meeting should be held in each semester, which should be agreed upon in consultation with School staff and student representatives.</p> <p>Schools must publish the date, time, and location of the meeting, inviting any additional items to be added to the agenda. It is suggested that this happens at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Please note item for consideration under hybrid teaching model</p>
5	Agenda items	<p>The agenda must be made available in advance of the meeting. Suggested agenda items are listed in section 5.2 No modification under hybrid teaching model</p>
6	Meeting format	<p>Students are encouraged to chair meetings or co-chair with staff.</p> <p>Schools are further encouraged to select a member of staff to support the student chair.</p> <p>All student representatives and students should have the opportunity to participate digitally during the meeting or input via other electronic means beforehand.</p>

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

		Exact format will vary between Schools however, an example of a basic format is described in section 6. Please note approaches to be taken
7	Minutes	Schools must publish minutes and inform students and staff where these are located No modification under hybrid teaching model

1. Role

Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) are meetings at which student representatives and staff supporting teaching and learning discuss the student experience which may include issues and activities in courses, programmes, and Schools.

As structures and systems vary between Schools, Institutes or Research Centres, the format of SSLCs may also be different to reflect this. Nonetheless, the principles should remain the same in that the committee provides a formal mechanism for communication and discussion between staff and representatives of the student body relating to all matters connected with the degree programme, and the student experience.

2. Remit

<p>Principle</p> <p>SSLCs should have a formal written remit which sets out the operation and governance of the SSLC, including where the SSLC sits in relation to other Committees in the School.</p> <p>The remit should also detail the mechanism for escalating issues out with the remit of the programme or School and how actions are reported back to the SSLC.</p> <p>Staff and student representatives are responsible for ensuring that students are made aware of how their feedback is acted upon after the SSLC meeting.</p> <p>The remit should set out the mechanism by which students will be notified on actions taken and expected response timelines. Schools are strongly encouraged to respond to issues in a timely manner, ideally within the same semester as the SSLC.</p> <p>The remit should be published on the School/Subject area/Research Centre/Institute website or equivalent and staff and students notified of its location.</p>
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2.1 Formal Remit

Staff and student representatives are encouraged to review the remit annually to ensure that it reflects current learning, teaching and research matters in the School/Subject area. This could take place at an appropriate forum such as an SSLC meeting.

2.2 Expectations

SSLCs are one way in which students and staff should engage in discussions to improve the student experience at the University of Edinburgh, including the digital learning environment for students not studying on campus.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

Following the launch of the UK Quality Code Advice and Guidance: Student Engagement (November 2018), the code states that ‘the provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience’.

Furthermore, the Code states: ‘Higher education providers, in partnership with their student body, define, promote, monitor and evaluate the range of opportunities to enable all students to engage in quality assurance and enhancement processes’.

Student representatives are expected to gather representative student views to identify good practice and areas for development to enhance the degree programme and student experience.

Students are encouraged to share suggestions with staff so they can work in partnership to enhance the student experience and create a strong academic community within their area.

Staff and student representatives are responsible for ensuring that students are made aware of how their feedback is acted upon after the SSLC meeting.

Schools are strongly encouraged to respond to issues in a timely manner, ideally within the same semester as the SSLC. This could happen at another meeting or via another route. Schools should state what can or will be done as there may be situations where issues cannot be easily or quickly resolved. (See Section 6.3 Communication following the SSLC)

Schools are expected to facilitate communication between student representatives and the students they represent. Schools should either share with student representatives the University student email address of the students they represent or facilitate alternative ways for representatives to contact all classmates e.g. via m-list.

Guidance is available for Schools which outlines the mechanisms by which Schools should share University student email addresses or facilitate alternative ways for student representatives to contact students in compliance with data protection guidelines.

Please refer to [Guidance for Schools regarding communication between Student Representatives and students](#) and the [Policy on Disclosure of Student Information](#)

Hybrid teaching model approach : Communication between student representatives and students

Approaches to be taken:

During this period of hybrid teaching, it is more important than ever that student representatives are provided with mechanisms to communicate with the student body when in-person communication will be limited.

As per the guidance above, Schools should either share with student representatives the University student email address of the students they represent or facilitate alternative ways for representatives to contact all classmates e.g. via m-list.

Schools should confirm with student representatives which mechanism will be used.

Representatives should be encouraged to confirm with the student body which mechanism will be used for their programme.

Items for consideration:

Consideration should be given to new students attending SSLC meetings bearing in mind that returning students have already established a sense of community which can make gathering

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

feedback from peers easier. New students may not have the same opportunities for in-person time to create a trusted community of practice.

Consideration should be given to ensure there is a space for development of a community of practice so that representatives are able to gather information from peers. This could be an area for the School and the Students' Association to consider over the semester.

3. Membership

Principle

Meetings should be attended by:

- Programme representatives for the programmes being discussed
- Staff responsible for the leadership and organisation of the programme
- Professional services staff as appropriate and relevant to school structure.

Hybrid teaching model approach

Items for consideration:

The flexibility of digital forums may enable a larger number of student representatives to participate.

The relevant elected Undergraduate/Postgraduate school representative may attend SSLC meetings in their School as they see fit, and at a minimum be informed of the business conducted. Their contact details can be obtained at <https://edin.ac/3qODPZP> or by emailing reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk

Where appropriate, Society Office Bearers within the School or subject area may attend SSLC meetings; ~~presidents of relevant academic societies within the School or subject area may attend SSLC meetings~~; their details are available via eusa.ed.ac.uk/societies

4. Frequency of meetings

Principle

At least one formal meeting should be held in each semester, which should be agreed upon in consultation with School staff and student representatives.

Schools must publish the date, time, and location of the meeting, inviting any additional items to be added to the agenda. It is suggested that this happens at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.

The frequency of SSLC meetings may vary between Schools depending on their size and structure as well as in terms of undergraduate and postgraduate provision.

For example some SSLCs may operate at School, subject area or programme level depending on their structure.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

At undergraduate level it may be more appropriate to meet once per semester whereas for postgraduate taught level it may be more appropriate to have additional meetings spread over the year.

Some subject areas and Schools may meet formally once a semester but may operate a more informal system throughout the year in terms of students having access to other meetings such as Director of Teaching meetings, School Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee meetings and meetings taking place at different levels (e.g. programme; subject area; school).

Therefore, Schools are expected to operate whichever system is most appropriate to their structure.

Good Practice

Some Schools list the dates of the meeting on the representative student timetable. Students receive a note in their student timetable encouraging them to communicate with their representative.

Some Schools schedule two meetings per semester; during week 3 /4 to discuss immediate issues at the start of semester, and towards the end of semester to feedback on actions.

Hybrid teaching model approach

Items for consideration:

Some Schools are considering holding a formal SSLC more than once a semester.

5. Agenda items

Principle

The agenda must be made available in advance of the meeting. Suggested agenda items are listed in section 5.2

5.1 Sharing information

Staff are expected to share information with students. This could include information such as themes arising from student surveys, themes from External Examiners reports, Part 3 External Examiner reports (Postgraduate Research), course and programme evaluation and review documentation, School Annual Quality Reports, and Internal Periodic Review reports. Student representatives and staff should collaborate to identify trends, areas for improvement and suggestions to enhance the student experience. Students' views should be sought on new programmes and courses as well as on changes to existing ones and the SSLC could provide a forum for this type of discussion. (see [Programme and Course Approval and Management policy](#))

5.2 Suggested agenda items

Agenda items can be suggested by students and staff. Although the exact format of meetings will vary between schools, this is an example of the basic format which many follow, in the order that they occur.

- Minutes of last meeting including update on actions
- Agenda items suggested by students

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

- Standing items: School, College or University wide issues and any updates from School Representatives
- School Annual Quality report
- Themes arising from Student Surveys, course enhancement questionnaires
- Themes from for mid-course feedback
- Internal Periodic Review preparation, where appropriate
- Internal Periodic Review reports and responses, where appropriate
- Themes from External Examiner summary reports
- Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Body (PSRB) accreditation outcome reports, where appropriate
- Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR), where appropriate
- Staff communications
- Student Partnership Agreement: priorities and any local activities which may be of relevance
- Any other business (AOB)
- Date of Next Meeting

5.3 External Examiner summary reports at SSLCs

Schools must provide an opportunity for student representatives to view themes extracted from External Examiner reports and the School's summarised response to these themes (section 68 External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy).

In order to streamline material being presented to SSLCs, Schools are encouraged to summarise points from External Examiner reports and group them into themes, together with the response from the School/Subject area/Programme and highlight areas of good practice.

In some Schools, the School-level SSLC may not be the most appropriate forum for discussion of themes and responses as this will take place at department or programme level rather than as part of the School as a whole.

There may be instances where one External Examiner's report may be relevant to more than one SSLC particularly for joint degrees. Therefore, each School is expected to decide which SSLC is most appropriate to their structure for the consideration of the summary reports.

Undergraduate External Examiner reports are received after the summer exam diet. For undergraduate students, the summary reports should be submitted to the first SSLC meeting of the academic year.

Postgraduate Taught External Examiner reports are received at the end of November and the summary reports will be submitted for consideration at SSLCs in the second semester.

It is expected that the summary reports and responses are emailed to SSLC members ahead of the meeting and in good time to allow members to prepare responses for discussion.

The consideration of summary reports is an opportunity to be involved in discussion of potential improvements to courses and programmes recommended by the External Examiners. During the SSLC meeting, students are expected to consider the themes and responses in the summary report and be encouraged to provide comments and suggestions.

However, there may be occasions when an External Examiner makes a suggestion or recommendation that is not possible/practicable for the University to implement. The response from the School to the External Examiner should demonstrate that the University has given full and serious consideration to the comments made and indicates the reason that action cannot be taken forward.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

Following consideration of the themes at the SSLC, it is expected that comments and suggestions are recorded in the SSLC meeting minutes.

Depending on recommendations, ongoing actions would be reported to SSLC meetings later in the academic year and ultimately through subsequent External Examiner reports.
(Section 68.1- 68.4 External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy)

Individual students and members of staff will not be named in the reports.

Good Practice

Some Schools ask the student representatives to suggest items under the headings of Start, Stop and Continue or by theme.

6. Meeting format

Principle

Students are encouraged to chair meetings or co-chair with staff.

Schools are further encouraged to select a member of staff to support the student chair.

All student representatives and students should have the opportunity to participate digitally during the meeting or input via other electronic means beforehand.

Exact format will vary between Schools however, an example of a basic format is described below.

Hybrid teaching model approach

Approaches to be taken:

During semester one 2020/21, SSLC meetings should be held digitally.

University Supported Tools/ Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs): for digital meetings

IMPORTANT:

- Only tools/VLEs for digital events supported by the University's Information Services should be used for digital SSLC meetings. These are listed at: <https://edin.ac/3fKUA6U>
- All other documentation and correspondence related to the SSLC should be managed using University email accounts.
- All information relating to the SSLC should be managed in accordance with data protection, freedom of information and records management legislation.

General:

- Schools/Deaneries are encouraged to use the tool that students and staff are most familiar with.
- The functionality of the various tools should be considered, e.g. breakout rooms, sharing screens, capacity.
- Information Services [Online & Digital Events Service](#) provides information on which tool is most suitable for your digital meeting.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

Guidance for those organising meetings:

For School/Subject area

- The meeting organiser will be encouraged to appoint a deputy chair to take over should the chair be unable to participate in a meeting.
- Consideration should be given to attendees' working environments (including any caring responsibilities and/or time zone issues) and how they can be supported to participate.
- The overall length of the meeting will be discussed and agreed with the School/Subject Area and student representatives. Ideally, meetings are limited to 50 minutes. If meetings last over an hour, a break of 10 minutes is scheduled, with the planned break communicated to participants in advance.
- Slides outlining solutions to common IT issues e.g. audio/video settings could be shown at the start of meetings to help participants.
- Participants are encouraged to arrive five minutes before the official start to ensure any issues can be addressed and the meeting can start promptly. It is helpful if the meeting secretary is available five minutes before the start also.
- It is helpful to agree how meetings with staff and students will be managed in terms of the options with the tools (see also technology considerations and meeting etiquette). This may differ for different participants and also the number of participants in a meeting.
- In meetings with a higher number of participants, it may be helpful to identify another member of staff to support the meeting secretary to facilitate the meeting (e.g. admitting participants if required and keeping an eye on participants indicating that they wish to speak).
- Digital meetings should not be recorded.
- Depending on the tool used, participants may need to be admitted to the meeting.
- Try to stick to the scheduled time for meetings, allowing time for introductions and any technical issues at the beginning of each meeting.
- If a meeting looks likely to run over the time allocated, it is important to check with participants if they can continue for a period of extra time. Make this period of extra time clear and have a cut-off point.

Technology considerations

- The meeting chair and secretary should test the tool being used for digital meetings in advance and become familiar with the main functions. Allow time for this.
- Consider how technology issues during the digital meeting will be dealt with.

Guidance for those participating in SSLC digital meetings

- Please access the meeting on time, ideally about 5 minutes before the official start time, to ensure any issues can be dealt with and the meeting can start promptly.
- The meeting will begin with an explanation on how it will be managed e.g. if participants should mute their microphones when not speaking, when the hand-raising feature should be used, and how the meeting will be chaired.
- As with in-person meetings, it is important that meetings keep to time and everyone has a chance to have their say.

Items for consideration:

One School has reported success in using a combination of digital tools and platforms to facilitate student feedback and Questions & Answer sessions.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

Some Schools are noting a preference for using Collaborate due to its functionality e.g. moderator function, easier sharing of the screen and breakout rooms which is useful.

Attempting to organise a meeting which happens synchronously in a room on campus and brings in others who are participating digitally may be complicated to set up. Opting for a digital meeting approach will be easier and less resource intensive for those responsible for organising.

Some Schools found that Drop-in and Town Hall style meetings worked well after the pivot to digital teaching as a mechanism of gathering feedback and for general communications.

Some Schools may wish to consider running an SSLC as an asynchronous event rather than a time bound live meeting. This may make the meeting more accessible for all if it could run over a slightly longer time period and students and staff could use chat functionality and collaborative document editing.

6.1 Chairing of meetings

Students are encouraged to chair meetings. This could be an elected school representative or another trained programme representative. Schools may wish for the chair person to be neutral (e.g. not a student on-programme, Programme Director or Course Organiser teaching on the programme which is being discussed). Schools are encouraged to assign a member of staff to support the student chair and facilitate the student's leadership role within the SSLC.

Further information for students on preparing for and chairing meetings, is available on the Students' Association programme representative resource area (a closed area for programme representatives), and on the Students' Association website at: www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/programmereps

Good Practice

Some Schools may choose to ask the school representative to chair the SSLC meeting(s).

Some Schools organise a welcome event at the start of semester so representatives have a clear understanding of the role and expectations and to make them aware of the staff who can offer support.

Hybrid teaching model approach

Approaches to be taken:

Meeting etiquette – tips for the meeting Chair

In advance

Agree how meetings will be managed in terms of the options with the tools (see also technology considerations). This may differ for different participants and also the number of participants in a meeting. Things to consider:

- Generally, it is good practice to ask participants to mute microphones when not speaking and to ask them to use the hand raising function when they wish to speak. This approach may not be necessary for smaller SSLC digital meetings.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

- If Wi-Fi or broadband speed is an issue, participants can be asked to turn off videos to improve connections.
- What action will be taken if a participant's connection, video or audio is lost? Ideally, the meeting should continue and, should the participant be able to re-join, they should be provided with a short recap of the discussion missed. If a number of participants have connection issues, the Chair can consider how to follow-up with those affected.

During the meeting

- Once everyone is present, begin the meeting with a welcome, introductions and confirmation of how the meeting will be managed.
- Pause periodically to ask if participants wish to comment or ask questions.
- Participants may need to come and go during the meeting due to other commitments. Allow time for these transitions and consider using tool functions such as lobbies to support this.
- Ensure regular breaks are taken and stick to timings wherever possible.
- Meetings may be interrupted and/or postponed – be flexible and agree on follow-up actions.
- Agree how any follow-up will be managed e.g. how action points will be taken forward and responded to.
- Thank participants as they leave and at the end of the meeting.

6.2 Student participation

All students engaging with courses at the University either digitally or in person should have the opportunity to participate during the meeting or input via other electronic means beforehand.

All student representatives are expected to be able to input into the agenda; receive papers before meetings and minutes afterwards.

Meeting organisers are expected to consider the following when arranging the timing of meetings:

- the availability of students who have work commitments,
- time zone considerations,
- allow students plenty of notice of the meeting,
- ensure in advance that students can access whichever system is being used.

Schools/Deaneries are encouraged to use the tool that students and staff are most familiar with. The functionality of the various tools should be considered, e.g. breakout rooms, sharing screens, capacity.

Information Services [Online & Digital Events Service](#) provides information on which tool is most suitable for your digital meeting.

6.3 Communication following the SSLC

Students and staff are not expected to give an immediate response at meetings to all issues or where they would want to consult further. Students may feel it necessary to consult with students in the cohort or with students in other parts of the School. Most important of all, if any action is called for and agreed upon it should be promptly reported back to students via student representatives.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

Staff and student representatives are responsible for reporting back information to those they represent and taking ownership of any action points agreed at the meeting.

Schools are expected to appoint named academic and professional services staff contacts in each School for student representatives to discuss any additional issues as they arise or request additional meetings if required. Student representatives and the Students' Association (reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk) are expected to be kept informed of the contact details of these staff.

Good Practice

Some Schools prepare a 'You Said, We Did' response, post it on Learn and inform students via announcements and email.

The School of Physics & Astronomy lists the suggestions/issues raised by students and the responses/actions on a wiki page which is updated regularly :
<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/PALiaisonCommittee/SSLC+Actions>

Hybrid teaching model approach

Approaches to be taken:

As in-person communication will be limited under the hybrid teaching model, Schools/Deaneries should inform students of how the closing the feedback loop mechanism will operate in the digital environment.

Items for consideration:

One School reported that student representatives were invited to submit comments in writing about any issues/concerns they would have raised or addressed at the meeting. Comments were forwarded to key committee members (convenor, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Undergraduate Manager etc.) who formulated responses. Comments and responses were collated, along with any updates to previous action items, and distributed to all members. This document was then finalised as the committee minutes.

One School is intending to host the SSLC on Learn and widen the membership from the student reps to include all on programme.

The School will use this platform to host information for students including the SSLC remit, what feedback can be actioned through this forum, themes for development and setting expectations.

When students raise an issue, they school will ask reps to take a quick poll on how wide spread the issue is, to avoid a smaller number of student voices determining the work of the SSLC.

In addition, the School will compliment digital meetings on Collaborate for student reps, with questions and requests for student feedback happening from the beginning of the academic year and throughout.

Students will now be able to feedback through different channels including discussion boards on Learn and emailing reps directly.

One School is considering an approach whereby queries and concerns are collated beforehand (and potentially responded to) and then a virtual debrief via Collaborate will be held to discuss the matters raised further and to allow for any additional feedback. The School would look to open up the meeting to a greater number of students.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

7. Minutes

Principle

Schools must publish minutes and inform students and staff where these are located

It is expected that the minutes follow the same structure as the agenda outline.

The person nominated to write the minute is expected to identify agreed action points and assign them to specific individuals, with a target completion date.

It is normally the responsibility of a member of staff to write the minute, and students would not be expected to carry out this task. However, where a student member volunteers or is nominated to write minutes, it is expected that they would be supported by a member of staff to ensure that actions are directed appropriately.

Schools must publish the minutes on the School/Subject area webpages or equivalent.

It is expected that minutes are made available as soon as possible after the meeting.

Minutes can be made available to Internal Periodic Review teams if there is a particular theme from the reflective report to be followed up.

Minutes may be reviewed by Senate Quality Assurance Committee and/or College Quality Committee in relation to themes emerging from the escalation of issues

Good Practice

The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies provides a student representative starter pack detailing an example of clear and helpful style of minutes and flowchart detailing the pathway of the minutes.

Examples from Schools who publish minutes on website:

History, Classics and Archaeology:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/history-classics-archaeology/information-current-undergraduates/your-studies/your-degree-programme/student-liaison/committee-structure>

Philosophy: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/ppls/philosophy/current/undergraduate/student-representation>
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/geosciences/teaching-organisation/ug-students/student-representation/sslc>

Engineering:

<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/etohub/Peer+Support+and+Student+Representatives>

Centre for Open Learning:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/lifelong-learning/students/student-representation/programme-representatives/student-staff-liaison-committee>

8. Equality

Schools should determine appropriate mechanisms for ensuring that all student representatives have an opportunity to participate. It is suggested that Schools consider the use of digital forums/meetings where appropriate.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Operational Guidance

Resources

- Online and digital events service: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/desktop-personal/off-site-working/online-meetings>
- Advice and guidance on online and hybrid events: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/comms-and-collab/online-meetings-and-events/advice-and-guidance>
- Examples of online events and good practice : <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/comms-and-collab/online-meetings-and-events/user-stories>
- University supported Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs): <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/learning-technology/virtual-environments>
- sparqs COVID-19 hub - sector resources: <https://www.sparqs.ac.uk/page.php?page=888>
- Strathclyde University Students' Union How to be an Effective Rep Online: <https://www.strathunion.com/pageassets/voice/studentreps/represources/How-to-be-an-Effective-Rep-Online.pdf>
- National Student Engagement Programme: Quick Guide on Hosting Online SSLCs <https://studentengagement.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Quick-Guide-on-Hosting-Online-Staff-Student-Committees.WEBpdf.pdf>

August 2020

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

**Task Groups:
Updates**

Executive Summary

This report updates the Committee on activities of the two current task groups: the Personal Tutor (PT) system Oversight Group and the Data Task Group.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper is relevant to the University's Strategic Goal of 'excellence in education' and the Strategic Theme of 'Outstanding student experience'.

Action requested

For information.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

- 1. Resource implications (including staffing)**
No resource implications are identified.
- 2. Risk assessment**
No risks are associated with the paper.
- 3. Equality and Diversity**
Equality and diversity considerations are integral to the work of the task groups.
- 4. Freedom of information**
Yes.

Key words

Personal Tutor, Data

Originator of the paper

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

Task Groups: Updates

Personal Tutor (PT) system Oversight Group

At the meeting held on 9 September 2020 the Committee agreed to maintain the Group as an oversight forum during the transition to the new system of student support.

In November 2020 Nichola Kett and Brian Connolly (Academic Services) met with Professor Alan Murray and Ros Classe (the Adaptation and Renewal team responsible for the transition to the new PT system) to discuss the role of the Group. It was agreed that there was a need for a strategic forum enabling stakeholders to discuss issues as they arise during the transition period to the new student support system. It was also agreed that the Group should meet again in February 2021 to consider feedback on the current PT system.

In preparation for this meeting the Deans of Students have been asked to gather informal feedback from the Senior Tutors in their College to find out if there are any issues that need to be addressed at University level or good practice that can be shared across the PT system. Data from the School and College annual reports will also be considered at the meeting. The outcome of this Group meeting will in turn be reported back to the Committee and the PT and Student Support Review team for further consideration.

Data Task Group

The Data Task Group (exploring data options for a new system of monitoring student retention, progression, and attainment) met for the first time on 3 November 2020. The membership of the Group is as follows: **Dr Paul Norris**, Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval (CAHSS); **Paula Webster**, Head of Student Data and Surveys (Student Systems); **Fizzy Abou Jawad**, Vice President (Education), Students' Association; **Brian Connolly**, Academic Services.

Brian Connolly
Academic Services
December 2020

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

**Thematic Review 2018-19:
Black and minority ethnic (BME) students'
experiences of support at the University**

Progress Update

Description of paper:

1. A progress update of the implementation of the recommendations of the [Thematic Review 2018-19: Black and minority ethnic \(BME\) students' experiences of support at the University](#).

Action requested / recommendation:

2. For information.

Background and context:

3. At the meeting previous meeting the Committee agreed to seek regular progress updates in relation to the Thematic Review 2018-19.

Discussion:

4. Committee is asked to note progress.

Resource implications:

5. Resource implications were considered as part of the review.

Risk management:

6. Risks were considered as part of the review.

Equality & diversity:

7. Equality and diversity was an integral part of the review.

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

8. Committee Secretary will feedback comments to relevant areas.

Author

Prof Rowena Arshad, Convenor, Race
Equality and Anti-Racist Sub-Group

Presenter

Brian Connolly, Academic Policy
Officer, Academic Services

Freedom of Information: Open

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Thematic Review 2017-18:
Black and minority ethnic (BME) students' experiences of support at the University**

Update on Recommendations/Remitted Actions

Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), at the meeting held on Wednesday 18 September 2019, approved the final report of the [Thematic Review 2018-19: Black and minority ethnic \(BME\) students' experiences of support at the University](#). The recommendations of the review were then remitted to the individuals and areas identified in the report and a taskforce established by Professor Sarah Cunningham-Burley under the new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee, to drive forward the recommendations. SQAC is required to oversee progress on the implementation of the report recommendations, via an initial 14 week report and then subsequent annual reports, until all outstanding actions have been resolved.

SQAC is required to oversee progress on the implementation of the report recommendations, via an initial 14 week report and then subsequent annual reports, until all outstanding actions have been resolved. In September 2020 SQAC considered year-on responses from the individuals and areas with remitted actions updating the Committee on progress and identifying possible barriers to completion (these have been included below).

The individuals and areas with outstanding actions have been asked to provide a further response to each action, noting expected timescales for completion and highlighting potential barriers to progress. The following responses were received:

Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Year-on Update	Current Update
The Review Panel recommends that the University work with the student BME Liberation Campaign, BME Staff Network, and the Race Equality Working Group (see section 4.1.5) to identify mechanisms for reporting racial micro-aggressions and racism.	June 2021	The University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee has since been set up and a Race Equality and Anti-Racist Sub-Group formed. This sub-group, led by Prof Rowena Arshad, has representation from	A meeting took place with Ayanda Ngobeni (EUSA BME Liberation Officer), Adam Bunni (Academic Services) and Caroline Wallace (HR) on 3rd November to look at how report and support can be improved for BME students. It was agreed an intern should be appointed to work with EUSA and

		<p>the Students' Association Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Liberation Officer, BAME staff and student networks. A key priority identified (and endorsed by the University Executive) is to ensure the Report and Support mechanisms are fit for purpose to enable reporting of racism and racial harassment with appropriate support and feedback to those reporting. A requirement is also to ensure that where appropriate, sanctions are applied to those committing racism and racial harassment. There should also be opportunities for anonymous reporting. A meeting will take place by end of October between Deputy University Secretary Gavin Douglas with Rowena Arshad (Race Equality sub-group convenor) and Ayanda Ngobeni (BAME Liberation Officer). Developments will also be discussed at the Race Equality sub-group meeting on 6th October 2020.</p>	<p>also REAR to take this forward. Johanna Holtan is now co-convening REAR with Rowena Arshad and will have responsibility for taking this forward. A concern is that financial issues are holding up the expansion of the Report and Support mechanism to include protected characteristics beyond gender. There is also concern that the 'support' aspects are lagging. The aim is to have an intern in place by Semester 2 who will liaise with EUSA liberation officers, with staff networks and Academic Services so that an improved R &S mechanism will be in place by start of session 2021/22.</p>
<p>The Review Panel recommends that the University work with the student BME Liberation Campaign, BME Staff Network and the Race Equality Working</p>	<p>Semester 2, 2020/21</p>	<p>The Sense of Belonging strand of the Student Experience Action Plan is working on various</p>	<p>The University Executive has approved the running of the Harvard Measuring Discrimination Survey in Semester 2. This</p>

<p>Group (see section 4.1.5) to identify mechanisms that address BME staff-student experiences.</p>		<p>aspects capturing BAME student experiences. (e.g. the work being taken forward with a PTAS grant by Dr Mohini Gray).</p> <p>SQAC will be asked for advice on what could be put in place to ensure that Schools report on BAME dimensions of student experience.</p> <p>There is a proposal to capture BAME staff experiences currently being discussed with the EDI Committee lead, Prof Sarah Cunningham-Burley, to be taken forward, if funded during Semester 1 2020/21.</p>	<p>will be run by Dr Gwenetta Curry (MVM) and will capture BME staff experiences.</p> <p>The key focus for improving BME student experiences for this academic year is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Have in place a BME Counsellor (b) Provide racial literacy training for students (c) Begin a whole University effort to consider what decolonising the curriculum means. Half of the Schools in the University now have a lead for Decolonising the Curriculum. A meeting will be held of all the School leads in Semester 2 to ensure there is a baseline understanding of what Decolonisation means to enable a degree of consistency in development (d) Improve report and support mechanisms.
<p>The Review Panel recommends that University Leadership recognise the need to improve knowledge and upskill in the area of developing racial literacy.</p>	<p>Semester 2 2020/21</p>	<p>This is recognised and a mechanism still needs to be worked out as to how to achieve this. There is a high profile lecture series The Edinburgh Race Lecture Series (Protocol Office and RaceED), and the Principal has chaired at least one of these. University Executive/Academic Strategy Group encouraged to read Enno-Lodge's 'Why I'm no longer talking to White People about Race'.</p>	<p>Staff resources have been produced to assist this.</p> <p>However what is now needed is to provide race equality and anti-racist training beyond static resources.</p>

<p>The Review Panel recommends that the Principal leads a conversation on 'race' in higher education and the implications for the University of Edinburgh.</p>	<p>Dec 2020</p>	<p>The Principal has led conversations within the University in specific meetings of the Academic Strategy Group (17th June 2020) and Leaders Forum (7th July 2020), and Court (July 24th 2020).</p> <p>Continued conversations planned with at least one online townhall meeting for all University EDI leads and possibly one for all staff (September to December 2020).</p> <p>A circular was sent to all staff outlining the University's initial action areas for race equality on 21st July 2020.</p>	<p>Meeting with EDI leads will take place on Dec 3rd 2020. A townhall meeting for all staff will take place in Semester 2.</p>
<p>The Review Panel recommends that the University provide each Head of College, School, and Professional Service area with a copy of 'Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race'.</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>An e-book link has been sent to all service and school leads.</p>	
<p>The Review Panel recommends that the University reapplies for the Race Equality Charter Mark (RECM).</p>		<p>The University will begin discussions on this at the end of Semester 2 of the 2020/21 session with the intention of an application being made in 2022.</p>	

<p>The Review Panel recommends that the University conduct a benchmarking of approaches to supporting BME students across the UK. The findings of this exercise must be implemented at a level above the benchmarked basic level of provision.</p>		<p>This is being taken forward by the Student Experience Action Plan team.</p>	<p>I suspect there is no movement forward on this due to workload pressure. I have not chased as my priority has been to take forward the five areas that the Uni Exec have prioritised– see attached document.</p>
<p>The Review Panel recommends that the EDMARC Report receives a high profile communication upon publication and that each College, School, and Professional Service is systematically required to provide a formal response each year.</p>		<p>Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP) has agreed to take this forward from 2020/21.</p>	
<p>The Review Panel recommends that the University review the collection of data for BME students to provide more granular data, accessible via the PowerBI Data dashboards.</p>		<p>Equality Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) will take this forward AY 20/21.</p>	<p>The BI team in CAHSS has built an EDI dashboard for the College which breaks down data per School. This data will be analysed centrally at College level with a report given to each School who have been asked by the end of the 2020/21 academic session to have identified areas for action to address issues identified for each School e.g. attainment gap, representation.</p> <p>MVM and CSE are also working on analysing data to identify next steps.</p> <p>There is a need to encourage all staff to respond to requests for monitoring as the staff data in particular is less detailed than then data held for students.</p>
<p>The Review Panel recommends that the University requires Colleges, Schools, Deaneries, and</p>		<p>See response to first recommendation.</p>	<p>See School Annual Quality Report Sub Group Report.</p>

Professional Services to respond to BME data as part of annual review processes.			
The Review Panel recommends that the Sense of Belonging strand of the Student Experience Action Plan consider ways of specifically improving the experience of community and belonging for BME students.		Sense of Belonging strand of the Student Experience Action Plan will take this forward.	
The Review Panel recommends that the University recognise and celebrate the contributions of BME staff and students.	October 6th	RACE:ED is now launched https://www.race.ed.ac.uk/ and captures the work of all academics in teaching, research and knowledge exchange in the area of race equality. There will be events related to Black History Month each year. However, further work needs to occur about how we celebrate the contributions of BAME staff and students. This will be brought to the Race Equality and Anti-Racist Sub-Committee meeting on October 6 th 2020.	REAR meeting on Oct 6th did not consider this and the next meeting is on February 23rd 2021. An email has been sent to all REAR members to seek ideas by December 15th which will be collated for the meeting in February. Once collated, the information will be shared with SQAC.
The Review Panel recommends that the University recruit a new BME Outreach Officer to work with BME communities. The Review Panel encourages the University to use positive action to diversify staffing.		Delayed due to the Covid19 pandemic.	Still delayed due to the pandemic but funding has been allocated.
The Review Panel recommends that the University commit to increase the percentage of BME staff,		This is one of 5 priority areas identified in the circular sent to all	Will now chase to find out who I am meant to speak to on this. I know this sits within

<p>both academic and professional services, with immediate priority in the professional services areas. The Review Panel encourages the University to use positive action to diversify staffing.</p>		<p>staff outlining the University's initial action areas for race equality on 21st July 2020. Actual next steps still to be identified. Meeting between EDI Committee Convenor and Corporate Services Group (CSG) Directors held 27/8/2020 to discuss how to take this (and other EDI matters) forward. Plan to be developed for EDI governance within CSG and action plan which diversifying staff will be considered. Meetings with other Support Groups to be set up.</p>	<p>Sarah Smith's portfolio but I am sure the diversifying of the workforce action has been given to someone in her team – but do not know who.</p>
<p>The Review Panel recommends that Student Recruitment and Admissions consult with the Students' Association and the student BME Liberation Campaign to explore how the pre-arrival information can be enhanced to better meet the needs of BME students.</p>		<p>Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA) has started to revise the material being given out to students.</p> <p>Shelagh Green leading on Adaptation and Renewal Team (ART) work around EDI training for students.</p>	
<p>The Review Panel recommends that the Sense of Belonging strand of the Student Experience Action Plan consult with the Students' Association and the student BME Liberation Campaign to agree how best to target funding for BME groups, societies and networks.</p>		<p>Sense of Belonging strand of the Student Experience Action Plan will take this forward.</p>	

<p>The Review Team recommends that the Service Excellence Programme ensure that a systematic staff training programme is an integral part of the final recommendations of the current Personal Tutor and Student Support Team Review.</p>		<p>Conversations are happening with those leading on the Student Support Team review. The work by the team has been paused due to the pandemic.</p>	<p>Paused due to the pandemic.</p>
<p>The Review Panel recommends that the Student Counselling Service use positive action to diversify its staffing.</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	<p>This is one of 5 priority areas identified in the circular sent to all staff outlining the University's initial action areas for race equality on 21st July 2020. We expect the Counselling Service to have in place mechanisms to better meet the needs of a multicultural and multilingual student community by the end of Semester 1 of 2020/21.</p>	<p>A job description has been pulled together to allow an advert to go forward for a BAME Counsellor to be appointed in house. UoE Legal Services have been involved to advise on triggering positive action that might be possible under the Equality Act 2010.</p>
<p>The Review Panel recommends that the Student Counselling Service should ensure that it has a Service Level Agreement in place with any organisation that it uses to support University of Edinburgh students.</p>	<p>January 2021</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>Andy Shanks and Ronnie Millar have been working with UoE Procurement and Legal Depts to run a pilot project whereby we work with an external provider to provide us with increased choice in accessing a BAME counsellor for BAME students- this is part of Plan A (the integrated/ blended approach), and can stand alone as Plan B in itself.</p>
<p>The Review Panel recommends that the Student Counselling Service conduct a benchmarking of approaches to supporting BME students across the UK. The findings of this exercise must be implemented at a level above the benchmarked basic level of provision.</p>		<p>Delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>Our priority is to get a Counselling service provision up and running asap that can meet the needs of BAME students. So a Benchmarking exercise should occur but actually we know that that we should get on</p>

			with the action of improving our service and continue to benchmark alongside.
The Review Panel recommends that the proposed Curriculum Review enables BME students to be involved in diversifying content, including the co-design of curricula and assessments. Academic staff must collaborate with BME students to understand their experiences in the design, implementation and evaluation of their access, progression, and employability activities.	Dec 2020	<p>There is an action point in the University circular mentioned above that we will be looking for each School to begin discussions about Decolonising the Curriculum in their various subject areas.</p> <p>The Vice Principal Students has also agreed to be a champion for equalities issues (including race equality) as part of the lead person in charge of the Curriculum Review.</p>	
The Review Panel recommends that the University address the attainment/awarding gap. The action plan should include targets to reduce the attainment gap.		This work is being taken forward with a PTAS grant by Dr Mohini Gray and will last for 13 months-reporting by Semester 1 2021/22.	
The Review Panel recommends that Senate Quality Assurance Committee implement systematic monitoring of retention, progression and degree outcome data for BME students and, if appropriate, recommend interventions where there are clear and consistent patterns of divergence between BME students and white students.		SQAC has identified this as one of its priorities for the academic year 2020-21.	SQAC has established a Data Task Group to progress this action for the 2020-21 academic year.

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

Enhancement Themes End of Year 3/Theme Report

Executive Summary

This paper presents the University's end of year 3/theme report of the Enhancement Theme, Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience.

How does this align with the University / Committee's strategic plans and priorities?

The paper is relevant to the Committee's responsibility for the quality assurance framework.

Action requested

The Committee is asked to note the report.

How will any action agreed be implemented and communicated?

See the 'Dissemination of Work' section of the report.

Resource / Risk / Compliance

1. Resource implications (including staffing)

Resource implications for any additional activities/projects were managed by Academic Services in consultation with the relevant colleagues.

2. Risk assessment

Risks were considered as part of individual activities/projects.

3. Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity was considered as part of individual activities/projects.

4. Freedom of information

Open.

Key words

Enhancement theme, evidence for enhancement

Originator of the paper

Nichola Kett, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services
10 December 2020



Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience

End of Year 3/End of Theme Report for University of Edinburgh

Institutional team

There were no changes to Theme leadership or the Institutional Team membership in 2019/20 other than the Students' Association Vice President Education.

Outcomes/activity

A key priority in year three of the Theme has continued to be supporting staff at all levels (School, College and University) to make evidence informed decisions to enhance the student experience. This has been taken forward through the following activities:

- Evaluation of the annual monitoring PowerBI student data dashboards developed following a review of the sources of data that support key quality assurance and enhancement processes

In-depth evaluation report

- Use the annual monitoring student data dashboards for internal periodic review to ensure that remit items explored during reviews are evidence-based and address key strategic issues.

A separate dashboard, using the same data as for annual monitoring, has been developed. This is primarily used by Academic Services (who manage the internal periodic review process) to produce reports for the review area and team. Review areas are also encouraged to use the recently developed Insights Hub, a searchable directory of analysis and insights produced by teams across the University.

Additionally, a subject specific remit item document which encourages and supports reflection on data to identify remit items for reviews to focus on, has been implemented for internal periodic reviews in 2020/21. This was developed locally during the internal periodic review of Chemistry in 2019/20.

- Explore support and training opportunities for staff using the PowerBI student data dashboards. This will include considering how sector resources could be used.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to carry out face-to-face training for the PowerBI student data dashboards in advance of the next annual monitoring cycle. Therefore, Student Analytics, Insight and Modelling created a library of four 'how to'

videos for PowerBI to help use and maximise understanding of the tool and the data in it. The videos cover:

- How to use the Assessment and Progression Modelling Tool
 - How to open and navigate around PowerBI
 - How to use filters and expand graphs in PowerBI
 - How to export PowerBI Dashboards
- Evaluate the provision of standard high-level analysis of student feedback to School student representatives.

In-depth evaluation report

- Further research into specific non-continuation challenges.

We have carried out detailed work to investigate specific non-continuation challenges. The most recently published Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Performance Indicator for non-continuation of young UK domiciled 2017/18 entrants, shows that our percentage for no longer in Higher Education for the session following entry is 2.6%; lower, that is more favourable, than for any other recent cohort. Our statistic is now below, that is more favourable than, our HESA calculated benchmark of 2.8% (the HESA benchmark represents the average across the UK Higher Education sector for our subject and entry standards mix). Our non-continuation rate is less than half that of the UK sector (6.8%) and the Scottish sector (6.1%).

We know that non-continuation rates vary between our Schools and between some student groups. In depth analysis investigated these patterns across four cohorts. Regression analysis was incorporated into the study, to suggest which factors were more powerful predictors of non-continuation. Amongst other insights this suggested that Scotland domicile, and socio-economic factors were more powerful predictors of non-continuation than which of our Schools the students were attached to. Since then we have opened a conversation with the Students' Association about joining their data into this analysis. This would investigate, for example, the extent to which engagement with societies is correlated with success but it will require a data sharing agreement to be compliant with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). We are currently working on extended analysis, incorporating more cohorts and the programme entry qualification level of UK students; to examine the extent to which these are correlated with non-continuation rates.

- Gather more examples of closing the student feedback loop to add to the staff-facing web resources (aligns with mid-course feedback evaluation and course enhancement questionnaire review outcomes). Continue to monitor engagement.

No further examples were gathered, however, the [web resources](#) were shared throughout 2019/20 in emails sent to staff in key roles about the requirement to carry out mid-course feedback which included links to supporting resources. The web resources contain a link to the Responding to the Student Voice resource pack on the Enhancement Themes website.

The web pages have been viewed 1561 times in total from launch in May 2018 to April 2020. Viewing spikes were observed around the times of the emails being sent out in October 2019 and February 2020.

- Share and evaluate the student voice mechanisms graphically designed visual representation.

In-depth evaluation report

- Evaluate the handover document implemented for all programme representatives to fill in at the end of their tenure.

In-depth evaluation report

- Project funding

The Institutional Team agreed not to fund projects in 2019/20.

The Institutional Team continued to receive updates on the following projects:

- 1) Strategic performance measurement dashboards (Governance and Strategic Planning)

To allow us to measure our performance and progress against our activities, we are developing a Strategic Performance Framework for Strategy 2030. Discussions are currently underway with colleagues across the University to establish our key performance indicators for Strategy 2030. The basket of measures being consulted on cover the breadth of University activity. Where appropriate, we are linking our Performance Framework to areas where performance measures already exist and where progress against activity is already reported. Where measures from our 2016 Strategic Plan continue to be relevant, we will refine and roll these forward into the Strategy 2030 Strategic Performance Framework. We are developing new measures for new activity aligned to Strategy 2030 and where existing KPIs do not exist. When the measures have been agreed by the University, with milestones and goals articulated, we will publish our Performance Framework on the University website.

- 2) Learn Foundations, was minimum standards for Virtual Learning Environment (Learning, Teaching and Web)

Information on the multi-year service improvement project helping Schools to better support students via Learn (our Virtual Learning Environment) can be found at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/learning-technology/virtual-environments/learn/about-learn/learn-foundations>

Usability testing your VLE: A service design approach to Learn Foundations <https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/website-communications/a-service-design-approach-to-learn-foundations/> is included in the Focus On technology enhanced learning resource hub.

- 3) Evaluation of lecture recording implementation (Learning, Teaching and Web)

The publication: [Delivering and evaluating lecture recording](#) tells the story of the origin, procurement and successful roll-out of the lecture recording programme.

- 4) Analysing student survey data (Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling)

The Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling team have been working to improve the analysis of student survey data and access to the data. Towards the end of 2018/19 new reports were launched in Power BI which provide all members of the

University with trends and data visualisations alongside data tables and survey comments with a key word search functionality. Moving to this software has allowed us to release analysis of survey data as soon as surveys close or on results day for the NSS. The survey reports are some of the most used in the University, with the NSS report ranked first.

5) Beyond analytics: Exploring the impact of Teaching Matters on learning and teaching practices (Institute for Academic Development)

A small team in the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) are conducting a mixed-methods research project to map the experiences of Teaching Matters authors and readers to gain greater insights into how teaching and learning conversations circulate, and generate impact on practice and professional development. The findings will help further develop Teaching Matters as a resource to support the informal sharing of good practice and influence practice more positively. Initial insights from the data suggest the following approaches:

- Monthly coffees to discuss the current theme and stimulate in-person conversations;
- Collating blog posts into digital artefacts (PDF magazine) which could be promoted as digital publications;
- A day where contributors could meet and discuss various topics or just a day of workshop/conference style where some of the key topics that were covered in the blog may have a slot/round table;
- Including live webinars associated with blog posts.

“Beyond analytics: the impact of the Teaching Matters blog on learning and teaching” will be presented at the International Enhancement Conference in November 2020.

Data Comics

An exciting opportunity arose to work collaboratively with the University of Dundee to produce a data comic. Initial meetings were held and a plan of work agreed, however, this work was stopped due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Collaborative Clusters

In collaboration with the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen, the University led the Widening Participation with Lecture Recording collaborative cluster which produced a range of outputs.

Conference Contributions

A number of colleagues provided asynchronous resources for the June 2020 ‘Learning from disruption: exploring what counts in higher education’ Conference:

- Comparing First Year Transition in Edinburgh with a TNE Programme in China
Presenter: Michael Daw
- Best practice with lecture recording to support widening participation in HE.
Presenter: Jill MacKay
- Learning Analytics: Student Perception across Scottish Universities
Presenter: Diego Rates

The following sessions were accepted for the International Enhancement Conference:

- The indescribability of artistry in a neoliberal world
Presenter: Neil Speirs
- Reflection Toolkit: Creating and valuing reflection as evidence beyond numbers
Presenter: Gavin McCabe
- Beyond analytics: The impact of Teaching Matters blog on learning and teaching
Presenter: Hazel Christie
- Curriculum Toolkit: From evidencing to enhancing employability & graduate skills
Presenter: Gavin McCabe
- Bringing Accessibility & Inclusivity into Learning Design using Student Personae
Presenter: Jon Jack
- Digital data and decision-making in the post-pandemic university
Presenter: Dr Ben Williamson (delivering the conference opening keynote)

Evaluation and impact

In 2018/19, light touch evaluations were submitted for:

- Sharing good practice at relevant internal network meetings
- Holding a sector-wide event on the use of qualitative data for driving decision-making at scale, with the aim of identifying what works well
- Academic Services monitoring engagement with the staff-facing web resource on closing the student feedback loop and seeking more examples to add (including those gathered as part of sector-level work in year one of the Theme)

In 2019/20, in-depth evaluations were carried out for the following activities (please note that evaluation activity has been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic):

- The annual monitoring PowerBI student data dashboards developed following a review of the sources of data that support key quality assurance and enhancement processes.
- The provision of standard high-level analysis of student feedback to School student representatives.
- The student voice mechanisms graphically designed visual representation.
- The handover document implemented for all programme representatives to fill in at the end of their tenure.

Dissemination of work

Internally: email communications; Institutional Team; Senate Quality Assurance Committee; Teaching Matters website; Learning and Teaching Conference; and a wiki.

Externally: Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC); Theme Leaders' Group (TLG); Enhancement Themes conference; and the University's website.

Teaching Matters post August 2019 (update on work and promoting the originally planned June 2020 conference) <http://edin.ac/2OWZhm9>

In 2019/20 Academic Services' developed a good practice website which collates examples of good practice and resources, both internal and external, and presents them thematically:

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

- Resources – Using data <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice/resources>
- Examples – Using data <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/good-practice/examples/using-data>

Resources to Share

Closing the student feedback loop resources: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/closing-feedback-loop> (includes links to the outcomes of the Responding to Student Voice sector-wide student-led project)

Delivering and evaluating lecture recording

https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/delivering_and_evaluating_lecture_recording.pdf

Giving feedback: a student guide

- Interactive version <https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback.pdf>
- Print-friendly version https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/givingfeedback_printversion.pdf

The guide was included in an Explorance blog post written by the University of Strathclyde <https://explorance.com/blog/strathclyde-workshop-highlights-clear-focus-on-enhancement-from-all-participants/>

Supporting staff and student engagement

Staff and students were kept informed of the work of the Theme through the communication methods outlined above. Support and guidance could be provided by the Institutional Lead and Theme Leaders' Group staff member. Students were supported through the Students' Association. Student School Representatives were involved in the evaluating the standard high-level analysis of student feedback reports.

Organisation and delivery

The organisation and delivery has remained broadly the same throughout the three years of the Theme. The Institutional Team had representation from across the Colleges, Support and Professional Services, and the Students' Association. In the final year, we moved away from funding individual projects to prioritise support for existing initiatives and activities.

Sector resources

We had planned to make explicit use of the Responding to Student Voice resource pack to tie in with QAA Scotland's evaluation work, however, this was not possible due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We did however provide links to this resource from both the closing the feedback loop and the Academic Services' good practice webpages.

Key learning points

The use of a long-term broad umbrella theme was helpful as it allowed institutions to focus on priority areas within wider sector discussions about the use of evidence to improve the student experience.

Within the University, the volume of evidence available to staff and students is seen a positive development. However, we need to ensure that staff and students are able to access and make use of data that is applicable to them for their specific purposes, and that they do not become overwhelmed by the volume of available evidence.

As always, time for staff and students to engage with Theme work was a challenge. Aligning Theme work with existing initiatives and activities helped, alongside targeted and timely communications (e.g. referencing internal and external resources in reminders for mid-course feedback).

The volume of resources produced as part of the Theme, whilst admirable, made it challenging to remain up-to-date as these were published and to disseminate these effectively. It would be helpful to find out from the evaluation of the Theme what types of resources staff and students value most.

Transition into the next Theme

It was a very timely theme and we were able to link a number of strategic and local initiatives and activities to the theme and thus gain synergies.

Work on many of the initiatives and activities will continue within the University once the theme had formally concluded.

Report Author:	Nichola Kett and Gillian Mackintosh
Date:	2 November 2020

The University of Edinburgh
Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

**External Examiners:
Exceptional Appointments Report 2019/20**

Description of paper

1. Report on College approvals of exceptional External Examiner appointments made during 2019/20.

Action requested / recommendation

2. To formally note the report.

Background and context

3. The External Examiners for Taught Programmes Policy provides for Colleges to make exceptional appointments or where a conflict of interest has been identified (section 24). It was anticipated that the need for exceptional appointments may increase due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, to support quality assurance processes and future policy development, Colleges were invited to provide details of approved exceptional appointments.

Discussion

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences:

4. The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences had seven exceptional appointments. The College reports that although the search for appointments was often affected by Covid-19 only one (extension in the School of Law) was specifically to support Covid-19 contingency.

New exceptional appointments

5. Two new exceptional appointments were approved, in the Schools of Social and Political Sciences and Health in Social Science, where there was a potential conflict of interest. Both were where the School had been struggling to find another examiner in very specialist programmes with a limited pool of experts and a reciprocal arrangement was unavoidable.

Extensions to existing appointments

6. Five one-year extensions were made to External Examiner appointments. Of these three, in Moray House School of Education and Sport, and one in Edinburgh College of Art were to provide consistency and continuity; and one in the Law School to allow time to find a suitable replacement from a limited pool of experts.

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine:

7. The College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine had six exceptional appointments.

New exceptional appointments

8. Two new exceptional appointments in the Vet School from non-higher educational institutions were approved. In both cases the External Examiners were experienced veterinary practitioners and both were paired with an experienced academic External Examiner. One appointment was approved where the External Examiner will have an overlap of one year of holding concurrent appointments. Workload commitments were agreed with the Examiner who was particularly well qualified for this new Medical Education programme.

Extensions to existing appointments

9. Four one-year extensions were made to External Examiner appointments. Three of these were related to Covid-19 issues. Two extensions in the Vet School were to support continuity. One extension was approved in the Deanery of Biomedical Sciences to ensure coherence in the final examination board for a particular cohort of students. One further extension for an existing External Examiner was approved in the Vet School where a proposed new appointment was withdrawn due to a conflict of interest.

College of Science and Engineering:

10. College of Science and Engineering reports no exceptional appointments in 2019/20.

Resource implications

11. The paper reports on activity and no resource implications are associated with it.

Risk management

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

Equality & diversity

13. The paper is a report on activity and an equality impact assessment is not required. Academic Services has identified no major equality impacts in relation to this report.

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

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

Author

*Susan Hunter, Academic Services
27 November 2020*

Presenter

Nichola Kett

Freedom of Information

The paper is open.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

17 December 2020

Internal Periodic Review Responses

Description of paper

1. The Year on responses from Internal Periodic Reviews 2018/19 and 14 week responses from Internal Periodic Reviews 2019/20.

Action requested / recommendation

2. For comment and consideration of the recommendations. The Committee is asked to confirm that they are content with progress.

Background and context

3. The following Year on responses from Internal Periodic Reviews 2018/19:

- Earth Sciences (undergraduate provision)
- Engineering (postgraduate taught and undergraduate provision)

The following 14 week responses from Internal Periodic Reviews 2019/20:

- Business School (undergraduate provision)
- Chemistry (postgraduate taught and undergraduate provision)
- Divinity (undergraduate provision)
- Geography (undergraduate provision)
- Informatics (postgraduate research provision)
- Social Policy (undergraduate provision)

IPR	Comment
Earth Sciences and Engineering 2018/19	We look forward to hearing about progress on the recommendations in the School Annual Programme Monitoring report and we note the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on progressing with some of the recommendations.
2019/20 responses	
Business School	We note the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on progressing with a number of the recommendations and we look forward to hearing about progress in the year on response on the recommendations that are still to be actioned.
Divinity	We look forward to hearing about progress in the year on response on the recommendations that are still to be actioned
Chemistry	We look forward to hearing about progress in the year on response on the recommendations that are still to be actioned
Geography	We look forward to hearing about progress in the year on response on the recommendations that are still to be actioned. We note the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic is having on progressing with some of the recommendations.

Informatics	We look forward to hearing about progress in the year on response on the recommendations that are still to be actioned
Social Policy	We look forward to hearing about progress in the year on response on the recommendations that are still to be actioned

Discussion

4. See attached paper.

Resource implications

5. No additional resource implications

Risk management

6. No risk associated

Equality & diversity

7. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the internal periodic review process

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

8. Comments on the progress towards completion of recommendations will be reported back to the School/Subject Area. The response will be published on the Academic Services website

Author

*Gillian Mackintosh
Academic Policy Officer
10 December 2020*

Presenter

Academic Services

Freedom of Information

Open

The University of Edinburgh
Internal Periodic Review 2018/19
Year on response

TPR of Earth Science UG programmes, School of GeoSciences:

Date of review: 11/12th March 2019

Date of 14 week response: 13th August 2019

Date of year on response: 31st July 2020, received August 2020

The Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

No.	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date	Year on response
1	The panel recommends that the School review its processes for maintaining student welfare by instituting uniform attendance monitoring at least for practicals, record keeping and triage systems; in particular, it is recommended that the School maintain formal attendance monitoring for practicals, using University systems to support this.		We currently use paper sign-in sheets for practical classes across all Earth Science programmes. These sheets are passed to the Teaching Organisation, data transferred to Excel files, and then used for various purposes (including monitoring). We will remind all staff of the importance of ensuring that this process continues. However, the School lacks resources to enact the recommendation in full, especially regarding the use of attendance monitoring for triaging. As we highlighted during the 2 day visit, this is due to a lack of investment by the University in software for monitoring student attendance and/or engagement. Current software does not readily facilitate uploading and transfer of attendance data between systems. There are various workarounds of current systems which can be used to monitor attendance (e.g. TopHat). However, there is no efficient and effective way of transferring or processing the volumes of data produced to enable the type of universal triaging process proposed. This would	Reminders to be sent prior to start of S1 19/20	The situation has not improved significantly, but has not worsened either. The barriers identified in the 14-week response remain. Progress is reliant on University-wide initiatives (e.g., SEAM project). The Covid-19 crisis is posing additional challenges and the School is working hard to ensure that student welfare will be maintained in a hybrid teaching model.

			<p>require a system where attendance data could be automatically synced with Euclid student records (or something equivalent). Currently, all attendance data would have to be transferred into student records manually, one student at a time. We could potentially use paper sign-in sheets and a simple database (or set of Excel sheets) to monitor attendance, although this would be time and resource intensive. The system would also again be standalone, and information would have to be continually processed and shared. We lack the resource to do this.</p> <p>As a School, we have a robust Student Support system which we believe offers a high level of support for our students, and is held up as a good model for Student Support across the College. Our SSC team provide a high level of care to students, and receive very favourable feedback from students. We would, however, be strongly supportive of any investment by the University which allows us to use data on student attendance and/or engagement to further this support. As noted during the 2-day visit, an investment by the University in this area would also be beneficial in understanding universal issues with declining student engagement.</p> <p>We further note that there is a University-level review of policy on attendance monitoring expected in 2020/2021, as part of the Student Engagement and Attendance Monitoring (SEAM) project.</p>		
2	The panel recommends that the School institute mechanisms to improve the collection of data in order to make		We maintain a high level of record-keeping within the School, including full data on student progression, student	N/A	N/A

	<p>informed decisions and implement change. The data should include information on student retention, transfers, progression and graduate destinations.</p>		<p>transfers, completion rates, and course pass rates. This data is used across the School for various purposes, and feeds into reviews of Teaching delivery.</p> <p>As highlighted in the reflective report, the issue here concerns University-level systems for record keeping, and as such, is external to the School. Data passed onto the School ahead of the TPR contained a number of significant errors. Information on student progression, in particular, was unreliable, and in some cases, 1/3 of students were missing from the data provided. This highlights a worrying deficiency in the accuracy of University student records systems. The TPR Liaison (GB) has already flagged specific data issues with the Internal Review Support team.</p> <p>We also anticipate rollout of the new power BI Quality Reports in summer 2019, which will provide us with more accurate data in these areas.</p>		
3	<p>The panel recommends that the School re-purpose the Teaching and Assessment Working Group to focus on enhancing the staff and student experience, to include the following remit items: timing and modes of assessment, curriculum review including thread review, academic guidance, and optimising spaces and resourcing.</p>		<p>As recommended, the remit of the Teaching and Assessment Working Group (TAWG) has been broadened to include complete curriculum review across all taught degree programmes delivered by the School (including all Earth Science programmes reviewed in this TPR). In May, the TAWG agreed a timeline for this process, which will begin with an IAD (ELDeR) led review of the geology programme in late 2019. This will focus on the overall syllabus and student/learning progression, but with considerable focus on timing and purpose of assessments. There will be subsequent reviews of other programmes.</p>	<p>Completed.</p> <p>Full review of Geology</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Work in progress: ES programme</p>

			<p>Aside from the work of the TAWG, we note that the TPR report comments favourably on the culture of reflection within the School (Section B 1.2). The DoT (UG) is keen to further encourage reflection and review of UG teaching through individual annual course review (by CO/DPC), annual programme review (by DPC and TO) and the regular work of the TO. This climate of reflection feeds into descriptions of roles, and expectations of role holders (CO, DPC, ESC etc) recently agreed by the Teaching Committee and circulated to all staff.</p>	<p>programme by January 2020. Review of other ES programmes by Jan 2021.</p>	<p>review was initiated also to address the issue of low student numbers (in particular Geology and GPG – Geology and Physical Geography), involving all ES staff. We had made significant progress (in particular on degree structure and defining the needs for new courses) but the covid-19 crisis stalled the process. Work will resume as soon as staff have capacity.</p>
4	<p>The panel recommends that the School introduce more clarity and better communication on the Personal Tutor role to staff and students, more in line with the University's guidance on Personal Tutors</p>		<p>We use a PT model across the School where pastoral issues are largely handled by SSCs, with PTs responsible for academic guidance. However, this system is flexible, and tutees are encouraged to engage with PTs regarding non-academic issues if both parties are comfortable doing so. We also advertise the fact that students should feel confident bringing up any issues with either their PT or SSCs, who can then guide the student towards an additional service if appropriate. This model has been held up as good practice by both College and University.</p> <p>However, in light of the recommendation, we will clarify policy with students and provide more guidance on roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>To be completed by Sept. 2019</p>	<p>Completed, with new clear guidance communicated to students and staff.</p>

			<p>We will review information given to students in Welcome Week (for 2019/2020 onwards), and ensure that a clear description of the PT and SSC roles, in addition to the School's student support policy, are available on our LEARN Student Information Hubs (which provide a one stop shop of resources and signposting for our student body).</p> <p>We also note that review of the University PT and student support systems is ongoing. Both are additionally being considered as part of the Service Excellence Review. We await recommendations.</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing
5	The panel recommends that the University increase provision of support services, including counselling services, on site at King's Buildings.		<p>Response from Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary, Student Experience</p> <p>SCS (Student Counselling Service) have access to 2 counselling rooms at Murchison House, and SDS (Student Disability Service) have access to 1 room (all 5 days a week). Director of SDS has brokered a deal with Director of Student Careers Service for temporary use of another room 4 days a week until the move into the Health and Wellbeing Centre in February 2020</p> <p>Both services would welcome more space at KB- SDS has around 800 students registered with the service in Schools based at Kings. Ideally we could provide counselling (including groups), some assessor capacity, more mental health mentors and some management cover/ drop-in and problem-solving capacity. The Director of Student Wellbeing has raised this</p>	Ongoing	Current space at KB- uptake of capacity not at 100% for all services- so we in fact have capacity to see more students within SDS and SCS at KB. Chaplaincy have met CSE to talk about organising events on site- this was developing positively prior to lockdown. SDS have increased capacity through using a Careers room. SCS capacity not being fully utilised. SCS started running Skills for Life and Learning groups at KB prior to the

			with the CSE College Office in the first instance.		lockdown- went well. SDS and SCS have had some challenges in engaging students to use these rooms, but take up was on an upward trajectory prior to the lockdown- which is encouraging. KB Nucleus- plans for Student Systems and Admin and Careers to move there at some point in future- likely to be 4 years (may be longer now). We may then be able to use increased volume of space at Murchison House.
6	The panel recommends that the School improves information to staff and students on feedback dates, have a uniform approach to the of quality of feedback provided within and across courses, and that it abide by the 15 working day rule set by the University.		We will continue to impress upon staff the importance of adhering to the 15 working day rule for feedback. In addition, we are taking action on 4 fronts to improve return: -The School's TO have been collecting data on return rates for all UG and PG assessments during 2018/2019. This data is processed using a traffic light system to highlight issues, and distributed to DPCs to disseminate to staff and discuss at teaching meetings across the School. The ESC has also been flagging specific failings within the Earth Science programmes with staff line managers. In 2019/2020, as a change in policy, we will freely distribute all data of assessment return rates to	From Sept 2019 onwards	The new system is highlighting "problematic" courses (feedback regularly late for years on) and helping targeted action.

		<p>staff across the School. This new policy of full transparency means that all staff will be aware of instances where work is returned late.</p> <p>-The School's TAWG is tasked at reviewing timing and purpose of assessments. One objective of this review is to reduce the number of assessments across Earth Sciences which, compared to other programmes within the School, remains high. A reduction in number of assessments should result in an improvement in return rates.</p> <p>-The LEARN Foundations project, which will roll out in summer 2019, will provide a new template for LEARN course pages which gives clear, easy to find information on assessment deadlines and feedback dates.</p> <p>-The Teaching Committee has revised their role descriptors for teaching posts across the School, including the role of Course Organiser. These will be advertised to all staff, and make the responsibilities of COs clear, including ensuring that good quality feedback is given in a prompt and timely manner in accordance with University guidelines.</p>	<p>Full review of Geology programme by January 2020. Review of other ES programmes by Jan 2021.</p> <p>From Sept 2019 onwards</p> <p>Completed</p>	<p>This was ongoing, but will need to be altered for the delivery of hybrid teaching. However, there is now an ES-wide awareness of the need to limit the number of assessments and coordinate to avoid bottlenecks.</p> <p>In progress (reviewed for hybrid teaching).</p> <p>Completed</p>
7	The panel recommends that the School improve academic guidance on course choice in pre-honours years, particularly courses in or adjacent to Schools which consolidate essential skills for honours years.	All knowledge and skills required in Earth Science degree programmes are delivered within compulsory courses. Choice of optional courses in PHs (where applicable) is open, and students are free to take courses from across the University. Rather than prescribing certain courses, we believe		Completed. We re-emphasise that we want to give students the opportunity to take outside courses to broaden their knowledge and

			<p>that there is equal benefit to students engaging in courses closely related to their chosen programme as there is with engaging in courses which are in very different subject areas. Students meet with PTs during Welcome Week to discuss choices of optional courses, and in Welcome Week literature/presentations, are given guidance on choosing optional courses. However, in light of this recommendation we will:</p> <p>-review information given to students during Welcome Week, and in 2019/2020, trial using 3rd/4th year students to deliver short talks to incoming students on course choice. We will also review information given to PTs about advising students with option course selection.</p> <p>-Produce, as part of the ELDeR (Edinburgh Learning Design roadmap) curriculum review process, a short summary of learning outcome, knowledge and skills training for all Earth Science programmes. A version of this can be distributed to students. This will help them to reflect on any particular optional courses which might provide additional training in any area they feel less confident.</p>	<p>September 2019</p> <p>September 2019-ongoing</p>	<p>skills – all essential ES skills and knowledge is delivered through the core courses (and is being reviewed as part of the ES programme review).</p>
8	<p>The panel recognises the challenge of building the identity of the Earth Sciences cohort when operating across multiple sites, and recommends that the School review and seek to improve the provision of spaces to enhance the student and staff experience, this to include social space, teaching space and quiet study space.</p>		<p>The School has been investigating options regarding reallocation of space, and this recommendation will be discussed at the School's SPARC management committee meeting. However, there are considerable issues regarding lack of space across the School (especially within Grant and the Crew buildings), and any significant action would require a radical review of how space is used, and a major investment in capital. We will continue</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>New student spaces (including study / social spaces) have been provided in the Grant Institute and Crew Building. Students really enjoy the study spaces at Murchison house, although they do</p>

			<p>to investigate all possibilities and make the most of any available opportunities.</p> <p>Lack of quiet study space is a general issue across the King's Buildings Campus. Refurbishment of Murchison House, and improvement in provision, has been warmly received by students within Earth Sciences. As such, we would encourage the University to continue to invest in support on the King's Buildings Campus.</p>		<p>not necessarily help building the identity of the cohort. Building this identity is one of our priorities within the new hybrid model.</p>
9	<p>The panel recommends that the University support the long-term in-position career progression, development and promotion of the Earth Sciences professional services staff in order to allow continuity in Schools.</p>		<p>Response from Stephen Barnes Head of HR for CSE:</p> <p>The University P&DR cycle provides the opportunity for staff to discuss their development needs and future career aspirations with their line manager and for them to agree the staff member's development plan for the year. This is a plan that should be kept alive and discussed as the year progresses.</p> <p>The University provides a range of learning and development resources and opportunities open to all staff. For example, the resources in the Online Development Toolkit but also the externally facing subscription to LinkedIn Learning that is now available to all.</p> <p>On the basis that some of the most effective development comes from 'experience' and 'exposure' rather than formal learning, the local Senior HR Advisor will discuss this recommendation with the Director of Professional Service for Geosciences to establish how HR can support the team further.</p> <p>In terms of personal development time for professional services staff, that is up</p>		<p>Response from Stephen Barnes Head of HR for CSE: Over the last year the school held a workshop with all professional services staff on team working and managing through change. Alongside this the school have encouraged people to focus on development areas with budget aside for professional services development when requested. The school has also actively been encouraging professional services staff to apply for funding to attend conferences and events etc.</p>

			to the school leadership team to determine.		
10	The panel recommends that the School continue to improve training for tutors and demonstrators by encouraging them to engage with CPD, including Higher Education Academy (HEA), Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PgCAP), and The Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA).		<p>The PgCAP is generally not appropriate for postgrad Tutors and Demonstrators (T&D). The Edinburgh Teaching Award (Level 1) and the <i>Introduction to Academic Practice</i> module are much more suitable than the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice for T&D seeking formal accreditation for their teaching. We currently support PG students wishing to engage with this training, although will improve how this is communicated to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -We will review and improve information given to T&D during induction and training events. -The Student Services Projects team are trialling a regular newsletter for PGR students involved in Tutoring and Demonstrating. This will contain information on various opportunities related to training and personal development, and we will use this as a means to regularly showcase and signpost the Edinburgh Teaching Award scheme. 	Sept 2019	Work in progress, with new focus in terms of training in response to covid-19 and the need to deliver hybrid teaching.
11	The panel recommends that the School institute and communicate to tutors and demonstrators a process for them to provide feedback to the School and that it address issues relating to the common marking scheme, payment for tasks undertaken and staff-student ratios raised during the review.		<p>Following this recommendation, for 2019/2020 we will trial a group feedback system for PG tutors and demonstrators. This will consist of surveys and a meeting chaired by one of the Earth Science DPCs.</p> <p>Role descriptors recently developed by the TC will remind COs of the need to fully liaise with T&D on all courses to receive feedback. We will additionally request that this feedback is also obtained and commented upon during end-of-course reviews which COs complete.</p>	Sept 2019-onwards	Implemented, in particular role descriptors. Some of the new approaches may need revision for hybrid teaching

12	The panel recommends that academic staff members (non-tutors and demonstrators) be present and engaged with all practical sessions		Following this recommendation we are changing policy within the School. This recommendation relates to 2 specific year 1 courses. From 2019/2020 onwards, academic staff will be required to be in attendance for at least part of each and every practical session.	Sept 2019	Implemented
13	The panel recommends that the School highlight the rich information which already exists on their webpages to the incoming cohorts, to provide them with sufficient knowledge and background to make well-informed course choices on arrival.		A complete web site review is being planned by the School, but is resource dependent. Programme web pages will be refreshed on a rolling basis by the Marketing, Recruitment and Communications team. We are also looking at setting up Facebook groups for incoming students to help them connect, share information and ask questions before they arrive to begin their programme. We also now have the LEARN Student Information Hubs, which provide resources and signposting for all students. We will also review information given to incoming students in Welcome Week.	In progress	In progress – this is a priority considering that we will deliver hybrid teaching for 2020-21.
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	The TPR Liaison will send a copy of the TPR report to all Earth Science UG students, along with a shorter explanation of all commendations, recommendations and actions arising.			
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review	<p>We received positive feedback on our actions through a range of media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student feedback at the Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings. - Feedback from the external examiners, in particular those who had been serving for 3-4 years (Geology, GPG, Environmental Geoscience): all external examiners highlighted the progress made in improving the academic process and student experience, although they mentioned that there is still room for improvement (e.g., quality and consistency of feedback – but we are going in the right direction). - ES results in the NSS survey significantly improved. Satisfaction overall for ES is 90%, with BSc GPG achieving 100% (from 94% in 2019) and BSc Geology 75% (from 60% in 2019). The response numbers for all other programmes were too low to give a “programme result” but the satisfaction overall for these programmes (Environmental Geoscience, Geophysics, Geology MEarthSci and GPG MEarthSci) is 92%. There is still room for improvement, with the lowest scores obtained in “assessment and feedback” (60-70%) and “student unions” (< 40%), potentially reflecting the cohort identity problem? 			

The University of Edinburgh
Internal Periodic Review 2018/19
Year on response report

TPR of: School of Engineering

Date of review: 20/21 February 2019

Date of 14 week response: 18 September 2019

Date of year on response: expected 12 June 2020, received 23 November 2020

The School is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action.

If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Rec no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	The review recommends that there is a need for the School to reflect and develop a strategic vision and that this exercise is prioritised to enable this vision to inform other areas of development.	2021/22 for 1 st year, then other years following on	<p>Conversations on developing a strategic vision began at the School Away Day on 4th September 2019. These will continue to be discussed with all staff via the Management Committee, School Learning and Teaching Committee and as part of the school wide curriculum review.</p> <p>Year on update: CRWG (the School's Curriculum Renewal Working Group) had worked on our strategic vision and started establishing our early years curriculum pre-Covid. We accelerated this due to the current circumstances, implementing changes to our 1st year (and some of 2nd year) from September 2020.</p>	
2	The review team recommends that the School examines their marking policy, and investigates why, in some areas, scaling of marks appears to be happening routinely rather than by exception. Following this exercise, the School should provide clarity to both students and staff on when and why scaling will be used.	Ongoing	<p>This is a high priority item for School Learning and Teaching Committee discussion during this academic year.</p> <p>Year on update – JREC update: DDOLT Director of Learning and Teaching, (Academic Standards) met with Convenors of BoEs in February to discuss scaling at BOEs and the reasons for it. It was noted that this was not a widespread issue across the School, but that DDOLT (AS) would draw up a set of guidelines for staff relating to the setting and marking of examination papers with a view to reducing the need for scaling. The document has been started, but delayed due to events in March.</p>	

3	It is recommended that the School review and reflect on feedback provided to students to ensure it is effective, transparent, useful and timely	2021/22 for 1st year, then other years following on	<p>This was discussed at the School Away Day on 4th September 2019 as well as at individual Discipline Teaching Review meeting, it will also be included as part of the school wide curriculum review.</p> <p>Year on update: CRWG – this has influenced the restructuring of our 1st and 2nd year, with an emphasis on more use of coursework with effective feedback prior to the next submission.</p>	
4	The review team recommends that the School makes space (both within workload allocations and by providing support, recognition and reward) for innovative teaching practice and considers how teaching practice can be shared across the School	Ongoing, see Rec 1	<p>Following the appointment of the new Director of Learning and Teaching, new deputy DOLT positions have been identified, (but not yet appointed), including Deputy DOLT CPD who will work with the Deputy Head of School on academic professional development (including workload aspects). The consideration of sharing teaching practice was also discussed at the School Away Day, on 4th September 2019, and well received by staff present. This will be considered as part of the school wide curriculum review.</p> <p>Year on update – Paused by COVID, however this influenced our 1st and 2nd year restructure for 20/21. The School’s workload allocation model is currently being revised by Deputy HoS. Formal work on the support, recognition and reward aspects by DDOLT CPD have been delayed due to Covid; however, a positive consequence of the changes to our curriculum and delivery mode have been numerous examples of innovative teaching practice, and sharing of these amongst colleagues, through discipline groupings and less informal discussions. DDOLT CPD will resume work on the more formal support.</p>	
5	The review team recommend that the School ensures that T&D tasks allocated are reasonable within the time allocated. In addition, Tutors and demonstrators must not commence their duties until the School has provided them with necessary formal induction on all core aspects of their role. The School could consider a system of noting pre-requisites to teach on any specific course and record that these have been met before starting tutor and demonstrator duties.	Ongoing	<p>Prerequisites will be highlighted in relation to applying for posts, as PGRs should have relevant experience of the subject matter having previously attended the same or similar related courses. This knowledge would ensure that T&D tasks should normally be completed within the time allocated. The new Deputy DOLT CPD will continue the work begun by the T&D Academic Champion.</p> <p>Year on update – Plans were in place however COVID has overtaken and requirements of support from T&Ds increased – will revisit in the future.</p>	

6	The review team recommends that the School considers ways in which T&Ds can receive feedback and how they may provide feedback on their experiences	Discussions and planning for launch 2020/21	<p>Systems were developed with previous the T&D Academic Champion to provide opportunities for student review and POOT. Discussions now suggest developing self-review forms with the opportunity to discuss any issues with Course Organisers. T&Ds should continue to be made aware of the feedback options available to them.</p> <p>New Deputy DOLT CPD will continue work of T&D Champion role.</p> <p>Year on update - New Deputy DoLT CPD develop feedback approach based on brief feedback forms to be completed during an informal discussion between T&Ds and Course Organisers/academics. Form will record main good practice, T&D's approaches that may benefit from further improvement, and additional IAD training suggestions for the T&D. Implementation planned for 2020/21 academic year; postponed due to development of Covid-19 hybrid teaching/Curriculum Renewal.</p>	
7	The review team recommend that the School follow up with the IAD to review T&D training and development opportunities such as the Introduction to Academic Practice course (a Higher Education Academy accredited course aimed at tutors and demonstrators), or level 1 of the Edinburgh Teaching Award	Ongoing, current discussions on how to encourage completion (priority discussions with HR)	<p>Additional training sessions were developed, in conjunction with IAD, and delivered for 2018/19 academic year. The HEA accredited course is also signposted in PGR induction and linked on the wiki.</p> <p>New Deputy DOLT CPD will continue work of T&D Champion role.</p> <p>Year on update – New Deputy DoLT CPD has continued delivering training sessions for 2019/20 and 2020/2021 academic years, including additional time during the sessions to explain IntroAP and EdTA paths to accreditation</p>	
8	The review team recommends that a review of CPD activity is undertaken to establish participation and support for CPD, and to send a clear message that development and performance of staff is a priority for the School	Ongoing	<p>New Deputy DOLT CPD role will have responsibilities in this area.</p> <p>Professor Alan Murray will be working with the new Deputy DOLT CPD to deliver a mentored Edinburgh Teaching Award in the school.</p> <p>Update: DDoLT CPD now appointed and working with Professor Alan Murray on this.</p> <p>Year on update – Discussions with IAD ongoing, although short term priority shifted to providing support</p>	

			and resourced for hybrid teaching/Curriculum Renewal. This included series of Curriculum Renewal in Engineering Workshops (CREW, 7 in total), as well as SoE ABC Workshops (5 in total), which also introduced CD ² /ND ² framework to staff.	
9	In addition, the review team recommends that the role of the TESE Chair is carefully embedded via definable objectives, with both near and long term deliverables together with support for growth and dissemination of outcomes, and clarity on integration of the role within the School management structure. The review team recommends that the aims and objectives of the role are widely communicated to staff at all levels to facilitate opportunities for staff to engage with initiatives	Ongoing	TESE Chair role will become part of School Learning and Teaching Committee, working with new DOLT, Assistant DOLT and Deputies to discuss objectives. The TESE Chair was also heavily involved in the planning and delivery of the School Away day in September 2019, which has begun the process of further engagement with staff. Year on update – TESE led on online exams for Semester 2, was involved in 1 st and 2 nd year restructure, our “hybrid seminars” (for in-person and digital attendees) and remote lab development. This has led to far greater awareness around the school of the TESE Chairs role across the school. Following our Covid response, digital education will have an ongoing important role in the school. We plan to revise our teaching governance structure post-Covid, and the TESE role will be part of this revision.	Completed
10	The review team recommends that students are engaged by and involved in the curriculum review	See Rec 1	We will certainly work carefully to ensure students are involved. HoS/DOLT drop in sessions to ensure available to all students and the creation of a student council will allow closer connection and involvement of students. Year on update – 3 student council sessions were held last academic year and 2 sessions (so far this year); active student representatives have been part of the development in CRWG, and although this was disrupted over the summer, student engagement is a priority for future planning and curriculum development.	
11	The review team recommends that the curriculum review also needs to take into account Widening Participation students (WP) and underperforming students in considering engagement with optional aspects such as extra-curricular activities	Begin to implement from 2020/21 academic year	DOLT recently met University WP staff to discuss our current situation and how we ensure we better engage WP. DDOLT WP now appointed and is exploring options for WP support mechanisms. Including arranging to meet with the University WP staff.	

			<p>Year on update – 1st Year restructure has improved transitions into University learning at its heart to support different groups of students; however, this requires more work.</p>	
12	<p>The review team recommends that the School considers incorporating inter-disciplinary projects into all years, to provide students with increased experience of working on projects. At the same time, consider incorporating formal teaching of teamwork skills into the first year curriculum</p>	Ongoing	<p>This will be considered as part of the curriculum review, and was one of the discussion points at the recent school away day.</p> <p>Year on update – 1st year now includes multiple interdisciplinary projects embedded in new curriculum within the “Engineering Principles 1” course that was introduced as part of our revised curriculum.</p>	
13	<p>The review team recommends that the University and Students’ Association consider ways to increase accessibility of existing services and review possible integration of support services currently based at the central campus</p>	ongoing	<p>School notes continued frustrations on access to support services at Kings Buildings.</p> <p><u>Response from Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary, Student Experience</u> Student Counselling (SCS) currently have access to 2 counselling rooms at Murchison House, and Student Disability (SDS) have access to 1 room (all 5 days a week). SDS has also brokered a deal for temporary use of another room 4 days a week until spring 2020.</p> <p>Both services would welcome more space at KB- SDS has around 800 students registered with the service in Schools based at Kings. Ideally we could provide counselling (including groups), some assessor capacity, more mental health mentors and some management cover/ drop-in and problem-solving capacity. The Director of Student Wellbeing has raised this with the CSE College Office in the first instance and discussions are ongoing about suitable space.</p> <p><u>Response from Students’ Association:</u> In the 2018/19 academic year, The Advice Place renovated the Kings Buildings office space and increased capacity for advisers by adding an extra desk. Although the office offers an open drop in service from 11am-2pm, students can book appointments at any time between 9am and 6pm Monday to Friday.</p>	

			<p>The Advice Place would welcome the opportunity to work with the School of Engineering on ways to advertise the opportunity to book appointments at KB during the week. We would also be keen to work with the School to more effectively promote the alternative ways to contact The Advice Place which include phone and email.</p> <p>Data from The Advice Place suggests that students studying at Kings Buildings choose to come to the office in Bristo Square. 91% of the in-person contacts with students from the School of Engineering in the academic year 2018-19 were at the Potterrow office and only 9% were at Kings Buildings House. It is not clear if students at KB choose to come to central campus because they don't know about the opportunity to make appointments at KB or because they prefer to go to central campus. Anecdotally, when a student based at KB is offered an appointment on their own campus, they often request to meet in the central area instead.</p> <p>As the School and The Advice Place work together to advertise the service to Engineering students in 2019/20, The Advice Place will monitor engagement with the service and see if this additional promotion increases attendance at both the KB Office and the Central office.</p> <p>Unfortunately, The Advice Place works with limited resource. During the drop-in at KB 11-2 we never fill all of our drop-in slots, it is not uncommon to have only 1 or 2 students come in. In the same time at the Potterrow Office an adviser is often full to capacity seeing 9 students in 3 hours with our receptionist and volunteers fielding more quick enquiries. With a limited resource, it is therefore currently a more effective use of time for The Advice Place to base its advisers at the central office.</p> <p>The Advice Place continually reviews its provision and would welcome the opportunity to work with the School of Engineering on an ongoing basis to offer an accessible service to students in the School.</p>	
14	The review team recommends that the School further reflect on the outcomes identified through its recent engagement with the LEAF project	Ongoing	<p>This will be considered as part of the curriculum review.</p> <p>Year on update – CRWG is looking at the culture for both staff and students as well as assessment and feedback, we</p>	

			are also consulting with IAD for a school wide curriculum review similar to an ELDeR.	
15	The review team recommends the investment in the Maker Space to accommodate and support the growing number of student-led project activities in the School	Ongoing	As an Engineering School this is something we agree is important both for student-led projects and to support the hands-on skills that are a vital part of and engineering training. However, University planning restrictions are currently a barrier. Space for activities remains a challenge within the School, however we are optimistic that plans are clearer within the next few months, by End April 2020. Year on update – Progress had been MADE; however, this is now paused and under review due to Covid19	
16	The review team recommend that the School are clear and transparent about the balance of credit in relation to workload, highlighting other benefits where appropriate, in order to manage expectations for both students and staff.	Ongoing	This was discussed at the away day on 4 th September 2019 and will be considered as part of the curriculum review process. Year on update – Several of CREW discussions related to this topic (e.g. contact time with students, scalable assessment, student resilience and grade seeking, soft/hard skills, etc.). Outcomes of CREW are being taken into account by CRWG	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	We are in the process of appointing the new programme reps for 2019/20 and will discuss the TPR process and outcomes with them, at an initial meeting, during week 3. We will also encourage discussion at SSLC committees in week 5.		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review	Curriculum changes for September impact on staff and students		

The University of Edinburgh
Internal Periodic Review 2019/20
14-week response report

Internal Periodic Review of: Undergraduate Provision at the University of Edinburgh Business School

Date of review: 18-19 February 2020

Date of 14-week response: 25 August 2020

Date of year on response: due 19 May 2021

The School is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Rec. no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comments on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1.	It is strongly recommended that the identification of appropriate, high quality space for the Business School is prioritised by the College. The lack of capacity to have any undergraduate teaching in the building is likely to continue to be a very significant negative factor in terms of student experience, and act against efforts to build a community of practice.	Unclear	College has been in no position to engage in discussions about this matter owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. A promised new building for the School to accommodate all students, initially expected to be available by 2023, was first delayed to 2027 and with the onset of the pandemic is now completely 'off the drawing board' owing to the financial impact of the pandemic. We will continue to engage with College and the University about this matter but a resolution should not be expected in the foreseeable future.	
2.	The review team recommends that the Business School is supported by the College to engage proactively with the central timetabling unit to ensure that room scheduling and timetabling is efficient and effective. Currently, the scheduling of concurrent classes which are not proximate is highly detrimental to students and staff, and also raises concerns about accessibility.	Unclear	The Timetabling Unit at the University has been in no position to engage in discussions about this matter owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. At present, they are struggling to accommodate timetabling for Semester 1, AY2020/21 working with vastly changed parameters. We hope to be able to share more detail in our 1-year-on response.	
3.	The review team recommends that there is School-level teaching practice training provision for Postgraduate Tutors, and that this is compulsory and paid for. Furthermore, Postgraduate Tutors should be mentored and signposted to courses by IAD and programmes and fellowship routes by Advance HE. We also recommend strongly that Postgraduate Tutors be given the opportunity for meaningful annual review of their teaching in line with University policy.	We hope to be able to implement this for the AY 2021/22	We were able to implement some changes to the guidance for the Teaching Assistants produced by the Course Organiser for the AY2020/21. On April 23 rd , 2020, the School's Learning and Teaching Forum approved the terms of reference for a comprehensive project in relation to Recruitment, Support and Mentoring of Teaching Assistants and in this the role of TAs in the Business School. This will include a review of:	

- Tasks undertaken by TAs and what proportion of tasks should be retained by Course Organisers; also how this relates to wider capacity needs and the student experience.
- The job description for TAs and in this the tasks and volume of tasks devolved to TAs – they are to ‘deliver’ but not to ‘develop’ teaching.
- Processes for the recruitment of all categories of Teaching Assistant.
- Guidance to Course Organisers.
- Guidance and supporting instructions to TAs, e.g. teaching objectives, advice on how to conduct the tutorial, marking guidance documents, timelines and a statement on what meetings and support the TA will receive expect.
- Guidance and processes for supporting TAs before, during and after their appointment, including processes for annual review of their teaching, in line with University policy.

We will develop a SharePoint resource holding all guidance and templates and we plan to implement a year-end review for comparing the projected use of TAs and the actual use, at Group and School level.

Discussions have started with IAD to help with devising an in-house Edinburgh Teaching Award and we are still planning to trial this with PhD Tutors in 20/21 though our efforts may be impacted by the ongoing COVID 19 crisis.

The work will be led by the Director of UG Programmes (who has taken on the responsibilities of the Senior Teaching Assistant Coordinator) and the Director of Faculty. A variety of staff including the Senior Teaching Fellow in Business Education, PhD and External TAs will contribute to the work. TA allocation is ongoing and has been hugely complicated by COVID 19. A training programme will be launched in Sept 2020 to equip all TA's with the necessary digital skills to work under hybrid conditions. In addition, under hybrid planning for 20/21, all Course Organisers have planned more explicit and regular meetings with their TA's to help support them and manage the work they will be delivering (which for some will be onsite and digital and for others digital only).

It is our intention to have this work completed and implemented in tome for the AY 2021/22 but we may need to defer this owing to COVID-19.

4.	The review team recommends that the School invests in providing teaching staff with increased opportunities for teaching practice training and reflection, and signposting to the relevant courses by IAD and programmes and fellowship by Advance HE. This is particularly important for new members of faculty staff.	Unclear	Plans (and discussions) are ongoing regarding the development of an in-house Edinburgh Teaching Award for PhD and External Tutors and Faculty staff. The Director of UG Programmes, the Director of Faculty and the Senior Teaching Fellow in Business Education have started internal discussions about this and reached out to IAD to get their advice and support. We aim to continue taking this forward in 20/21 though progress was severely curtailed by the COVID 19 crisis.	
5.	Building on the School Forum, the review team recommends that the School investigate ways of providing more and better advertised opportunities to share good practice in relation to teaching.	Unclear	Our plan is for the School's Learning and Teaching Forum to propose a model for this in collaboration with our Teaching Champions. Owing to the impact from COVID-19 we have not had time to take this forward though interesting our Keeping Connected sessions (instigated to bring the school community together virtually during COVID19, have included some very interesting pedagogic shares especially from staff with digital and online education experience. We hope to be able to share more detail in our 1-year-on response.	
6.	It is recommended that the School consider whether the apparently wide number of Honours option courses available meet the School's educational goals, and also meet with student demand and expectation.	Unclear	This review had already begun but was set aside when the pandemic reached the University. A small reduction (15%) was approved for 20/21 to aid with COVID 19 planning and resilience. We hope to be able to share more detail in our 1-year-on response.	
7.	The review team recommends that the School works with the College to ensure that the professional services UG support resourcing model is adequate for current and future needs.	Unclear	Notwithstanding the huge upheaval associated with COVID 19 and the immense workload that our teaching offices have been coping with, the Director of Professional Services, Head of Student Experience, UG Programme Manager and the PGT Programme Manager have been in discussions about how to bring together the Teaching Offices, and better and more agilely support students especially at UG level. Two additional fixed term posts were approved and recruitment has started. Much more work is needed on this and we hope to be able to share more detail in our 1-year-on response.	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review.	With permission from the Panel, we were able to record the open feedback session. This we subsequently shared with undergraduate students via Learn early June. Future progress will be share with students via relevant committees and newsletters.		

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review 2019/20

14 week response report

Internal Periodic Review of: Chemistry

Date of review: 11/12th March 2020

Date of 14 week response: 24th Nov 2020

Date of year on response:

The School/Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recommendation no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	<p><u>Curriculum:</u> It is strongly recommended that Chemistry gives careful consideration to the content of the Year Three curriculum. It is strongly recommended that the School works towards embedding its skills and careers' development within the core curriculum, and that a mandatory, assessed reflective portfolio for Year Five students and more reflective elements for earlier years are introduced.</p>	<p>Year 3 Review: End of 2020/21</p> <p>Skills portfolio: in line with University Curriculum Review</p>	<p>Some immediate measures were taken to reduce workload in Year 3 in response to COVID planning, and these will seed further discussions at Board of Studies in 2021.</p> <p>The University is now prompting Institution and College-level discussions regarding Curriculum Review (first College meeting: 17/11/20) and these will be used to prompt School conversation in the coming academic year after the COVID workload has passed.</p>	
2	<p><u>Supporting and Developing Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that pedagogical training is rolled out for all Postgraduate Tutors and Demonstrators as soon as is practicable. • It is recommended that Chemistry takes steps to professionalise the Tutor and Demonstrator roles by introducing a selective recruitment process. Once in post, Tutors and Demonstrators should be regarded as University staff members. • It is recommended that Demonstrators are required to work through all pre-lab exercises and experiments in advance of teaching classes and that they are paid fully for their time. • It is strongly recommended that the School produces detailed assessment criteria and marking rubrics for each assignment, and clear information 	<p>Immediate and over the year 2020/21</p>	<p>Plans for pedagogic training are in place for the current year.</p> <p>Tutors and demonstrators are now embedded in the university's new "People and Money" system.</p> <p>Demonstrators are already paid fully for allocated training time, and when labs resume, lab organisers will ensure completion of all laboratory activities by demonstrators.</p> <p>Rubrics for assessments will be produced as part of the Extensions and Special Circumstances Project underway at University level.</p> <p>The pandemic has focussed minds on teaching and teaching approaches, and in the aftermath we will look to explore how best to support staff in completing the FHEA</p>	

	<p>about this should be published in course handbooks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review team recommends that the School sets more ambitious targets for EdTA participation and completion; continues to build on the work started through the Teaching Forum to discuss innovative approaches to teaching and learning and share best practice; and ensures that teaching activity is a key focus in Academic Staff annual review processes. 		<p>status. We have already given a briefing session on using teaching considerations in the pandemic as a route to taking up FHEA.</p>	
3	<p><u>Assessment and Feedback:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that the School reviews the quantity and types of assessment used across all years. • It is recommended that the School develops a more systematic and explicit approach to providing formative feedback opportunities for all undergraduate courses. • It is recommended that Chemistry ensures that Course Organisers take full responsibility for all aspects of their course's assessment. 	<p>Current and In line with Curriculum Review</p>	<p>As mentioned we are already undertaking a review of Chemistry 3. With the pandemic, we have introduced a range of new assessments for Chemistry 1, as well introducing new assessments on coding in Chemistry 2 and 3. In all years, we have moved to open book examinations, and will likely maintain these into the future.</p> <p>The Curriculum Review is likely going to seed conversation about other aspects of assessment.</p> <p>Course Organisers are fully responsible for all aspects of their Course Assessment.</p>	
4	<p><u>Teaching Delivery:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that the School considers ways in which it might reduce its reliance on traditional lectures and diversify teaching approaches. 	<p>2021/22</p>	<p>The pandemic is likely to prompt a lot of rethinking about the role of lectures, and we will use that as a basis to move to more active/discussion based learning.</p>	
5	<p><u>Student Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that the School considers ways in which elements of the one to one relationship between Personal Tutor and student that exists under the current model of student support is retained, whilst taking full advantage of the opportunities afforded by the enhanced Professional Services Student Experience Team that will exist under the University's new model. • It is strongly recommended that the School works towards developing standard templates for all programme and course handbooks and ensures that handbooks are a comprehensive source of information for students. 	<p>Current</p>	<p>The School is committed to maintaining all positive aspects of the PT system in whatever form manifests after the review.</p> <p>A project involving standardisation of Programme and Course Handbooks is planned by the Teaching Office in 2021.</p>	

6	<u>Student Voice</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that the School takes steps to ensure that all students know when and how to raise concerns about Postgraduate Tutors and Demonstrators. 	Current and ongoing	We continue to illustrate to students how they can best raise queries, and will include it in PG training.	
7	<u>Quality and Standards</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that Boards of Examiners' discussions and decisions about action to be taken for students with special circumstances are based only on the judgements provided by the Special Circumstances Committee. 	2020	We will bring this topic up for discussion with the Senior Internal Examiners and Senior Personal Tutor for review.	
8	<u>Management</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that the School gives further consideration to succession planning for teaching-related roles and wherever possible, adheres to the principle that roles should be held for a fixed-term, five year period. 	Ongoing	This comment refers to roles such as Course Organiser, etc – we are refreshing Course Organisers and for example have new course organisers in our three Year 2 optional courses already in place, new CO for a Year 4 course. We are reviewing Course Organisation of our main course each year, and are extending the CO role to be a course team, so that three staff in each year are responsible for aspects of the course. This builds in sustainability and rotation possibilities.	
9	<u>University Shuttle Bus</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team recommends that the University Shuttle Bus service continues until the KB Nucleus development is complete. 	Ongoing	<u>Response from Travel and Transport Manager, Estates Department</u> In May 2019, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) announced the University's intention to change the transport options offered to students for their travel to and between campuses. This followed an external consultation review process. The new approach will concentrate on creating more affordable options for students on city-wide transport services. This means all students would be able to take advantage of subsidised prices for Lothian Buses' tickets and significant discounts on Just Eat Cycles. Due to the approach shifting to concentrate on a reduction in public transport prices for students, the money allocated for the current transport options will be diverted. This means the discontinuation of the King's Buildings shuttle bus.	

While it is recognised that this will affect students and staff who currently use the shuttle service, the aim of reallocating this funding is to provide affordable and sustainable solutions that are fair and equitable for a larger majority of our students.

These changes were due to come into effect from the start of the 2020/21 academic year. During 2019-20 students were invited to join a Student Bus User Forum, as the primary stakeholder group for informing and shaping the University's approach to ensuring students can access high quality and affordable public transport. The Forum met once on 28th November 2019. Due to the impact of COVID-19 lockdown, the Forum has not met since. Work to develop more a more affordable and attractive Lothian Buses ticket product has been stalled by the significant operational and financial impact of the public health restrictions on public transport.

During summer 2020 transport plans were developed and implemented to support students on their return to blended teaching from September 2020. Due to challenging operational conditions Lothian Buses were not able to operate the shuttle service, and an alternative was not sought due to the fact that capacity would have to reduce to 25% and costs would increase. Instead the shuttle bus budget was diverted to:

- Provide all students with access to reduced price bus tickets (£1.30 reduced from £1.80). Sales were limited to 20 per student as Government guidance was and continues to be to walk or cycle wherever possible.
- Provide match funding with the Further and Higher Education institutions in Edinburgh, and Edinburgh Council to subsidise 4 month passes for the Edinburgh Cycle Hire Scheme. The 'Back to Study' pass was priced at just £10, reduced from £50, and available for all students to purchase.

These measures are expected to remain in place to the end of 2020-21. During the remainder of 2020-21 the Transport and Travel Office will prepare plans for September 2021, with the aim of implementing the May 2019 SLT decision. This would mean that the shuttle bus would be discontinued, a reduced price bus ticket product

			<p>introduced, bus services improved where required, and an attractive student offer on the Edinburgh Cycle Hire Scheme.</p> <p>Completion of the KB Nucleus project will not be before September 2022, and therefore there will be a period of at least 1 year from the discontinuation of the shuttle service, and the opening of the Nucleus. It is therefore not possible to implement this recommendation.</p>	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	Report and response will be presented to students at semester 2 SSLCs		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review			

The University of Edinburgh
Internal Periodic Review 2019/20
14 week response report

Internal Periodic Review of: Divinity

Date of review: 3 & 4 March 2020

Date of 14 week response: 16 September 2020

Date of year on response: due 10 June 2021

The School is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action.

If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recommendation no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	<p>The review team accepted the strategic and organisational considerations behind changing the School structure for the management of undergraduate teaching and supported current plans to dissolve subject areas as administrative structures. However, at the same time the review team recommends that the School also identify, implement and/or preserve clear DPT-defined pathways that support disciplinary progression and integrity, in order to address the above-noted staff concerns highlighted at the review. This means that the School should collectively examine and confirm that current DPTs would remain fit for purpose in this regard after the dissolution of Subject Areas as administrative structures. In instances where uncertainty or reservations around this question might arise, the School should be open to making changes to current DPTs necessary to underwrite staff confidence, for example, looking at programme-specific instances where new and/or additional DPT pre-requisites would be needed to support disciplinary progression and integrity</p>	May 2021	<p>We are pleased the proposed administrative restructuring is affirmed and confirm this is currently being completed. To ensure the continuity of disciplinary pathways that colleagues desire, we will review the current pathways signposted in the course catalogue and DPTs and seek to define these more clearly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) DQAE will tabulate current course entry requirements (including recommended and compulsory pre- and co- requisites) from the DRPS course catalogue; ii) UGSC will discuss pathways at its autumn meeting and articulate a vision for these; iii) UGSC will also propose a new course code prefixing framework to deliver improved disciplinary signposting; iv) ii and iii will be put to BoS for discussion; v) DQAE will mail COs, inviting them to propose any additional desired requisites; vi) UG PDs will review their DPTs and consider if changes are needed and if so bring these forward. We believe these measures will raise our disciplinary progression and integrity above the levels the subject area management structure provided. 	
2	<p>The review team recommends a holistic review of the School's entire UG course provision to ensure appropriate consistency, diversity, timing, constructive alignment, and cumulative volume of assessments</p>	March 2021	<p>The assessment review described in the reflective report is already well advanced. DQAE has identified courses with assessment loads significantly higher than Divinity norms and wrote to COs in March about reducing these. DQAE will</p>	

	across the curriculum. This would include consideration of the impact of assessment practices on all stakeholders (students, academic staff and professional services) when conducting this review and arriving at its conclusions.		write to relevant COs and follow up if needed until all identified courses have been addressed. Proposed assessment changes will be brought to the February UGSC and BoS for approval. This will enable all assessment changes to be in place before the 2021/22 course catalogue is published.	
3	The review team strongly supported the proposed strengthening of the UG Studies Committee to undertake strategic decision-making in relation to curriculum development and provision and recommended that this change was undertaken as soon as possible.	September 2020 and ongoing	We propose a basket of measures to strengthen UGSC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) A revised remit (including e.g. pedagogical innovation, learning technology forward direction, tutorial strategy) will be drafted by DUGS for UGSC discussion and SMG approval, in which approving individual new courses and course changes will no longer be UGSC's main business; ii) UGSC membership will be DUGS (chair), HoS, DQAE, UG PDs, PG tutor coordinator, senior tutor, DEDI, teaching administrator (secretary), learning technologist and at least one student member; iii) Service standards will meet Divinity norms (paper call two weeks before, agenda one week before, draft minutes one week after); iv) The chair will actively promote open, collegial, strategic discussion and forward planning, and any UGSC member will be entitled to table agenda items; v) If progress proves difficult, HoS will arrange external facilitation for UGSC. UGSC will have in mind the Panel's Suggestion 1 that the School 'should have the confidence to develop and implement local solutions in relation to curriculum development and restructure as appropriate, rather than feeling compelled to wait for final outcomes of parallel University-wide initiatives'. 	
4	The review team acknowledges feedback received on strong aspects of community identity, but recommends that the School formally consider how best to preserve and further enhance existing levels of inclusivity, bearing in mind all student voices, identities and experiences (e.g. BAME, carers, LGBTQ+ and WP).	July 2021	In the coming year we will review UoE reports on the experiences and needs of marginalised UG groups, while continuing to draw on the resources of the Edinburgh Diversity and Inclusion Network and RACE.ED to develop concrete actions to improve inclusion. This work will be led by DEDI, whose brief now includes WP, and overseen by the Divinity E&D Committee, which with SMG will consider appointing a tutor or tutors to support BAME, carer, LGBTQ+, WP and disabled students. Informal meetups for BAME	

			students, similar to those available to LGBT+ students through the recently formed NC Pride group, will provide an opportunity for support and sharing experiences. A compulsory seminar- taught course in year 1 s1, which could strengthen inclusion, would provide a good setting for orientation and study skills and promote meaningful contact with individual academics, will be considered. Our PT Statement includes provision for tutees to change PT and this will be made more explicit by including it on the PT webpage summary. We will also publicise the IS Laptop Loan service.	
5	The review team recommends that the excellent local practice in personal tutoring currently demonstrated in Divinity is preserved in any forthcoming system transformation. This will be the responsibility of colleagues leading the joint University-SEP review of the personal tutoring system, who should consult directly with Divinity on this matter.	ongoing	PTSSR has been paused and UoE approval of the evolved model is postponed. Current structures and systems remain until at least 2022/23. PTSSR will work in partnership with Schools to discuss plans for implementing any future changes, which will also be informed by the ART students workstream	
6	In relation to commendation 6 above, the Review Team recommends that the wider University formally examines the local arrangements put in place within Divinity, in order to identify aspects of best practice that might be scalable across the wider institution more generally.	December 2020	The CAHSS Deans of Education and QACA will arrange to meet with the School's Academic Liaison and PG Tutor Co-ordinator to learn more about the role. With the support of IAD, the meeting will be used to discuss how the local arrangements to support PG Tutors have been enhanced and to explore ways that local practice may be shared across UoE, e.g. via the Doctoral College. We will also liaise with HR colleagues to ensure that role descriptors for this and similar roles in other Schools (e.g. PPLS) align with consistent grades and remuneration. The CAHSS Deans of Education and QACA will arrange to meet with the School's Academic Liaison to discuss how this recommendation may be taken forward.	
7	It was recommended that the College develop further guidance, guidelines and support for PG Tutors and demonstrators contributing to teaching and assessment of online courses and programmes. The review team recognises that this is a College-level responsibility, however, given the outstanding culture of tutor and demonstrator mentoring and support within Divinity we consider the School would be well placed to contribute to this work.	December 2020	CAHSS has collated a number of existing key resources into a single document that can be shared with Divinity colleagues. This contains examples of innovative practice and resources from across UoE. The Academic Governance and Quality Team has also met with Michelle Evans (Programme Manager (MSc in Clinical Trials)) to discuss the support and resources they offer to PG Tutors teaching on their online programmes. This includes a dedicated online course/module (currently setup in Moodle, but transferring to Learn) that provides a platform for support, community building and key resources to tutors, teaching staff and External Examiners. The CAHSS Deans of Education and	

			QACA will arrange to meet with the School's Academic Liaison to discuss how this recommendation may be taken forward.	
8	It was noted that the College Dean of Undergraduate Education was undertaking work to harmonise issues experienced by students on joint programmes across the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. This would include the designation of Programme Directors linked to the programme in counterpart Schools. In light of the significant proportion of UG students enrolled on joint programmes, the review team recommended that the College Deanery continue this work to further align processes and student experiences across these programmes.	August 2021	CAHSS continues to focus on joint degree programmes as a key strategic priority. Work is underway to develop a Programme Director role descriptor following collation of extensive feedback about core activities across a range of functions supporting programme design and delivery. The projected output from a dedicated workshop on the PD role was delayed due the impact of COVID-19, but CAHSS plans to return to this work in the coming session and the input from colleagues in Divinity through the Undergraduate Education Committee and other task groups and meetings will be essential.	
9	The review team recommends that the School make explicit their vision for graduate attributes and how this relates to programme design, with particular emphasis on making explicit the link between assessment and skills building: for example, articulating the ways in which academic skills such as critical thinking also prepare students for the world of work. This recommendation will overlap and interact with those recommendations made elsewhere within the review that relate to documenting potential pathways through the programmes and the strengthening of the UG Studies Committee	May 2021	We recognize that our vision for graduate attributes could be more clearly embedded at the core of programmes at both levels 8 and 10 and that this closely relates to our response to Recommendation 1. UGSC will discuss and bring forward proposals to achieve this. Just two ideas are compulsory credit-bearing courses in year 1 s1 to deliver initial orientation and study skills, and in year 3 s2 to provide dissertation preparation and aid exploration of post-UG trajectories. If seminar taught, such courses would also enable the development of skills associated with group settings, and summative assessment could explicitly relate to study skills and graduate attributes. Our new Learn programme hubs and existing course catalogues (Graduate Attributes and Skills section) will help us communicate our vision for graduate attributes and explain how we structure programmes and courses to promote them.	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	UG SSLC, UGSC		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review			

The University of Edinburgh
Internal Periodic Review 2019/20

14 week response report

Internal Periodic Review of: Geography

Date of review: 6 & 7 February 2020

Date of 14 week response: 30 October 2020 (due 27 August 2020)

Date of year on response: due 21 May 2021

The Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recommendation no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	The review team felt from discussions throughout the review that the School needs to reflect on where Geography sits within the wider School strategic vision and recommends that the School prioritises this exercise to enable the vision to inform further strategic thinking about teaching and other areas of development (e.g. admissions)	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial meeting with Head of School, UGT subject leads, Director of UGT, Head of Student Services, Head or Marketing and Recruitment to discuss future undergraduate admissions in April 2020. • Follow-up meetings planned with Head of School, Geography subject lead and Geography Admissions Advisors to discuss 2021-22 admissions cycle. • Covid-19, its impact on recruitment and admissions in 2020-21, and the need to prioritise the move to hybrid teaching, have prevented further developing our strategic thinking about teaching and admissions 	
2	It is recommended that the School reflect on their structures to ensure that they best facilitate and encourage enhancements to learning and teaching provision and empower and support staff to make change.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since March there have significant changes in working practices and the delivery of teaching and student support across the school. The focus has necessarily on implementing and supporting change. 	
3	It is recommended that the School reflects on the capacity of the Student Support Coordinator and Student Support Office and subsequently sustainably resource the team.	Ongoing/2021-22 School Annual Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School is included at least 1 (and possibly 2) additional FTE of student support in the annual plan for 2021-22. We had intended to implement this in alignment with the PTSSRR (Personal Tutor and Student Support Review) outcomes that are now delayed until 2022-23. We will process with the case for additional SSC support as soon as we know what the University's financial constraints will allow in terms of School devolved funded for posts. 	
	The review team recommends that the School reflect on and revise the WAM appropriately to	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School is implementing new WAM software in 2021-22 	

4	take account of large courses, equitable distribution of workload and facilitating teaching innovation through explicit resourcing of innovation.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2019-20 the School established a Course Delivery Framework Project that has aimed to develop and implement principles that define the amount of work (academic and tutor/demonstrator time) that should be allocated to the delivery of a course. The principles focus on developing a more equitable distribution of resources across the school that reflects student numbers on programmes and courses, and aims to deliver consistent contact hours for students across courses and programmes. Recommendations from the project, including principle, proposed tariffs and an implementation plan have been presented to SPARC (School Planning and Resource Committee). The intention is to implement more granular tariffs linked to student numbers in the WAM in 2021-22. 	
5	<p>The review team recommends that the subject area consider effective communication on curricular reform. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how best to communicate changes to staff and students (matriculated and prospective) how to engage the community of students in curriculum reform how to work effectively with the School and College curriculum approval processes to ensure a robust consideration is given to such matters for future changes. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the review we have communicated planned curricular changes with matriculated students via Year Group meetings and through student handbooks. As part of our strategies for keeping students informed during the pandemic we are hosting 2 town hall meetings each semester for all students. Since 2019 recruitment cycle all materials for prospective students have included information on planner curricular changes. Materials for 2021 will emphasise any proposed reforms. We continue to use SSLC as a key forum for engaging with our student community. We are considering how we can enhance student engagement and involvement, including appointing student representatives to working groups (for example on the Joint Honours working groups). A student representative also regularly attends the School Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee. As a School we are refining our Board of Studies procedures. Enhancements to these procedures will improve the consideration given to changes at both School and College level. 	
	The review team recommends that the subject area's review of Tutor and Demonstrator provision remit is directed to ensure that Tutors and Demonstrators have good support in their work, are well trained, and have transparent processes	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of changes have been implemented for 2020-21: guidance for course organisers has been revised to provide greater clarity on what can be expected from tutor and demonstrators. This guidance has been accompanied by guidance on training and a course 	

6	<p>for appointment and allocation of work in their roles in line with the Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators.</p> <p>To this end the review team recommends that the review considers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarifying appointment processes • ensuring job descriptions are accurate and informative • monitoring Tutor and Demonstrator experience on courses • providing a structured approach to CPD • providing clear redress procedures in the case of Tutors and Demonstrators having issues with their management 	2021-22	<p>organiser checklist. Course organisers have also been required to attend a briefing, which includes recommendations for further support for tutors and demonstrators with the move to hybrid teaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All tutoring and demonstrating roles are advertised to all PGR students in the school. The revised guidance for course organisers emphasises the need to follow this process and information on the appointment process is available to PGR students via the School intranet: https://www.ed.ac.uk/geosciences/intranet/student-support/postgraduate-research-support/tutoring-and-demonstrating/tutoring-demonstrating-process • Training and CPD opportunities are advertised to tutor and demonstrators, including routes to professional accreditation via Advance HE: https://www.ed.ac.uk/geosciences/intranet/student-support/postgraduate-research-support/tutoring-and-demonstrating/tutoring-demonstrating-training • Current redress procedures for tutors and demonstrators are via the PGR committee. This committee includes PGR student representative and the academic-lead for tutoring and demonstrating. We have clarified existing redress procedures and will review tutor and demonstrator representation and redress procedures at a programme level in 2021-22. 	
7	<p>The review team recommends that the Subject Area investigates how to work more closely with College Admissions to ensure transparency and exchange of information to facilitate understanding recruitment patterns and how to achieve goals of greater diversity and rebalancing recruitment across the School.</p>	Ongoing 2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DPC and admissions advisors for Geography will meet with the Head of School, the Director of Professional Services and Head of Marketing and recruitment to discuss recruitment targets for 2021-22 and how best to influence College Admissions processes to achieve goals of diversifying and rebalancing recruitment. • DPC and admissions advisors to develop an action plan to ensure regular communication with school leadership and college admissions. • Covid-19, and in particular home-working, the challenges of recruitment and admissions in 2020-21, and the demands of moving to hybrid teaching have delayed more actions on developing a closer working relationship with College Admissions. 	
	<p>The review team recommends that the School works with students to better understand the</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A couple of colleagues are leading a PTAS research project in the School on Inclusive Student Cultures. The 	

8	challenges students face due to the social composition of the cohort and how to combat this.	2021-22	<p>research will provide an important evidence base for directing ongoing work on building a more inclusive programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPC, senior tutor, and honours and pre-honours coordinators will meet with Inclusive Student Cultures project team to identify complementary ways of working with student to understand and address the challenges arising from the social composition of the cohort. 	
9	The review team recommends that the review team for Joint Honours provision fully engage with Joint Honours students to identify the key issues of provision for Joint Honours students and work to better integrate them into the academic life of the subject area.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately after the Review the School established a Joint Honours working group led by the Senior Lecturer in Geographical Information Science. The remit of the working group is to define principles that define a successful joint degree, before reflecting on how our existing joint honours degrees measure up to these principles. The working group includes academic representatives, professional services staff in the teaching organisation and recruitment and marketing; and student representatives. The working group will report its recommendations to the School Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee and School Planning and Resource Committee. • As a programme we are interested in the opportunities that the Edinburgh Futures Institute may present for refocusing our Joint Honours provision. We will engage actively with opportunities to shape and contribute to EFI UG programmes as part of a strategic approach to reviewing our involvement in joint honours programmes. • Implementing the move to hybrid teaching has delayed on our ambitions for 2020-21. 	
10	The review team recommends that the School considers how to incorporate an element of Teaching Professional Development into the Annual Review Process.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last year Annual Review Process forms have been revised at School level to emphasise teaching contributions. Feedback on the inclusion of Teaching Professional Development will be discussed at the Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee, with recommendations then made to SPARC. 	
11	The review team recommends that the subject area better communicates employability and personal development opportunities to students and incorporate more external employer engagements as well as greater support for	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the move to hybrid teaching has delayed on our ambitions for 2020-21. • In partnership with the Careers Service, Geography will pilot an alumni mentoring scheme in 2020-21. Targeting Year 3 students we will match current students with recent UoE Geography alumni, focusing on professional 	

	those interested in careers in academia earlier in the student lifecycle.	2021-	<p>development. The pilot will be implemented in January 2021 and involve 6-month mentoring arrangements. The pilot will be reviewed in July/August 2021 with the ambition to extend the scheme in 2021-22 across the programme, and other UGT programmes in the School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with the careers service and GeogSoc we are organising a careers week in week 7 of semester 1, with a focus on internships; PGT applications and Geography careers, with presentations from current students and recent graduates. • Employability and professional development will be a key focus of our 2020-21 away day. Discussions will focus on how we implement changes for the coming year, and incorporate more employer engagement and explicit reflection on skills and professional development in all years of study. We will draw on the recently published curriculum toolkit: https://www.ed.ac.uk/employability/staff/curriculum-toolkit/elements and support from the careers service. • For 2021-22 we aim to have produced and implemented a series of expectations for each year of study that give students a clear guidance on the skills they have developed, and employability and personal development opportunities that they are expected to have engaged with. 	
12	The review team recommends that the School works with students to identify better ways to close the feedback loop with the wider student body.	Ongoing 2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have working with our SSLC to identify ways of closing the feedback loop, particularly with the move to hybrid teaching. • In semester 1 2020-21 we are piloting monthly town hall meetings for all geography students with a standing item reporting back key discussions raised at SSLC meetings. • We will review this approach in semester 2. We will also identify good practice within and beyond the university (e.g. via sparqs) to develop an action plan to close feedback loops with the wider student body. 	
13	The review team recommends that the School works with students to enhance peer assisted learning opportunities for Pre-Honours students (particularly second year students) to improve student engagement.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course organisers for Year 1 and Year 2 courses have been asked to work closely with the GeogPals leaders to design activities that support students' adjustment to hybrid learning and teaching. Course organisers and personal tutors have also been asked to promote GeogPals activities. 	

		2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has not been possible to run in person peer assisted learning activities. • A priority for the pre-honours coordinator in early 2021 will be to develop an action plan to improve student engagement with peer assisted learning opportunities for 2021-22. 	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	<p>The final report has been shared with the student representatives on the SSLC and the School EUSA undergraduate representative.</p> <p>Key commendations and recommendations have been shared with all students during online town hall and welcome meetings. These include specific meetings for Joint Honours and pathway students.</p>		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review			

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review 2019/20

14-week response report

Internal Periodic Review of: School of Informatics (Postgraduate Research provision)

Date of review: 12 & 13 March 2020

Date of 14-week response: 1 September 2020

Date of year-on response: due 26 May 2021

The School is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. If any recommendation has been fully addressed, please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Task owners are identified as:

HoGS – Head of Graduate School, **DHoGS** – Deputy Head of Graduate School, **IGS** – Informatics Graduate School Office staff, **ITO** – Informatics Teaching Organisation Staff, **COMMS** – Informatics Communications team, **DOI** – Directors of Institutes, **HoS** – Head of School, **DoPS** – Director of Professional Services, **DoSS** – Director of Student Support, **CS** – Computing Support

Recommendation no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	<p>School structure and organisation</p> <p>a) The research institutes have an important role in the School's structure; however there is a lack of consistency in processes across institutes. The review team recommends that the School's structure and organisation needs to keep pace with the increase in size. Further expansion should take into account the physical limitations of the building and avoid further impact on the student experience.</p> <p>b) The review team recommends the School take advantage of the strong institute structure and ensure consistency of provision across the institutes.</p> <p>c) The review team recommends that further support for professional services staff is needed, given the increasing complexity and volume of programmes and students.</p> <p>d) The review team recommends that the School gives consideration to the impact of increased growth on the Graduate School as part of the School's structure and organisation plans above</p>	<p>Aug 2020</p> <p>Covid-19 dependent</p> <p>Apr 2021</p>	<p>a,b) [HoS,DoPS] In response to the increasing size of the School, the senior management structures have been revised during AY 2019-20 and taking effect from 2020-21. The most relevant change is in the increase in responsibilities for Institute Directors and the introduction of specific responsibilities for the Deputy Head of School.</p> <p>a) [DopS,CS] In recent years the physical limitations of the Informatics buildings in respect of office accommodation for PGR students has been an ongoing consideration for the School. The School is aware that there is insufficient space to expand PGR numbers beyond 2020-21 levels, and consequently the Informatics Graduate School (IGS) planned a restructuring of the usage of our PGR offices alongside plans to move to a mobile (rather than tethered) computing infrastructure for PGR students to decouple desk facilities from students' personal computing facilities. This plan was stalled by the Covid-19 pandemic but is still expected to roll out from autumn 2020. Our plan is to not only ease the desk space issue but to improve student experience through a more up-to-date computing infrastructure that allows students greater freedom to choose their place of work.</p> <p>a) [DHoGS, IGS] We plan to review the issue of consistency in approach to PGR provision across</p>	<p>Aug 2020</p>

and works with current staff to identify ways forward.

e) Recruitment for CDTs is managed by the Graduate School, and the research institutes and centres manage their own postgraduate research recruitment. Currently there is a misalignment of deadlines for applications and therefore planning for space management is challenging. The review team **recommends** that the School consider alignment of recruitment processes and moving to two or three fixed intakes per year. The School and Graduate School should plan for limiting the number of intakes of students it operates in order to help balance workload in the Graduate School office. Furthermore, awareness of space resource needs to be carefully considered during the intake process.

institutes. While differences in approach are to be expected, given the diversity of programmes, we recognise the importance of consistent standards across institutes and PGR programmes, and the importance of clear communication to students regarding processes for their annual reviews. For example, there are differences in expectations on students in relation to annual reviews between institutes, and some institutes have a tradition of holding open review presentations whereas others hold closed meetings of a small panel. We therefore propose to review our processes for annual reviews across institutes and review our methods of communicating these processes to students on each programme. We will identify discrepancies and amend processes or explain the rationale behind valid programme-specific approaches where they differ from the norm. We will also augment the IGS web pages to make clear that different approaches are taken in different institutes.

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c,d) [DoSS] In response to the third and fourth sub-recommendations given the University's current financial position and the need to reduce staff-related costs, the School will be unable to invest in additional professional services resource. We will, however, review the Graduate School structures, identifying issues that prevent it from scaling or that could be achieved more efficiently in what is now a large organisation within the School. We will also continue to ask for additional resource as the School's financial situation improves.

July 2021

e) [IGS] In response to recommendation concerning two or three fixed intakes per year it is firstly noted that in practice we already have two main intake periods (Sept and Jan). The flexibility to start at other months of the year is often necessary, e.g. if funding is time limited. However, an issue was raised that needs to be reviewed. We will therefore examine the workload in the IGS office that is driven by multiple intakes, to determine how can this be minimized without constraining start dates.

Oct 2020

e) [HoGS,IGS] We plan to review our recruitment processes and consider how we can better align these between programmes, bearing in mind that programmes do sometimes need to recruit in ways that are specific to those programmes.

		Oct 2020	a,e) [HoGS, IGS] Although space resources are carefully taken into consideration already during the intake process and have been for some years, this year the challenge has been exacerbated by a gradual increase in space pressures combined with numerous student interruptions due to Covid-19. We anticipate that our recruitment processes from 2021-22 onwards will need to be “space aware” and will almost certainly require quotas for CDTs and Institute PGR programmes. This will be planned and communicated to relevant stakeholders across the School.	
2	The review team heard evidence from students that they have inconsistent experience of supervision. Consistency of milestones and expectations around progression is required, not least to help professional services staff support the student journey. The review team were concerned to hear evidence of unacceptable comments made by some academic staff to students for example ‘this institute offers success, money and women’. The review team recommends that supervisor training is enhanced. Induction of new supervisors is important, but ongoing supervisor training is needed in addition to the normal five-year cycle, particularly in areas such as diversity and respect. Cultural issues need to be addressed around gender, equality and diversity. It would also support the School’s remit item on supporting postgraduate research student mental and wellbeing if mental health training is included as part of a suite of supervisor training enhancements. Transparency on how issues are dealt with within the School must be increased and inappropriate behaviour must be dealt with. The School must ensure safe mechanisms for reporting inappropriate behaviour are in place and communicated clearly to students and staff. The School should explore alternative mechanisms so that students have greater confidence in the system and will not worry about retribution. The blacklisting of staff from supervision should be more transparent.	Sept 2021	a) [DHoGS] As long as resources allow, the School will continue to offer the “ <i>Don’t Cross the Line</i> ” course, encouraging academic staff to attend until there are enough delivery opportunities to make it compulsory for all supervisors.	Sept 2020
		Sept 2020	b) [HoGS,DHoGS] The School will introduce content, and refer students to further resources, on cultural diversity into the PGR induction programme.	
		Jan 2021	c) [HoGS] Completion of the “Challenging Unconscious Bias” and “Equality & Diversity Essentials” courses is already mandatory for all academic staff. The School will aim for 90% compliance, and make it a condition of recruitment of new PhD students.	
		Nov 2020	d) [DHoGS] We will review best practice in the College and the IAD for training the academic supervisors to deal with student mental health issues. We will promote the uptake of the Learn course “Supporting Students with Mental Health Problems: Charlie Waller Memorial Trust”	
		Jan 2021	e) [DHoGS] We will be transparent in explaining what appropriate behaviour in the research environment is. We will improve our support for resolving problems, and for supporting students wanting to make formal complaints, so that they can come forward with greater confidence.	
3	Enhancing the learning and research environment	January 2021	a) [DoPS] The building work that was planned for the summer to improve the air quality in the internal rooms within the Forum was delayed by the Covid-19 lockdown	

	<p>The review team commends the Building Manager and Senior Team for engaging with Estates Department to ensure building work to address issues in terms of heat and air quality. The review team recommends that efforts to move forward rapidly with this are supported by the College.</p> <p>The review team heard evidence from students that other clear and more transparent communications to students were needed. The review team recommends a “you said we did” approach, transparent communication on important issues (for example, air quality issues in the building) and involving students in planning (to take advantage of engaged and enthusiastic students).</p>	<p>Oct 2020</p>	<p>and, unfortunately, the scope of this work will now been reduced due to the University’s financial position. Estates are currently reviewing the required works to maximise what can be achieved within the available funds that have been committed by the College. Under the Covid-19 distancing rules, there will be fewer people in each room, improving temperatures and air quality.</p> <p>b) [DHoGS, COMMS] We will improve and expand our mechanisms for communicating between IGS and the PGR student community. We will continue the very successful PGR townhall meetings that were held during the Covid-19 lockdown, together with online updates from IGS following SSLC meetings. The IGS web page for sharing feedback based on “you said we did” will be updated.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Supporting Postgraduate Research Mental Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>a) The review team recommends that student pastoral support is strengthened particularly for low-level issues, with better awareness of available support structures amongst staff and students.</p> <p>b) The review team recommends that the School provides appropriate funding and opportunities for students to take the lead in organising to self-support and build resilience, particularly around coping with failure.</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p> <p>Oct 2020</p>	<p>a) [DHoGS] We will work to improve the awareness amongst students of the support staff and roles. We have expanded our team of PGR Personal Tutors in AY 2020/21 who we anticipate taking on more active pastoral support roles including holding regular office hours.</p> <p>b) [DHoGS] The School will consider how best to deploy resources for on-course support of students including empowering them to take the lead in organising self-support. Options being considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal meeting sessions for PGRs to meet with PGR tutors at the start of their programme (or annually). • Set up drop-in sessions, or fixed times/office hours for PGR tutor consultations. • Regular reminders to students about the PGR tutors (e.g. at key times of the year) • Promote IAD courses to students. Options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managing your Work and your Goals ○ Seven Secrets of a Highly Successful Research Student ○ Beating Writers Block ○ Ease the Load - Feel Good About Your Busy Life ○ Imposter Syndrome and How to Deal with It ○ The Inner Game - Exploring Stress, Balance, Resilience and Self-Belief 	

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staying Well (while social distancing) ○ Staying Well during your PhD ○ Working productively at a distance - working with your supervisor and time management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Circulate to staff and students information on how to recognise signs and symptoms of mental health issues. ● Enhance and promote student-facing IGS web pages linking to mental health support resources, including promoting the Student Counselling Service. ● Institutes to introduce a staff role with responsibility for PGR oversight. 	
5	<p>Provision of teaching support and management of teaching opportunities</p> <p>a) Final course moderation practices were not clear. The review team recommends that each course is clearly moderated by the Course Organiser in line with University and College guidance.</p> <p>b) The review team found that there was no underlying problem with students rejecting opportunities to teach and recommends that the School delivers teaching, including postgraduate support for teaching, within the available teaching resources and GTA resource budget, and that students are allowed freedom to pursue the teaching that interests them. Course Organisers should work with the Informatics Teaching Organisation to advertise teaching opportunities.</p> <p>c) The review team commends the good practice in tutor training and materials provided by Course Organisers in the larger courses for example, Machine Learning and Pattern Recognition (INFR11130). The review team recommends that the School consider ways this good practice can be shared with other Course Organisers.</p>	<p>January 2021</p> <p>Sept 2020</p> <p>Nov 2020</p> <p>Oct 2020</p>	<p>a) [ITO] Course Organisers/TAs already moderate coursework submissions. The School's Teaching organisation will review the way in which each course applies moderation to ensure processes are in line with University and College guidance.</p> <p>b) [ITO] The ITO will continue to advertise teaching support positions as proposed by the course organisers.</p> <p>c) [DHoGS] The School will review existing tutor training courses and circulate best practice with all Course Organisers. In the current year, a two-week IAD training is already underway for blended learning.</p> <p>c) [ITO] The School will consider other ways in which best practice in particular courses can be shared with other Course Organisers, including the regular Teaching Hour. Teaching Lunches to discuss support and training for tutors will be organised. The School is currently running training courses for tutors.</p>	
6	<p>Student voice</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p>	<p>a) [IGS] The School welcomes these recommendations for student-led shared values in terms of office etiquette. The Graduate School will review operation of the existing Staff</p>	

	<p>a) Students were aware of variable occupancy of postgraduate research student offices and the impact growth is having. There were also tensions around different expectations of office etiquette. The review team recommends the School supports students to develop a set of student-led, shared values, particularly in terms of office etiquette.</p> <p>b) The review team recommends that the School facilitate the formation of a student body that makes the most of the Institute representative system so that greater communication between students from institutes is achieved and opportunities for collaboration enhanced. This would also help address issues around acceptable behaviours.</p>	<p>Nov 2020</p> <p>Nov 2020</p> <p>Dec 2020</p>	<p>Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) and work to improve its effectiveness.</p> <p>a) [DHoGS] The Graduate School will consult with Institutes with a view to enhancing their role in improving office culture and in improving student representation.</p> <p>b) [IGS] The Graduate School will facilitate the formation of an Informatics PGR student group, based on the Institutes' PGR reps.</p> <p>a) The Informatics PGR student group will be asked to develop a guide to shared office etiquette.</p>	
7	<p>The review team recommends that the external member of the progression review panel is formally recognised by the School for the important role they play in the student experience and that the external, if at all possible, should be the same person for the duration of the PhD.</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p> <p>Sept 2020</p> <p>Sept 2020</p>	<p>[IGS] The School will locally record the external member of the review panel, although at present EUCLID has no way to record this information.</p> <p>[IGS,DHoGS] The Graduate School will follow the guidance to recommend that the external reviewer stays the same, where possible, for each student.</p> <p>[IGS,DHoGS]The Graduate School will update its induction materials and annual review guidelines to students to highlight the importance of the role of the external review panel member and clarify the functions of this role to all involved in the review process.</p>	
8	<p>The review team recommends that the School ensures that both students and staff are made better aware of the Postgraduate Research Personal Tutors, that awareness is assessed after a suitable period, and that Postgraduate Research Personal Tutor resource is increased to a level appropriate to the number of research students in the School.</p>	<p>Sept 2020</p>	<p>[IGS,DHoGS] The Graduate School will work to increase student awareness of PGR Personal Tutors and their role in providing pastoral support to PGR students. We have increased the number of the PGR Personal Tutors. We will also promote more widely the contacts for the tutors, and their office hours (e.g. at Induction and at Town Hall meetings, as well as web pages). We will set up an email rota to periodically remind the students about the Tutors.</p> <p>We note that the CDT programmes already have their own Pastoral Support contacts with discussion meetings and drop-in hours.</p>	
9	<p>The review team recommends that the Head of School and School Management Team ensures clarity for staff on financial routes and what can and</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>[DoPS] Changes to the University's financial model in recent years has changed the way College and Schools can fund equipment and capital projects of >£50k; these</p>	

	cannot be achieved. If particular operational difficulties are incurred, College should work with the School to resolve these.		capital investments now prioritisation at College level within budgets provided to Colleges. Improved forward planning is required at School level to plan equipment purchases and replacements, and our improved budgeting processes will support this. The School made some changes a year ago to restrict the ability for our Institutes to fund equipment purchases, which is being reversed from FY 2020/21 which will provide more flexibility for Institutes to support PGR student equipment needs.	
10	The unfavourable comparison by staff and PhD students of the Edinburgh PhD to that of American competitors should be avoided as it appears to devalue the offering. The review team recommends that the Graduate School and Careers service work with students in recognising the value of their PhD work.	Dec 2020 Jan 2021	[DHoGS] The School recognises that there are differences between UK and US PhD programmes, and each has some advantages and disadvantages. The Graduate School will work to promote the benefits of the shorter UK PhD programme to students, highlighting job prospects, transferable skills, etc. We will also promote the benefits of the full-time research position here versus the part-time teaching responsibility positions associated with US/EU PhD positions. This will include input from the Careers Service. We will include a section on the benefits of the UK PhD model relative to the US/EU PhD model in the supervisor training. [COMMS] The School will publicise, through its Communications and Outreach team, the impact of the research carried out by our PGR students, highlighting the strong publication record of students across the School and the contributions they make to society.	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	[IGS] This document will be posted on the new "You said / We did" web page.		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review			

The University of Edinburgh
Internal Periodic Review 2019/20
14 week response report

Internal Periodic Review of: Social Policy

Date of review: 10-11 February 2020; SQAC approval 21 May 2020

Date of 14 week response: 27 August 2020, received 23 November 2020

Date of year on response: due 21 May 2021

The Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action. If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Rec no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	<p>The review team recommends that the Schools' review of Tutors and Demonstrators is in line with the University.</p> <p>The review team recommends that tutors are involved in the review process if this has not already been agreed.</p> <p>The review team recommends that a dedicated space is considered to enable tutors to do marking, to meet with students and to meet as a group to facilitate opportunities to share practice.</p>	Ongoing	<p>The school has established a new role of Director of Student Development whose remit covers the defining the work of tutors and demonstrators in the school (as these posts are typically occupied by the PGR students in the school). The Director of Student Development is an active member of the learning and Teaching Directorate.</p> <p>The review itself is a continuous and ongoing process (somewhat delayed by the pandemic) and tutors are involved in the process. The school always mindful of maintaining alignment with University guidance and processes.</p> <p>Space requirements will be reviewed as pandemic conditions allow.</p>	
2	<p>The review team recommends that the Subject Area review and reflect on feedback provided to students to ensure it is effective, transparent, useful and timely.</p> <p>The team also recommends that the Subject Area consider ways to make exam feedback more useful and meaningful.</p>	end 2020	<p>These items have been remitted for discussion at the School Education Committee in semester 1, 2020-2021. We are mindful of the extent to which both assessment and feedback may need to change in the light of revised arrangements for course delivery as a result of Covid-19.</p>	
3	<p>The review team recommends that the Subject Area and School consider approaches to improve community building and enhance communications</p>	September 2020 and continuing	<p>As of August 2020, we have made arrangements for online community-building through semester 1 at programme level, following School and University guidance. Further initiatives will follow, if necessarily in accordance with the changing parameters set by adaptation to Covid-19.</p>	

4	<p>It is recommended that the Subject Area consider approaches to strengthen the effectiveness of the School Education Committee.</p> <p>In addition, the review team recommends that the Subject Area consider using the Education Committee to systematically consider how to use staff research interests to reflect on possible diversity topics, especially for new members of staff who may have relevant research interests.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the Subject Area continues with planned changes and consider the topic-based suggestions</p>	end 2020 and continuing	<p>Head of Subject Area (HoSA) and Director of Undergraduate Teaching (DUGT) will conduct an initially informal review of the membership and operation of Education Committee, with a view to making recommendations to the Subject Area early in semester 1. Future membership will include at least one postgraduate tutor.</p> <p>Our Research Director will collate a list of diversity topics addressed by current research in the SA, for consideration by Education Committee.</p> <p>Our commitment to curriculum diversity will be made explicit in the remit of a configured Education Committee. The Committee will instigate a subject-wide discussion of diversity issues through academic session 2020-21.</p>	
5	<p>Therefore the review team recommends that the School and Subject Area review the award application details on what has already been agreed and use this as a starting point to further enhance diversity and/or improve community.</p>	end 2020	<p>Similarly, we will remit consideration of the Athena Swan bronze award to Education Committee, and to the wider Subject group as appropriate.</p>	
6	<p>The review team recommends that the School considers upgrading administrative support structures to 1 FTE to reflect the increase in staffing in the Subject Area.</p>		<p>The workload of the administrative team of Subject Academic Support Offices (SASO) is looked at holistically. As the Social Policy SASO is 0.6, she has not been given any additional project work or centre support to balance out the workload.</p> <p>Within student support, we have upgraded the administrative support with the addition of a dedicated line manager and student support assistant. The establishment of the new Extensions and Special Circumstances team will also take on some of the day to day tasks previously support by the Student Support Officers (SSOs). Improved team working processes also better allow staff to cover for each other, allowing resources to focus on areas of most need.</p>	January 2020
7	<p>In addition, the review team recommends that the School and Subject Area review communications to ensure that all students are aware of the location of the SSO office and the mechanisms to book appointments and rooms confidentially.</p>	September 2020	<p>In response to Covid-19, all communication with SSOs now takes place online, with in-person pre-booked appointments available should the student require. The role of the SSO is set out in programme handbooks, with contact details and a statement about confidentiality, and highlighted in induction</p>	September 2020

			<p>meetings with Course Organisers, Programme Directors and Personal Tutors.</p> <p>As part of the reception desk, the student support office is visible to all those entering the building, with the student support assistant based at the reception desk. There has been an established in-person presence in the office since the building re-opened for welcome week.</p>	
8	<p>The review team recommends that the School consider ways in which current study and teaching spaces can be improved to enhance the student experience and consider where any unused spaces could be used as social spaces for students to come together. The Student User group should be involved in these discussions if not already invited to do so.</p>	Ongoing	<p>In response to Covid-19, all study space and student space is considered on a University-wide basis and students are required to use the centrally managed spaces.</p>	
9	<p>The review team recommends that the Timetabling Unit consider the allocation of teaching rooms across campus to reduce transition time between classes.</p> <p>The review team also recommends that the University Estates Management Group are mindful of the factors noted above and the impact that the pressures on the School estate is having on the student and staff experience.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Recommendation 9 fits with the StEAP student travel-time project currently being worked on. The project is due to report its findings and recommendations by the end of the calendar year. However, its main focus will be on the challenges in the Central area, where travel-time constraints don't officially exist from a timetabling perspective, but do in reality for many students.</p> <p>The biggest official travel constraint burden, namely that between Central-KB, will be largely mitigated by the delivery of the KB Nucleus and hopefully contribute to ongoing reduction of travel requirements. It may be that given the necessity to deliver lectures online in 20/21, online lecture delivery becomes more of the norm, in which case many travel-time issues would be mitigated.</p> <p>The review will be noted at the University Estates' Space Management Group.</p>	
10	<p>The review team recommends that the School and Subject Area consider succession planning and are mindful of the reliance on a small number of people during the interim period.</p>	end 2020-21	<p>A new HoSA has now been in post for a month and is actively considering succession planning.</p> <p>As noted in our submission, the Subject Area has 35 members of staff: 6 at grade 10, of whom 5 have served or are serving as HoSA, and 13 at grade 9. We have no reason to think that succession will present any significant or unusual problem three years from now. In the course of session 2020-21 the Subject Area will consider whether to</p>	

			appoint a Depute (and prospective) HoSA at least one year before succession becomes due.	
11	<p>The review team recommends that the School consider ways in which additional financial assistance could be provided for the PPALS scheme.</p> <p>It is recommended that the School consider ways in which additional financial assistance could be provided to the Social Policy Student Society support events and activities.</p>	end 2020-21	<p>The Subject Area has identified budget lines to support student initiatives. In the light of Covid-19, the greater challenge is to identify what sort of initiatives might be possible.</p> <p>As of September 2020, the School's Student Support Office holds a UG student support fund, to support PPALS and other student experience initiatives.</p> <p>A fund to support student initiated activities has also been established in the Student Development Office</p>	
12	It is recommended that the Subject Area review course content with partner institutions.	March 2021	This issue has been remitted to the Junior Year Abroad coordinator to review, initially to establish the scope and nature of any problem, and to report to Education Committee. That said, it may be difficult to move quickly on this: the shape of the problem is likely to be as unclear as much else is right now, given uncertainty about the nature of provision in different countries, its mode of delivery and the possibility or otherwise of international travel.	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	A paragraph of explanation has been inserted into course and programme handbooks for all undergraduate students in the Subject Area.		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review			