

Internal Periodic Review of: School of Law

Date of review: 11-14 October 2021

Date of 14 week response: 27 April 2022

Date of year on response: 19 January 2023

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 |
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| 1 | <p>The review team recommend that the School reflect on where responsibility sits for delivering change across the range of School goals, including within the management structure, roles and responsibilities of other post holders, and how this includes the student voice. The purpose of this recommendation is to encourage the School to ensure that it can work through and deliver planned changes, including large-scale change projects such as LLB curriculum review.</p> | 18 months | <p>Edinburgh Law School (“ELS”) has put in place a new management structure that explicitly seeks to separate out its strategic approaches to change delivery from function. As the School has increased in staff size, the current management structure has become unwieldy, with an unrealistic over-emphasis on direct Head of School action. A diagram of the new management structure is attached in the appendix, with carefully delineated new roles for School office-bearers highlighted.</p> <p>The principal reforms associated with this new management structure are primarily located in the senior leadership roles. The Director of Education role refreshes the previous role of Deputy Head of School with responsibility for teaching. Supporting the role of Director of Education is an advisory group bringing together key office holders amongst academic staff in relation to education such as the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the Director of Postgraduate Studies, with the relevant senior professional services staff. This structure will be crucial in terms of developing ideas for policy and change under the guidance of School Management Group, and creating a framework for implementation.</p> | 1 st October 2023 |

In addition, a refreshed role of Staff Development Officer (“SDO”) will provide a holistic approach to the support and personal development of academic staff. In terms of delivery, this brings into play the School’s subject areas and in particular the Heads of Group. The Heads of Group will introduce a more streamlined approach to line management of academic staff, but also create an organic link between the subject areas and the School Management Group which has hitherto been focused on “office bearers”, at the expense of an organic approach to policy formulation and delivery. Heads of Group will drive forward change at a management level, e.g. by assisting with long-term planning and strategic staff recruitment in respect of each of those SAs and by facilitating and helping to drive forward internal promotions cases.

On the side of student voice, ELS operates a comprehensive student voice policy, which has recently been upgraded in particular for undergraduate students to offer more institutional connections, with an additional staff student liaison committee (“SSLC”) (with an increase in meetings from 2 to 4 per annum) and meetings between the Director of the Student Experience, the Undergraduate Office manager and key student representatives, as well as consultation with students via the Undergraduate Studies Committee (“UGSC”) and the involvement of students in the Part one business of Law School meetings. Other elements of the student voice are project-based, such as involvement in the curriculum building process for the new Global Law LLB, involvement in the implementation of changed approaches to student support (for the Law School from 2023 onwards), and involvement in ongoing work on decolonising the curriculum. ELS will also do more to promote websites which identify the key office-bearers in the Law School and Student Law Society representatives via the Communications team and also to identify what students do and don’t want to hear about, and what they need more of in terms of information, e.g. see the

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| | | | <p>following websites: Meet the UG Staff - Current Law Students (ed.ac.uk); Groups and Societies at the Law School - Current Law Students (ed.ac.uk);</p> <p>Overall, this refreshed scheme of change delivery will be implemented with effective transition management placed at the forefront of the scheme.</p> | |
| 2 | <p>In relation to issues of programme development / renewal, programme structure and assessment strategy, the review team recommend that the School develop a structure for a programme level approach to planning and delivery that involves subject area leads, course organisers, tutors and students in a meaningful way, and that takes account of student experience and staff workload. The aim of this recommendation is to ensure effective interactions between senior management planning and subject area planning, and to ensure that the School planning and delivery facilitates a cohesive and coherent programme-level experience for students. Programme-level planning is likely to cut across subject areas, and this recommendation is relevant to the LLB, the Diploma, and PGT Masters programmes to the extent that students take courses from across the suite of PGT programmes.</p> | 18 months | <p>Steps have already been taken towards the formulation of a more forensic analysis of the relationship between the degree programme level and demands on subject areas, with a view to ensuring that courses forming part of degree programmes are sustainable and not overly taxing on staff workload, time and resource. This mission for more coherent cross-programme and cross-subject area planning cuts across subject areas. For example, our Head of PGT Programmes has compiled a Teaching Projection Report (“TPR”) as a basis for discussion of teaching plans at a School level. This is a new strategic planning tool that has been developed to enable the Law School to become more responsive to student choice at Programme levels, particularly at the LLM level. In particular, the TPR tracks the number of courses being offered by each subject area per 1 FTE academic member of staff and identifies the Programmes to which such courses are primarily devolved and devoted. This enables a detailed cross-subject area and cross-Programme assessment to be carried out. For example, in respect of the subject areas that are over-exposed to teaching, this tool facilitates consideration as to whether certain courses ought to be retired and the identification of Programmes where student demand has subsided, with a view to offering more attractive course and Programme choices in alignment with student voice and demands. An illustration of where the TPR can make a difference can be found in the Honours stage of the LLB degree, as this has suffered from a chronic lack of courses for some time now.</p> | 1 st October 2023 |

It is hoped that the TPR (or similar management information sets) can be deployed earlier in the planning cycle as a **pre-planning instrument for SA heads**, to enable them to undertake more detailed programme-level planning and quality assurance discussions in collaboration with Programme Directors, Course Organisers and students (whether directly or with reference to student feedback gathered in the previous academic cycle). We expect that the newly-created Director of Education (and their advisory group) will be best placed to consider what mechanisms might be required to facilitate such detailed planning at a programme level, especially where programmes rely on courses beyond their own subject area for core elements of the programme curriculum. It is hoped this will be discussed in the early part of Semester 1, in time for the planning round 2023/24. Relatedly, there will be consideration at Board of Studies in November 2022 of the practical issues surrounding approval, review and record-keeping mechanisms for programme changes, including temporary suspension of courses from programme structures.

At the LLM and MSc level, both in respect of On-Campus and online distance learning programmes, the School has already committed to a full review of the programme portfolio (now expected to take place in 2022/23), with an over-arching objective to evaluate the current portfolio against the market, internal and external measures of quality and to ensure that we continue to deliver an excellent range of opportunities to future students which align with the principles and values of our School. The process is expected to deliver the following benefits:

1. Better understanding of the current market conditions, including our own position in relation to competitors, and in relation to the effect of the Covid-related shakeup to online learning, including the increased uptake and

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| | | | <p>understanding of synchronous online teaching/learning tools (such as Collaborate);</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Better understanding of how to tackle challenges of scale and complexity in managing and delivering our programmes, including student intakes; 3. Clearer principles for consideration and approval of new programmes; 4. Stronger platform for delivering an excellent student experience, with research-led programmes and courses which allow staff and students to benefit from each other's contribution in a meaningful way. <p>Turning to the issue of student voice, ELS has a comprehensive student voice policy, whereby student members of the SSLC and the UGSC are invited to express their opinions and input into the establishment of the cross-cutting approach towards subject areas and programme level consultation.</p> | |
| 3. | <p>The review team recommend that the School ensure that mainstreaming accessibility requirements are being met for all levels of study, and that the School is aware of and implements best practice around inclusivity. In particular, regard should be had to</p> <p>- obligations around captions on recorded materials. Students reported that some pre-recorded lectures did not have captions, and this included lectures for students with adjustment schedules requiring captions;</p> | 12 months | <p>The Law School has established an ongoing Programme of staff training involving the dissemination of EDI best practice amongst colleagues. These regular sessions are lead and driven forward by Law School's EDI Officer and other colleagues, with a view to offering refresher training on EDI concerns, and implementing improvements.</p> <p>With regard to expectations of ELS in relation to the captioning of recorded materials, it is understood that there are currently no plans for the captioning service (involving manual subtitling via a CAHSS subtitling team) formerly provided by CAHSS to be resurrected. In such circumstances, the ELS will do as much as is reasonably practicable to meet its captioning obligations, in light of adjustment schedules. In particular, the understanding is that the anticipated move to Learn Ultra will facilitate implementation of many accessibility and inclusivity goals. Learn Ultra has been specifically designed to be mobile-first, inclusive, and accessible and the ELS Learning</p> | 1 st May 2023 |

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| | <p>- the University policy regarding provision of reading lists and course materials appropriately in advance of classes;(accessible_and_inclusive_learning_policy.pdf (ed.ac.uk));</p> <p>- whether the time given to receive and complete assessments is appropriate and enables students to plan and balance workloads and other commitments and needs.</p> | | <p>Technologist has been working with the Learn Ultra implementation team, with an early-release build of the Learn Ultra platform to enable ELS to glean what the new platform will allow us to achieve.</p> <p>ELS supports the use of the library Resources List system which has been specifically designed to enable course organisers to provide reading lists and handouts to students in compliance with accessibility requirements. Steps are also being taken towards consideration of the embedding of reading lists.</p> <p>The Director of Education and advisory group will undertake a review to consider whether the period allocated to students to receive and complete assessments is appropriate and provides students with sufficient room to balance their workloads and plan their commitments.</p> | |
| 4. | <p>The review team recognises that automated captions may not be sufficient for lectures using technical language, and further recommend that Information Services prioritise improving automated lecture captioning. While the current system is in place, however, the School must address this issue in order to ensure accessibility. In some Schools, tutors have been employed to correct automated lecture captioning.</p> | 18 months | <p>ELS has been informed that ISG will bid again as part of the University Planning Round 22/23 onwards for investment in this area as it is clear that across the University, coverage is patchy and students are having an inconsistent experience. ISG believe that it was helpful to have this feedback from ELS and ISG will include it as part of the business case in their bid. ISG have already allied to KSC, SEC, Exec, STEAP, ITC committees in 2019, 2020 and 2021 for investment in this service. However, no additional funding has been made available for a central “human finishing” service to lecture captioning, as Schools and Colleges prefer to make local arrangements. In the absence of investment centrally, ISG are able to provide training to tutors who are working locally to correct automated lecture captioning and they continue with experimentation to improve the automated tools available.</p> <p>ELS will work constructively with IS to facilitate such change in the long-term, as students continue to move away from learning via attendance at large lectures</p> | 1 st October 2023 |

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| | | | towards more long-term planning for flexible modes of learning, which necessitate investment in accurate automatic lecture captioning. This will present ELS with various challenges and part of ELS's response will be to provide greater support to IS in making the case for University and College access to more resources. | |
| 5. | The review team appreciate that there are many logistical barriers to change, but recommend that the School instigate a programme of curriculum renewal for the LLB and Honours programmes, taking into account the needs of the Law Society while also ensuring that the requirements of the Law Society are not over-interpreted as a barrier to change. | 18 months | ELS recognises that its Honours course offerings which form part of the LLB degree, as well as its strategic approach towards the allocation of Honours choices amongst students need strategic reassessment and review. For evidence of the ongoing review of Honours provision and allocation criteria, see Appendix 2. An ongoing shortage of Honours courses creates difficulties for students, as offerings in particular subjects which one might expect from a Law School of such a high standing and calibre are not always available. This creates pressure on the Honours allocation process, which, at present, is done on the basis of academic merit. It is recognised by the Law School that this can result in student disappointment and dissatisfaction where they are unable to secure their preferred Honours course choices: this is a complaint that is sometimes versed in the free text comments of the NSS. It is understood that the requirements of the Law Society of Scotland ought not to be over-interpreted as an obstacle and that the Law School can think creatively as to how they can be best satisfied whilst removing some of the pressure points on students caused by the existing LLB Honours curriculum. In responding to the University's Curriculum Transformation process, ELS will keep this issue under review and greater flexibility will be sought by modifying the existing syllabus where that is found to be appropriate. The scope of the curriculum review and transformation process in terms of offering Major/Minor degrees is constrained in the Law School owing to Law Society requirements and also the pending launch of the non-local, non-qualifying and internationally-oriented Global Law LLB degree, which will occupy a lot of time in embedding this into the curriculum. | 1 st October 2023 |

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| 6. | <p>The review team noted that the School plans to draw on SSLC feedback to inform the next iteration of the School Learning and Teaching Strategy. The review team recommend that the School identify complementary opportunities to engage with students to improve their experiences, to enhance student participation beyond participation in School committees, and to more actively engage students in course and programme review.</p> | 18 months | <p>The Law School plans to prioritise this as a matter of urgency and ongoing steps are being taken by office-bearers, including the Director of Student Experience, with a view to consulting students on how their experience can be enhanced and improved. For example, the Director of Student Experience, the Head of PGT Programmes and the incoming SDO are currently exploring the possibility of launching a regular CPD programme on learning and teaching (akin to the existing staff seminar devoted to the dissemination of staff research), which will enable staff to share ideas and illustrations of their successes and experiences around teaching and learning, and assessment within the company of students. This would allow students to hear more about the great innovations in learning & teaching being pioneered by staff and also to engage in dialogue and discussion about them.</p> | 1 st October 2023 |
| 7. | <p>The review team recommend a number of actions in relation to supporting student career development:</p> <p>The review team recommend that the School ensure UG students are made aware of the entry requirements for the Diploma at an early stage in their UG programme. Students who the team spoke to had not been aware of the significance Year 1-2 results, indicating that current methods of communicating about this may not be effective;</p> | 18 months | <p>LLB students often come to the realisation that they are interested in a career as a Scottish solicitor in years 3 or 4 after the relevant professional subjects have been taken in years 1 and 2. Students, of course, need to be informed of significance of grades but this has to be managed sensitively too; a poor mark in one subject (or even more) may or may not have impact two, three or more years down the line and we need to be mindful of students' exam worries and the potential impact on mental health. Requirements for entry to the Diploma shift and are affected by the market; the last two years have seen an increase in competition for places and a hiatus in traineeships, increasing anxiety. We are not able to say for sure that if you secure passes in professional subjects with X average you will secure a place at your Diploma of choice in two or more years' time, when entry requirements constantly shift. Having said that, ELS routinely communicates the importance of good performance in years 1 and 2 at the annual welcome talks for each year group. New students are likely to receive too much information to retain the importance of this point at that early stage in the year. The year 2 welcome back talk is often poorly</p> | 1 st October 2023 |

attended, again speaking to this method as not being the most effective way of communicating this important point. The Personal Tutor system is also deployed to remind students of the importance of good performance in years 1 and 2 on a more personal level, but consideration will be given to rolling this into our assessment period communications (sent out twice yearly) to students to remind them of the importance of their results in the first two years if they wish to qualify, at a time when they are thinking about their assessments and results.

Diploma entry requirements have been discussed recently with Law Society of Scotland (LSS) and the Diploma providers but no real change for this year when last discussed with Nicola Ward (UoE Diploma Director). Regardless, it is imperative that clear and direct advice is presented to early years students showing the potential significance of a strong performance in their professional subjects in the first two years of study. The Careers Service ("CS") suggests, alongside itself clearly promoting this message, that the requirement for strong grades in professional subjects for entry to Diploma is conveyed through the Personal Tutor system and SSO i.e. via those guiding students in their academic programme in the early years and those in regular contact with students. We would also seek other points of contact to reinforce this message so it is embedded in the students' understanding throughout their academic journey.

Actions:

- CS to ensure messaging is robust and accessible across CS platforms and update and disseminate as required, including an appropriately toned communication to early years students at start of each semester
→ Kay Barbour (KB), link Careers Consultant for Edinburgh Law School (ELS), to check and adjust sources of information as required via

While students spoke very positively about career support from programme staff, **some reported that advice from the University Careers Service was too general for their specific needs**: the review team recommend the School work with the Careers Service to improve provision for these students, involving the Law Society and the profession as appropriate.

CS website, team members and Careers Service Plus.

- Currently, subject requirements for Diploma are clearly conveyed in PT Handbook. Reinforce the significance of strong grades to secure a place at the Diploma provider of choice here in *LLB Requirements and Diploma Pre-requisites* and through events e.g. CS Induction/ Welcome presentations to students and PTs and discussion with key School contacts
 - KB to discuss with School via Katy Macfarlane (KMac, Senior PT), Bob Lane (BL, DUG) and SSO.
- Reiterate messaging at the start of each semester via DUG and senior PT to cascade to PTs
 - KB to liaise through BL and KMac.
- Explore potential to reiterate message through ELS community
 - KB to discuss with Lindsay Jack, Director of Student Experience.

In terms of approaches towards enhancing and revitalising communications to students, it is envisaged that targeted student newsletters and refresher training sessions will repay serious consideration. In addition, colleagues who are Personal Tutors will be used to communicate to students via a personal touch.

The [Careers Service](#) offers a blend of general and highly tailored provision, adapting this to the local context and needs. It offers information, education, advice and guidance through a range of provision, activities and 1:1 support to matriculated students of the University of Edinburgh and its graduates for up to two years after graduation. The Careers Service also advertises employers' vacancies, including traineeships and training contracts and placement and

internships opportunities here: [MyCareerHub Opportunities](#). By its nature that means that some of the messaging that is conveyed is 'general'. Much is also very specific – regular updating of professional routes takes place through, for example, the Legal Careers Day conveying specific information on how to qualify in Scotland as a solicitor and as an advocate delivered by the Law Society of Scotland (“LSS”) and the Faculty of Advocates respectively. Training in England and Wales is undergoing changes so information and updates are conveyed regularly, sometimes with external presenters, and all sessions are recorded and disseminated. LSS and the CS continue to deliver a series of presentations through the academic year to different groups, focussed on the Scottish legal profession, at key points in the student journey (during University Welcomes, when considering applications to the Diploma, on approaching graduation etc.). In addition, the CS offers regular tailored updates and communications to specific law groups throughout the academic year, including small group open Q & A sessions and then the most tailored of all: specific one-to-one confidential longer careers guidance appointments and specific one-to-one shorter consultations. In addition, ELS has pioneered a sophisticated Advancement initiative, part of which is designed to facilitate formal engagement with local and international law firms, with a view to fostering mentoring and other career developments opportunities for students.

Actions:

- Continue to convey tailored communications to different groups within ELS
- Continue to specify the ways students can gain explicit advice for their specific needs
→ CS and KB to reiterate via tailored email communication the services and support available including events, presentations, fairs and activity with and about the LSS and

The review team recommend that the School ensure that PGR students receive career development support for non-academic, as well as academic, careers, and that all opportunities are taken to give students access to career development and networking opportunities beyond Scotland and UK.

profession, and ways to secure one to one regular appointments, one to one shorter consultations, and drop ins.

It is proposed that students' communications will be targeted more towards students via the Careers Service.

An array of career development support is available, both academic and non-academic related. The latter includes a PhD (and Masters by Research) careers workshops series helping these students understand non-academic routes, where a PhD can take them beyond academia and how to present their profile, and PhD, to best effect through applications and the selection process. PGR students should also make full use of Career Essentials, our programme of live sessions, recorded content for 24/7 viewing and resources which this year includes sessions on patent work, working in policy, working in management consultancy, and working in finance, amongst many others. This year we are running webinars with guest speakers as part of our PhD Horizons - a careers event exploring careers outside academia - in late June and we record all session so currently students can view and hear from speakers working in policy, life sciences, government and third sector research, creative industries, professional roles in higher education and more, from previous events. Employ.ed for PhDs is another initiative allowing those students to gain experience, develop skills, and extend networks beyond their own departments while earning some money. The internships are short term and part time based across the University. Students are encouraged to network via Platform One and engage with the University of Edinburgh community. The recently launched ELS's alumni and advancement strategy will help these students engage with the School's 16,000 alumni from over 140 countries and build a network committed to global impact and contribution to society, facilitated by ELS and the CS.

Actions:

- Continue to promote all career development opportunities, non-academic as well as academic, home and international, to PGR students in ELS
 - CS to promote breadth of opportunity to PGR students via tailored communications, specific events, group work and presentations, and one to one support.
 - CS and School to continue to identify opportunities, local and global, and promote to PGRs.

In terms of initiatives that prioritise the career development opportunities of PGR students and offer them support for non-academic and academic careers, at the local level, it is a major priority for ELS to provide complementary sessions that are specific for Law PGR students. For example, the PGR Director has been engaged in various proactive initiatives, such as workshops and events targeted at all PhD students. In addition, as regards career opportunities for PGR students in their 3rd year or above (but also open to any PGR students who are keen to attend) sessions are run on an annual basis on the subject of 'applying for academic jobs', which provide 'applicant' and 'employer institution' sides of the recruitment experience and are (1) practical (e.g. "dos and don'ts"), and (2) interactive: enabling PGR students to raise as many questions as they like, and leaving time for discussion. The ELS are also in the process of organising a session on non-academic career pathways which will involve law PGR alumni who have gone into non-academic employment (NGOs, practice, Govt. etc.) talking about their experiences and opportunities. This will help ensure ELS is preparing its PGR students for diverse career pathways and show how the skills/training they gain from the programme can be used beyond academia.

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| | | | At the broader institutional level, both the CS and the Institute for Academic Development provide courses and training for PGR students to support their career development. The ELS regularly refers PGR students to such courses for the training that they need, e.g. in methodologies, approaches to academic writing, etc. | |
| 8. | The review team note that the School provide a tutor induction at the start of the academic year, but recommend that the School offer additional training opportunities for tutors, specifically PGR tutors, including raising awareness of Advance HE accreditation opportunities. The review team also recommend that tutors, including PGR students, could be given a greater role in course and programme development. This relates to the recommendation 2 above. | 12 months | The Law School will be taking the appropriate steps necessary to incorporate the student voice and views of academic colleagues on guaranteed hours contracts into programme developments, e.g. via embedding tutor representatives into the process. In particular, with regard to tutors teaching on the Diploma in Legal Practice programme, specific discussions are ongoing about their needs, as a discrete group drawn from within the legal profession. This will ensure that ELS is supporting tutors effectively. This is critical, not only from the perspective of individuals engaged in tutoring, but has wider implications for the health of the Diploma teaching delivery model, the reputation of the university and of the Diploma itself amongst the legal community in Scotland and further afield. | 1 st May 2023 |
| | Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review | | We disseminated the content of the IPR report to students through the usual channels, e.g. the Staff-Student Liaison Committee and the UG Studies Committee. There were some other informal channels of communication with students, e.g. via communications sent by the Law School to the Student Law Society and student representatives. | |
| For Year on response only | Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review | | | |