

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Quality Assurance Committee
Thursday 7th December 2023, 2pm to 4pm
Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, CSH and Microsoft Teams

A G E N D A

* Standing item

1.	Welcome and Apologies	
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting To approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12 September 2023	SQAC 23/24 2A
3.	Note of business conducted by e-SQAC To approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• e-SQAC – 13th - 19th September 2023	SQAC 23/24 2B
4.	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convener's communications	Verbal Update
5.	SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS	
5.1	College Annual Quality Reports 22-23: <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciencesii) College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicineiii) College of Science and Engineering	SQAC 23/24 2C
5.2	External Examiner exceptional appointments 2022/23 To note.	SQAC 23/24 2D
5.3	Evaluation of Course Level Feedback To approve.	SQAC 23/24 2E
5.4	Short Online Courses Update: Annual Report 2022-23 Closed - Commercial in Confidence To note.	SQAC 23/24 2F Closed paper
5.5	Internal Periodic Review: Forward Schedule For discussion and approval.	SQAC 23/24 2G
6.	ITEMS FOR INFORMATION & FORMAL BUSINESS	
6.1	Student Support: Monitoring and Evaluation*	Verbal update
6.2	Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	SQAC 23/24 2H

	The Committee is invited to approve the IPR Final Reports and Responses published on the Committee Sharepoint.	
6.	Any Other Business	
7.	Date of next meeting Thursday 22 nd February 2024, Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room Charles Stewart House and Microsoft Teams	

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held on
 Tuesday 12th September 2023, 2pm – 4pm
 Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House
 and Microsoft Teams**

1. Attendance

Present:	Position:
Professor Tina Harrison	Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) (Convener)
Professor Matthew Bailey	Dean of Quality, CMVM
Dr Michael Barany	Senate Representative
Professor Laura Bradley	Doctoral College Representative of CAHSS (PGR)
Marianne Brown	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling
Brian Connolly	Acting Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Services
Dr Anne Desler	School Representative of CAHSS
Dr Gail Duursma	School Representative of CSE
Olivia Eadie	Co-Director, Institute for Academic Development
Dr Pia Helbing	Senate Representative
Carl Harper	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
Professor Nazira Karodia	Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching, Edinburgh Napier University
Professor Linda Kirstein	Dean of Education Quality Assurance and Culture, CSE
Callum Paterson	Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator

Dr Nena Rowa-Dewar	School Representative of CMVM
Dr Emily Taylor	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, CAHSS
Sinéad Docherty	Committee Secretary, Academic Services
In attendance:	
Adam Bunni	Head of Regulations and Governance Team, Academic Services
Apologies:	
Professor Jose Vazquez-Boland	Elected member of Senate

2. Minutes of meeting held on 9 March 2023

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2023, pending minor amendments.

3. Matters Arising

- **Thematic Review**

The Convener noted that the Thematic Review: 2018-19 Review Progress update, postponed from the May 2023 meeting, will be on the agenda for the February 2024 meeting.

- **Internal Periodic Review (IPR) Reports and Responses (Conducted by Electronic Business)**

The Convener acknowledged that recent meeting conducted via email correspondence had included an exceptionally large volume of IPR business due to the clustering of reviews delayed by the pandemic. The Committee discussed suggestions for making the IPR response and report reading process more efficient, particularly in relation to workload constraints of members and the need to ensure that each response/report is given sufficient scrutiny. It was suggested that the IPR process adopt an approach similar to that used for the Student Support Services Annual Review reports, with assigned readers for each response/report (for example, the relevant Dean of Quality of the College the response/report was submitted and another Committee member).

Action: Academic Services to explore options for enhancing the IPR response and report reading process and report back to the Committee.

The Convener noted that in regard to the IPR reports and responses the role of Committee members is to: verify that review teams have adhered to the required quality procedures in

relation to the final reports; and determine if Schools/Deaneries have made sufficient progress in relation to their 14 week and year-on responses. If the Committee is not satisfied with progress in a specific response, it can request a further update from the School/Deanery (either for consideration at a subsequent meeting or in the next annual monitoring report).

The Committee approved the final reports and the 14 week and year-on responses (pending comments to be passed back to certain Schools).

Action: Academic Services to feedback to Schools.

- **Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) (Conducted by Electronic Business)**

The Committee discussed the PhD Agriculture and Environmental Studies validation report and the proposal for the programme to be validated as part of the existing accreditation arrangement. The Convenor noted that the University has a long working relationship with SRUC and is keen to support SRUC in developing its own PhD provision.

The Dean of Education, Quality Assurance and Culture (College of Science and Engineering) informed the Committee that she also sits on the SRUC Academic Board and commended SRUC on its QA processes and Equality Impact Assessments, and its engagement with the University's Doctoral College. The Doctoral College representative also informed the Committee of the Doctoral College's strong support for SRUC's proposal.

The Committee approved the validation report for the programme and the proposal for the programme to be validated as part of the existing Accreditation Agreement.

Action: Academic Services to communicate decision to SRUC.

- **Quality Enhancement & Standards Review (QESR)**

The Convener outlined the role of the upcoming Quality Enhancement & Standards Review (QESR) in the context of the transition arrangements from the previous Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) process to the new tertiary quality assurance and enhancement arrangements in Scotland (due for implementation in academic year 2024-25). It was noted that Academic Services is leading the preparations for the QESR visit which will take place on 16th November 2023.

- **Scottish Concern Scheme**

The Convener informed the Committee that a concern had been raised through the Scottish Concern Scheme in the summer of 2023 in relation to the mitigations that had been put in place around the marking and assessment boycott (MAB). The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) investigated the University and found that the approach the university had taken had been appropriate and no further action was required.

Action: Committee Secretary to share the QAA Concern Scheme outcome letter with SQAC members.

4. Academic Collaborations Report (Paper B – CLOSED)

The Head of Regulations and Governance Team (Academic Services) presented a paper on behalf of the Academic Collaborations Advisory Group (ACAG). It was noted that this was the first time the Academic Collaborations Report had been presented to the Committee. The Committee was invited to advise on any additional data or information that it would like to see as the body responsible for oversight of academic collaborations, and how it would wish to exercise its responsibility for this oversight.

Action: Head of Regulations and Governance Team (Academic Services) to send Academic Collaborations SharePoint site link to Committee Secretary for circulation to the Committee.

SQAC discussed the gaps in monitoring that may occur in expired agreements and the potential need for interaction with Edinburgh Global (who have oversight over collaborative agreements at institutional level). It was noted, however, that some expired agreements may be dormant, so there would be benefit in having better data regarding which programmes were actively recruiting students. There is no main reporting link between Edinburgh Global and SQAC. SQAC also discussed the level of resource needed to support ACAG's work across the institution.

The Dean of Quality, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) informed the Committee that concerns had been raised within CAHSS about the ongoing oversight of collaborations and therefore confirmed support for SQAC taking a role in a more active oversight process. The Co-Director of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) highlighted the Institute's work and involvement in collaborations and proposed that IAD should have a role within ACAG.

The Committee agreed that SQAC's role would be one of assurance that collaborations are operating as they should, with up-to-date Memorandums of Agreement (MOAs) and timely reviews of MOAs, and applying a quality lens to monitor risk and standards. The Committee noted that the strategic direction of academic collaborations sits outside its remit, with instead Senate and the Vice-Principal International having key strategic roles. However, the Committee agreed that SQAC may have a legitimate role in formulating questions for Senate regarding strategy pertaining to academic collaborations, for example in relation to types of collaboration (rather than potential collaborative partners, or regions). The Committee agreed that there may be benefit in using a sub-group of SQAC to consider these issues, as they arise.

Action: ACAG to consider where SQAC's input may be most beneficial with regard to matters of policy or strategy relating to academic collaborations, bringing papers to the Committee as appropriate.

5. Students' Association Sabbatical Officer Priorities 2023/24 (Paper C)

The Vice President Education (Students' Association) presented the priorities for 2023/24, outlining the focus on an inclusive and accessible learning environment, student engagement (especially in relation to strategic projects) and students within the academic community.

The Committee expressed support for the priorities, with particular focus on the work on student engagement. Members highlighted the difficulties that Schools experience with student engagement and expressed support for the Students' Association's role working with Student Voice initiatives. There was also discussion of the online student cohort, which is growing, and requires focussed efforts to establish representation and accessibility. The

6. Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Annual Report 22-23 (Paper H)

The Committee agreed to consider Paper H in order to seek timely consideration due to the required approval timeline. The Acting Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (Academic Services) presented the paper for approval and outlined the further stages - the paper will be presented to e-Senate for comments and then University Court for final approval before submission to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). It was noted that the report was informed by the themes which emerged in the annual monitoring report (paper 1D) and the IPR theme report (paper E).

The Committee agreed that while the new annual monitoring reporting template had ensured coverage of postgraduate research (PGR) in all reports, the guidance on the annual monitoring reporting template should be reviewed to ensure that key aspects of the PGR experience are reported on. It was also agreed that the Doctoral College representative should join the annual monitoring sub-group from 2023/24 to enhance the focus on PGR themes. The Committee agreed that the annual monitoring reporting template should also require a response in relation to online students.

Due to time constraints, the Committee agreed to submit further comments on Paper H to the Committee Secretary during the following week. The Convener confirmed that a communication will then be issued to the Committee regarding the outcome.

Action: Doctoral College representative to join the annual monitoring sub-group from 2023/24 to enhance the focus on PGR themes.

7. Any Other Business

The meeting was adjourned before consideration could be given to the further items on the agenda.

Action: Committee Secretary to circulate agenda and papers for outstanding items to be considered as e-business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting will take place on Thursday 7th December 2023, 2-4pm. This is to be a hybrid meeting, taking place in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and via Microsoft Teams.

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Quality Assurance Committee e-business

Wednesday 13th September 2023 – Tuesday 19th September 2023 5pm

Note of e-business

1.	School Annual Quality Reports 2022-23: Sub Group Report To discuss and agree recommended actions.	SQAC 23/24 1D
	<p>Comments received from members included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requests for clarification on the proposed actions of the reports analysis; these should be more clearly signposted within the report. - Suggestion that the sub-group makes specific recommendations for further action at University level to enhance the themes noted for development. - Support for Dr Laura Bradley to join the sub-group to enhance the focus on PGR themes. - There are many examples of good practice across the University; it would be beneficial to find efficient ways of sharing them. - More engagement on the Assessment & Feedback principles and priorities would be beneficial given how key these will be going forward. - A request for SQAC to think about how it can support future reports providing more concrete evidence of impact deriving from good practices. - Concern over the level of reporting around issues including recent difficulties with Timetabling, central initiatives such as ESC, staff experience, industrial action and EDI. <p>Action: Dr Laura Bradley to be added to the sub-group in 2023/24 and onwards.</p> <p>Action: All comments to be passed to Academic Services for consideration in relation to annual monitoring reporting templates for 2023/24.</p>	
2.	Internal Periodic Review Themes 2022-23 To discuss and approve.	SQAC 23/24 1E
	A member of the Committee raised concerns around the effects of ongoing industrial dispute in the sector on the review themes and proposed that this is an area for further development in the	

	<p>IPR process. Concerns were also raised around the standards of evidence that the Committee is required to uphold, with a note that reviewers should include proper evidence and examples to meet SQAC’s reporting needs.</p> <p>Another member highlighted the ongoing challenge of resource and the scope for the Committee making recommended actions in the areas of further development. The member noted that progress appears slow and impacted by barriers, both perceived and real. It was highlighted that failure to respond to areas for further development constitutes institutional risk and SQAC should explore how to assist more with progress.</p> <p>One member recommended that SQAC do not approve and should consider a revision at a later meeting.</p> <p>Action: all comments to be passed to the IPR team within Academic Services.</p> <p>Action: IPR team to return to SQAC at February 2024 with a paper outlining proposed enhancements to the IPR process.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Evaluation of Course Level Feedback To approve.</p>	<p>SQAC 23/24 1F</p>
	<p>The Committee broadly supported the work to evaluate course level feedback. Comments received from members included the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evaluation team would be encouraged to look to the wider sector to find out what works, rather than undertake another (solely) internal focussed review. Doing one or two things consistently across the University might make a difference. • To ensure that the feedback loop is closed at all levels, it would be helpful to include an expectation for all levels to provide a response to course level feedback (not just course organisers). • The evaluation team must outline the planned measures to ensure that the student voice will be included in the review. • Will the review involve developing qualitative and/or quantitative indicators? • This should not become a circular issue of course evaluation cycling between the responsibilities of the central University and local areas. The proposed evaluation must get to the root problems and change must be sufficiently prioritised and resourced. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some subject areas, there appears to be a correlation between programmes with high student numbers and low response rates. It was suggested that the impact of individual staff on response rates might also apply elsewhere within the University. <p>The consensus from the Committee was that the SAIM team have approval to review course evaluation, but this item should be on the SQAC agenda for the December meeting for further discussion on the approach and objectives of the review.</p> <p>Action: Committee Secretary to pass all comments received on this item to Marianne Brown for her information.</p> <p>Action: Marianne Brown to resubmit this item for the December meeting for further discussion.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Senate Committees’ Internal Effectiveness Review 2022/23 To note and comment.</p>	<p>SQAC 23/24 1G</p>
	<p>The Committee was asked to note this paper.</p> <p>Comments received from members included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More members on the Committee would allow for a more holistic view of the University and also a more robust feedback strategy to different groups within each College. The 56% response rate is low; action should be considered for the 23/24 review to ensure that the response rate is in a range that can be considered fully representative of the Committee & statistically viable. Concern that there is not strong evidence of the Committee elevating the voices and concerns of marginalised individuals and communities, and that there are too few BAME members on the Committee. One member proposed an alternative approach to the EDI representation on the Committee with the suggestion of specific EDI in Policy, Strategy & Quality training for Committee members. It was suggested that this could be a combined training activity with the other Senate Standing Committees. There is not currently an appropriate relationship between the Committee and Senate, and this requires rethinking of delegation and the flow of business between SQAC and Senate. 	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Scottish Funding Council Annual Report 2022-23 To approve.</p>	<p>SQAC 23/24 1H</p>

	<p>Following review by SQAC members, several minor changes were made to the content of the report to reflect the comments received as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention of the WP Strategy. • Modification of the text on Assessment and Feedback to reflect that the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities were only introduced at the start of the academic year. • Modification of the text referring to student feedback on the new student support model, to reflect that feedback is from a small proportion of students. • Modification of the text referring to EDI actions to reflect that this report captures new actions throughout the year, hence it is too soon for Schools to demonstrate impact. • Modification of the text on increase in student numbers to reflect that this has been uneven across Schools. • Reference to ESC has been added in relation to assessment and feedback. • Mention of the impact of the cost of living crisis on WP student recruitment. <p>Several other comments received have not been reflected in changes to the report content because doing so would not fit the purpose of the report as specified by SFC. These will be noted for transparency and largely relate to suggestions to include reference to wider concerns or discussions from Senate members. The SFC report is a report on in-year monitoring and review activity from the routine quality assurance processes and not a report from Senate.</p> <p>Only one SQAC member indicated they would not approve the report. The reason for non-approval given was one of governance rather than content. Therefore, the content of the report has been approved by SQAC.</p> <p>The amended report was submitted to e-Senate (for noting and further comment) and to University Court on 9 October 2023 for approval. Any comments from e-Senate, along with a response, will be provided to Court members. Once approved, the report will be submitted to SFC.</p> <p>Following the confirmation of approval sent to SQAC members on 20th September 2023, one member noted their objection to this interpretation of their concerns and believe it is inappropriate for e-meetings to confirm papers that do not have unanimous consent.</p>	
6.	Committee Administration:	SQAC 23/24 11

	<p>To note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Terms of Reference • Committee Membership 2023/24 	
	<p>This paper was noted by the Committee.</p> <p>Comment received included the suggestion of an EDI representative on the Committee and focus on the gender split of the Committee (over two thirds female). One member commented that Senate has not approved the TOR or membership. These items did not get discussed at the May 2023 Senate meeting and are on the October 2023 Senate agenda.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting Thursday 7th December 2023, Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and Microsoft Teams</p>	

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

7 December 2023

**College Annual Quality Reports
2022-23**

Description of paper:

1. The College annual quality reports for 2022-23.

Action requested / recommendation:

2. For discussion.

Background and context:

3. The College annual quality reports for 2022-23.

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.

Authors

CAHSS:

Dr Emily Taylor, Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Approval, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

CMVM:

Professor Matthew Bailey, Director of Quality Assurance, College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine;

Presenter

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December 2023

Freedom of Information: Open

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH - ANNUAL MONITORING 2022/23
College Report

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

1. Reflection on progress with, and effectiveness of, actions from the last year

QA actions requested of College within 2021/22 School Annual Quality Reports were grouped under the College's four priority themes of the CAHSS Learning, Teaching and Student Experience (LTSE) Plan, as well as the CAHSS People Plan. This approach enabled College to effectively develop and monitor progress against all QA actions. Key themes were discussed with School Quality Directors at the College QA Forum.

Please find the progress on last year's actions requested of College below. We note that a number of actions initially remitted to College were ultimately taken forward at University level, with proactive input from College and these are issues that continue to be challenges for schools and college which will require continued prioritisation across the university.

LTSE 1: Curriculum Transformation

Review course enrolments and quotas across Schools

- A new University-wide Course Enrolment Task Group (part of the Student Lifecycle Management Group) led by and with representation from CAHSS Schools was created. The primary focus was enhancing pre-honours elective course selection and finding methods to facilitate more directed choices for the benefit of both staff and students' experiences.
- The group continues to review reports on Degree Programme Tables and optional vs compulsory enrolments on courses. This is to better inform future academic planning for schools, with an ultimate goal of self/auto enrolment for students.
- College continued to facilitate information sharing and reporting of quotas and course availability across and beyond CAHSS to support enrolment in 23/24, and created pre-arrival guidance on available courses for new students.

Enhance the dissemination of best practices throughout learning and teaching within CAHSS by establishing new governance structures, specifically focusing on the implementation of new baseline standards related to assessment.

- An informal monthly Directors of Teaching Network was established within College to facilitate the sharing of best practices.
- The College QA Forum launched and met twice during 2022/23, focussing on course evaluation and the approaches to annual monitoring.
- Implementation of the Assessment and Feedback (A&F) Principles and Priorities was discussed regularly at College committees, groups and networks throughout 2022/23. CAHSS representatives joined the newly configured University A&F Strategy and Operations Groups (under Senate Education and QA Committees).

Review processes and resources relating to academic misconduct with specific AI consideration

- CAHSS participated in a review of the University's AM procedures, agreeing various amendments including the ability for SAMOs to apply minor penalties
- Early reports from SAMOs suggest a reduction in academic misconduct cases referred to College across CAHSS for 2022/23 compared to the same point in 2021/22.
- The use of generative AI is now specifically referenced in the Academic Misconduct section of the Taught Assessment Regulations.
- The action to set up a sub-committee/ group to discuss Generative AI matters, in relation to future of learning, teaching and assessment in CAHSS, will be carried forward to AY2023/24.

- The University's new A&F Guidance, Procedures, Data, Systems and Evaluation Group has Academic Misconduct in its remit and Own Work Declarations has been one of their focuses.

College collaboration with the Timetabling Unit regarding the transition back to in-person exams and their organisation.

- The A&F Strategy Group has discussed the need to set an institutional policy on examination formats, following the Covid exam period and the return (in many cases) to in-person exams.
- Approaches to support for student concerns about the return to in-person examinations was discussed at various college groups in the lead up to and after the December exam diet.
- For the August Assessment Diet 2023, it was recommended that where possible Schools use alternative assessment formats to minimise the need for students to return to Edinburgh in August due to cost, accommodation and sustainability concerns.
- The new Exams Timetabling system was piloted for August Assessment diet 23 with a view to fuller rollout in December 2023.

Support COL colleagues in mapping a generic framework around how COL communicates and engages with other Schools

- COL colleagues are working closely in the Curriculum Transformation Project to embed consideration of Academic Language and Literacy from the earliest point.
- COL's support to embed Academic Language and Literacies into programmes has been piloted in a number of areas, notably Moray House.
- Curriculum development supports broader involvement in COL's work.

LTSE 2 Student Support and Wellbeing

Review Extensions and Special Circumstances (ESC): reviewing the impact, the systems and seek to "re-set" student expectations around extensions.

- CAHSS's former Dean for Education chaired the University's Coursework Extensions / Special Circumstances Task Group in 2022/23 which reported its findings and recommendations to APRC in March 2023, alongside a review of the ESC service.
- Following the decision not to proceed with the proposed new University Exceptional Circumstances Policy, CAHSS undertook a rapid consultation to explore what initial improvements could be made to manage coursework extensions in 2023/24. CAHSS Schools were recommended to adopt a standard Coursework Extension period of four calendar days for 2023-24 and this has been widely adopted as a first step.
- CAHSS will continue to feed into the new EC policy ahead of it going to APRC in early 2024.

Consider and explore further support needed for by distance doctoral programmes

- The College PGR Committee held a discussion and provided feedback on optimising PGR student numbers in May 2023, focussing on PhD by Distance doctoral training.
- PhD by Distance now features as a recurring item on the agenda of Doctoral College Forum, allowing schools to raise specific comments or concerns on a regular basis.

LTSE 3: Enhancing and Understanding Diversity

Foster a more inclusive and supportive College by combatting the marginalization of certain demographic and WP constituencies.

- The College's EDI Plan outlines various priorities and approaches to achieve greater equity, diversity, and inclusion within the institution. These priorities also include initiatives to build a more inclusive culture, address bias and discrimination, and create a safe and respectful environment for all members of the university community.

- The School EDI Directors are responsible for working with their Schools to ensure that their specific EDI objectives align with the College's overarching EDI priorities and contribute to the broader institutional goals.
- The CAHSS WP Network continues to meet monthly and additionally hosted a dedicated session on implementing the student support model within the context of Widening Participation. The progress of the network was presented to the College Education Committee in December 2022.
- In April 2023, the CAHSS WP Network, in collaboration with the student society Tackling Elitism, successfully piloted a Widening the Student Network event. The event brought together around 50 staff and students from across the College and wider university.

Support staff in engaging with available data for use in compiling annual School Quality Reports and Annual Programme Reviews.

- College QA team and some CAHSS School colleagues worked with the Student Analytics team to identify enhancements needed to the Annual Monitoring and Student Survey (NSS, PTES and PRES) reports in PowerBI.
- CAHSS BI team delivered training sessions for QA Directors, EDI Directors and relevant professional services staff on the CAHSS EDI and WP PowerBI reports.
- The Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling delivered a presentation on the subject of providing improved guidance and training materials during the last CAHSS QA Forum meeting of 2022/23. The presentation focussed on the effective use of data and Power BI apps to assist staff in the compilation of annual School Quality Reports and Annual Programme Reviews.

LTSE 4: Size, Shape and Composition of Student Population

A number of schools requested actions around approaches to student population planning in CAHSS with particular consideration of joint UG degree target setting; cohort diversity; staff: student ratios; capacity for pre- and in-session English Language support

- The CAHSS Head of Student Recruitment and Admissions works closely with Schools to plan student population forecasting, target numbers, and the consequent requirement to adjust staffing levels.
- UG Admissions and Schools agreed to improve reporting on projected intakes for joint programmes for the 2023 entry. UG Admissions integrated program-level forecasting into SRPPC reports earlier in the admission cycle and enhanced the Undergraduate Admissions dashboard to enable Schools to monitor the number of UF offer holders for joint programs. UG Admissions assessed with Schools the effectiveness of these measures in providing timely information to support target setting exercises.
- The International Diversification Group has identified a number of priority Schools to focus initial work on, with progress updates being presented to the College's Student Recruitment and Population Planning Committee.
- The gathered field approach is now an established and stable PGT admissions strategy in a number of Schools. PG Admissions also discuss with Schools the entry requirements of the applicant pool during each round and have worked together to ensure offers are made to the best qualified students.
- COL has been actively collaborating with Schools to pilot various methods of integrating academic language and literacies within programmes. Through this work they aim to increase the availability of in-session language support as a complement to the pre-session programmes. COL are also currently exploring an expansion of their pre-session course provision to an online offering.

CAHSS People Plan

Several schools raised issues around WAM tariffs, staff resource planning and recruitment.

- The College has established mechanisms such as the College Workload Allocation Tariffs for academic staff and the College WAM Forum to enable Schools to address wider concerns regarding staff workloads, which can be escalated to the College People Committee if required.
- The former CAHSS Registrar has led on a WAM Audit process for the College, focussing on tariffs. Outcomes from the audit were taken to CAHSS People Committee in October 2023, with particular recommendations

presented around the development of guidance outlining appropriate use of assessment tariffs and how they map to academic duties of a defined minimum grade.

- There are well established processes within the College that enable Schools to prepare evidence-based proposals for staffing within the standard planning rounds including provision of comparator data from within the College as well as support to provide sector comparisons on request from the Head of School or Director of Professional Services. Issues around the authorisation of additional staff recruitment has been brought to the attention of the CAHSS WAM Group lead and the Head of CAHSS HR.

2. Changes to/additions made to actions from last year

New: Academic Planning – a key priority which is key to unlocking several other issues

- In Semester 2, our College Education Committee and Strategy and Management Committee endorsed a paper from our the CAHSS Senior Academic and Student Admin Managers group which outlined a pressing need and recommendations for:
 - improved coordination and availability of data relating to planning of academic resources and teaching
 - development of a common CAHSS planning timelines and principles.

This essential work is being led by the Senior Managers Group at college level into 2023/24 and will link into wider university projects arising from the Student Lifecycle Management Group task groups on timetabling and course enrolment.

Impact of industrial action on planned activity

- The considerable impact of industrial action in 2022/23 on individual colleagues, teams, Schools and wider College activity must be noted as a barrier to progressing with some of our planned activity.
- Some committee meetings and QA forum meetings either did not run or were moved to electronic business due to strike days.
- The Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) from May affected all schools in CAHSS to varying degrees and a huge amount of resource, time and effort from school and college teams was necessarily focused on mitigations and support for students through this very challenging period.
- In particular, the work of our Deans, especially our former Dean QACA in his final months in role was heavily committed to supporting the College and University-wide response to the MAB.

Curriculum Transformation

- Schools have noted that the lack of clarity around CTP is limiting the development of innovative curriculum design across programmes and courses.

People and Money

- It is important to acknowledge the issues surrounding the rollout of the People and Money system in 2022-23 and the negative impact this has created on relationships with students, staff and GH Tutors and Demonstrators. Efforts to address workarounds as well as changes to roles within College and Schools has resulted in resource limitations on other activities.

3. Actions

CAHSS Response to School QA Reports 2023-24

CAHSS response to school QA reports 2023-24

The 2022-23 school Quality Assurance (QA) reports^[1], student surveys, IPR reports and committee discussions have contributed to the formulation of the recently updated Learning, Teaching, and Student Experience (LTSE) Plan.

Four broad areas of focus have emerged as part of CAHSS priorities for 2023-24^[2]:

1. Assessment and Feedback
2. Understanding who our students are
3. Curriculum Transformation
4. Tutors and Demonstrators

Actions to address these College priority areas will be collaboratively formulated with the CAHSS QA Forum and College Education Committee, ensuring active involvement and support for our schools throughout the entire process. We will help schools and the college understand and use data consistently to review progress in these areas.

Whilst all these areas are highly relevant to (and will continue to inform) Quality Assurance, Assessment and Feedback stand out as our primary QA-specific focus for 2023-24. We will provide a detailed account of the actions undertaken in this priority area in our next annual College QA report. We anticipate that the remaining three College priorities will lead to further actions in 2024-25, and College will report on these via its Education and Strategy & Management Committees.

CAHSS Priorities in 2023/24 are to address issues in assessment and feedback to improve:

- a. Engagement with the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities
- b. Timeliness of return of marks and feedback to students
- c. Literacy in and use of assessment criteria and assessment rubrics to improve consistency
- d. Assessment loads and school approaches to benchmarking and reviewing these to ensure they are reasonable and manageable for students, preventing overload.
- e. Resource allocation, including effective use of data, to support more efficient and effective assessment and feedback processes.
- f. The quality and availability of feedback through sharing of innovative feedback practices
- g. Consistency in delivery and marking across all course staff, including Tutors and Demonstrators, to avoid disparities in feedback quality.
- h. Collaboration and sharing of best practices among different departments to establish consistent and effective assessment and feedback strategies.
- i. Understanding of perpetuating factors in attainment and awarding gaps, with the goal of ensuring fair and equal outcomes for all students.
- j. Working towards a standardised approach to tutor training and supervision, to improve consistency and quality in assessment feedback

^[1] With the exception of the Schools of Law and Health in Social Science, whose reports were pending submission at the time of composing this report

^[2] Summary authored and presented by the Dean of Education to College Strategy and Management Committee on 31st October 2023, in a presentation titled 'Reflections on the National Student Survey 2023'

Barriers identified by CAHSS Schools that require prioritisation for actions at a University level:

University Systems and Estates:

- Multiple and intricate systems causing administrative burdens and risks, especially with fluctuating student numbers, new types of students and learners (modes of study and non-traditional learning) and the acute burden that MAB has placed on teaching offices.
- Inadequate systems related to timetabling, course enrolment, and mark processing pose a risk to the Curriculum Transformation Programme.
- Inadequate estates pose a risk to the Curriculum Transformation Programme, particularly the ambitions for challenge courses.
- People and Money implementation issues have negatively affected relationships with students, staff, and suppliers, necessitating rebuilding trust and ensuring system functionality.

Central Support for CEQs: some Schools support the reinstatement of centrally managed CEQs with increased flexibility, like the ability to adjust timelines, presenting this centralized model as an optional tool for course evaluation.

Need for Policy Revisions and Implementations for:

- more guidelines and policy for online exams
- University level policy concerning Generative AI
- focus on a new Exceptional Circumstances Policy

Clarity on the Curriculum Transformation Project (CTP):

- objectives and governance
- timelines for implementation
- QA mechanisms
- involvement of Professional Services staff

Estates/timetabling: challenges experienced by schools in this domain directly affect student experience.

PG fees: MSc programme fees are historically high and difficult to adjust quickly, impacting programme diversity and competitiveness.

Quality Assurance: Schools and the College have observed a decrease in the submission of annual programme reviews on the SPQS system over recent years. The College urges an evaluation of the monitoring tools' effectiveness for tracking these submissions and emphasises the need for clearer delineation of expectations and responsibilities among the University, College, and Schools concerning annual programme reviews.

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH - ANNUAL MONITORING
2022/23 College Report CMVM**

Guidance:

- The streamlined approach employed during the pandemic has been retained.
- 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 four pages). Use bullet points where possible.
- Reports should not contain information which identifies any individual – [Data Protection Policy](#)
- **Deadline:** Thursday 23 November 2023

1. Reflection on progress with, and effectiveness of, actions from the last year

1) Work to enhance student engagement with College committee activity.

College QAE Officer has driven a focussed effort to improve student representation on College committees, working directly with student groups and elected School/Deanery representatives. Three “hurdles” were identified. First, the college/school/deanery structure, largely understood by staff, was unclear to students. Second (and related), the role/purpose of college-level committees was unclear. Third, the ratio of staff to students on committees can be a barrier to engagement. More time has been given to demystifying structures and roles the role/purpose of each committee. Regarding staff to student ratio, College uses good engagement practice, offering pre-meeting discussion with the convenor. We have lively representation on every College committee concerned with Learning & Teaching, covering our types of provision.

In AY22/23 the College Dean of Students established a Student Rep Forum involving all elected EUSA-level student representatives across our provision. This had a strong focus on welfare and was purposefully structured to provide a discussion area with more students than staff and has successfully enabled surfacing and discussion of issues primarily related to student welfare. One of the emergent actions was an initiative to hold a student support services fayre. This is in the first instance focussed on on-campus students across CMVM’s campuses. The first event was held at the BioQuarter on 17th October 2023 and others are scheduled for the DMGPHS campus (Western General) and the R(D)SVS (Easter Bush) later in AY23/24. Feedback will hopefully show the value of these events and give impetus to developing support events for our online students.

Following consultation with students, the remit of the welfare forum was expanded to capture feedback related to the wider student experience. The value of this group in facilitating engagement with College is valued, acknowledging that students wanted welfare to remain the central focus of the forum. To reflect this development, the forum is renamed as Student Voice Group and has been extended to programme-level student representatives. SVG work will be enabled by The Dean of Students with support from the College QAE Officer. It is planned that the EUSA VP Education will chair the meetings. A Teams site has been set up to support communication with student representatives on the forum and as a place to raise agenda items, to set and follow up actions, closing the feedback loop.

2) Engaging with local areas around implementation of the student voice policy and promote the sharing of good practice in this area.

Engagement with the Student Voice Policy has continued throughout the year with work taking place in Schools/Deaneries. The College QAE Committee has provided the primary forum for discussion and sharing of good practice. Schools/Deaneries were periodically asked to provide written and verbal updates on engagement with the policy, to review effectiveness of processes adopted and provide updates on progress and planned amendments.

School/Deanery Annual QA Reports highlighted low response rates to course enhancement surveys and have implemented a variety of strategies to address this. Examples include:

- The Deanery of Biomedical Sciences pilot reintroducing paper-based surveys to be completed during class time for some Courses to see if this led to improved response rates. It was concluded that while the response rate was slightly higher, this was not significantly so.
- R(D)SVS worked with students to co-create the School course enhancement survey and this version is in the process of being rolled out in academic year 2023/24. It is anticipated that the student-designed questions will more effectively target and improve engagement
- DMGPHS set up a Student Quality Group. The team consulted with this group on how they wished to meaningfully engage with quality process at the Deanery. They continue to invite representatives to sit on committees, but also meet with the Student Quality Group ahead of meetings to discuss agenda items and receive feedback for reporting at committee meetings. This good practice was adopted by College QAE Committee.

Despite actively working to engage with the Student Voice Policy course enhancement survey response rates remain low. The College Dean of Quality noted that this theme was surfaced widely in School reports. A concern is that significant resource is been utilised without measurable impact. We would be interested in hearing success stories from elsewhere in the University.

Good practice highlight: DMGPHS identified the challenge of embedding the student voice into preparation for Internal Periodic Review (IPR). Active student participation is of high value to IPR and DMGPHS allocated resource (0.2FTE UE6) for the appointment of a student to work with the Quality team, shaping the subject specific remit items and preparing the reflective report and timetabling of the IPR. We will ask for reflection on the success of this innovative strategy after IPR completion (February 2024).

3) **The College annual Good Practice Showcase**

The CMVM Annual Good Practice Showcase was held in person for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic. The event held at Chancellor's Building in the BioQuarter was well attended (>70 participants from across provision type (UG/PG; on campus/digital)) and received positive feedback. Colleagues enjoyed the in-person aspect of the event and discussions of the presentations was lively. Feedback indicates that colleagues valued the opportunity for in-person networking and informal discussion and requested increased allocation of time for this in future events. Interest in lunchtime "Enhancement Forums" was raised.

The theme for the first half of the event was student voice and we received two presentations highlighting good practice in engaging student voices. The first presentation

asked the question 'How can we encourage more meaningful student representation in our College and beyond?' and outlined the new approach taken to student voice in the DMGPHS with the development of their Student Quality Group (see above). A presentation from The Deanery of Biomedical Sciences outlined their approach to incorporate alumni feedback and engagement in teaching and curriculum development. A talk "3 Stars and a Wish" highlighted an innovative way to engage student voice (students comment on 3 positive things they like and a something they wish to know more about/change). We also had a number of student presenters including one MGPBS student and five MBChB students outlining initiatives they had been involved in. Student presenters were provided with a certificate noting their participation in this College event.

The presentations were recorded and can be found here:

[CMVM Good Practice Showcase 2023 - Session1 - Media Hopper Create](#)
[CMVM Good Practice Showcase 2023 - Session2 - Media Hopper Create](#)

We plan to continue to promote good practice around student voice at the 2024 Showcase event. A discussion point for our College QAE committee will be how to develop this event inclusively to engage our students in digital programmes. Hybrid events are not necessarily the way to do this: anecdotal reporting (eg on campus PGR and MScR programmes) is that hybrid events can have a negative impact on attendance and engagement (ie people do not travel and do not engage in networking spaces).

4) To review the implementation of PGT research project ethical review.

The College developed and implemented a new process for the ethical review of student projects in AY22/23. A SharePoint site was published containing information on the Medical School Student Ethics Pathway and the R(D)SVS Vet School Student Ethics Pathway. There are also significant resources to support implementation of the pathways in local areas, including a CMVM position statement on our approach to student project ethical approval.

Each School/Deanery was asked to outline how they planned to align with this new process at the College QAE Committee. All areas have plans in place to align with the new process with some areas committing to further developments over the next academic year. Currently, all reporting flows from local areas directly to the secretary of the College Ethics Committee. An action is to strengthen oversight to ensure compliance with the reporting requirement.

2. Changes to/additions made to actions from last year

- **Governance Review:** The College Leadership Team instigated a wide-ranging consultation of leaders (including thematic Deans/Directors) to surface areas of good practice and identify challenges/barriers to delivering our ambitious Learning & Teaching and Research strategy. The objective is to develop clarity of roles and responsibilities and of reporting lines and to build an agile and streamlined organisational structure. Quality processes are securely embedded within this review and will improve the integration of QAE activity within Learning & Teaching strategy. This is ongoing process and College will support Schools/Deaneries by providing context ahead of IPR (see below).
- **Targeted enhancement of College QAE activity:** Good practices were identified from the other colleges and there is work to do in order to ensure QAE is integrated in wider college

strategy and identification/implementation of action. We have modified the operation of CMVM's QAE Committee to enhance discussion. Recognising workload challenges, e-business/sub-groups use has enabled agenda space to be used for a deeper dive into specific areas. Informal feedback is positive: improved involvement of Deans/Directors to QAE activities and improved connectivity is highlighted.

- **PGR:** the IPR of this part of our provision is scheduled for AY24/25 and is held at College level. Concerted actions since AY19/20 have ensured excellent integration of PGR within the Annual Programme Review carried out by School/Deanery teams. This has highlighted areas of good practice & also some inconsistency of practice that the College teams is working to address. There is also recognition that metrics for PGR are useful but limited. A working group is developing College-level guidance (see below).

3. Actions

Actions identified for the College:

- 1) **Supporting IPR:** we have four reviews scheduled for AY23/24 and have noted emerging common themes in subject specific remits items. Areas have asked for targeted support from the College team to provide organisational context of the ongoing Governance Review. Actions is to provide the support and to use the opportunity to address common emerging themes across Schools/Deaneries.
- 2) **Supporting PGT targeted change management:** Edinburgh Surgery Online offers a suite of 9 digital programmes that provide general and specialist postgraduate training to early and mid-career health professionals including a number of programmes targeted at surgeons. ESO was an early leader of digital education at the University and is a key asset of the Colleges PGT framework. ESO surgical programmes have an established reputation for improving student capability for Membership and Fellowship exams at the Royal College of Surgeons, with which there is a partnership. ESO has global-reach, external esteem and is market-leading. ESO began a programme to refresh and align their ChM programmes which was significantly derailed by the pandemic and its continued impact on NHS colleagues and on the academic teams that manage the programme. Working with leadership in the Deanery of Clinical Sciences' Teaching Organisation (CSTO), College Director of PGT Education and Dean of Quality are establishing and implementing a development plan with an anticipated timetable of ~18 months.
- 3) **Targeted Quality objectives for PGR:** the IPR of this part of our provision is scheduled for AY24/25. A sub-group of the Colleges QAE Committee, involving College PGR Director and College Dean QAE, is working toward guidance that will allow targeted and data-driven enhancement of PGR provision and ensure consistency of experience across our Schools/Deaneries . College Director of PGR Student Experience and College Quality Officer have met with student systems to discuss what we would like to see in the data. Discussions within College will cover recent developments in the sector regarding harmonising criteria for benchmarking the quality of doctoral programmes and the experiences of students in what mostly remains a highly individualised programme of study.
- 4) **Supporting students on digital programmes:** the College QAE committee will move to implement the student support fayre model for online students and reflect on the optimal format for our enhancement events (eg the Good Practice Showcase) to provide a forum for student-led presentations across all our provision.

Actions requested of the University:

- 1) Identification of success stories for increasing student survey engagement to share good practice and optimise resource allocation.
- 2) The Curriculum Transformation Project Team is showing excellent engagement with learning and teaching groups in our College. Recent workshops (including PGT) show the

enthusiasm of colleagues for the pedagogical principles of the CTP. All areas request deep consideration of the necessary operational structures and systems. It is understood that this is being developed by the University but given the track record, colleagues highlighted concern that a disconnect in parallel systems development would make implementation hugely challenging for staff. Colleagues also highlighted the need for significant resource allocation to support change management in Schools/Deaneries and highlighted the (short-lived) resource implications that come with supporting overlapping “legacy” and “CTP” programmes.

- 3) Development of PGR data on PowerBi would be welcome and broadly applicable across Colleges.

**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH - ANNUAL MONITORING
2022/23 College Report CSE**

1. Reflection on progress with, and effectiveness of, actions from the last year

1) Continue developing the remit and membership of the Progression and Attainment (ProAttain) Working Group. Convened group in Spring 2023 with progress plan in place.

The membership of the Progression and Attainment Working Group was confirmed in January 2023, with the first meeting of the group taking place in March 2023. Next steps include:

- Undertaking a large data project to collate information from various datasets for further interrogation.
- Reconvene the Working Group to review the dataset and begin to discuss potential interventions to support the various groups of students identified as particularly challenging.
- Be cognisant of a College Working Group looking specifically at Widening Participation.

2) Further develop the Decolonisation Working Group (DWG) to implement structures for sharing guidance and recommendations, consider mechanisms to implement and track positive transformation.

The Decolonising Working Group (DWG) last met on 31 January 2023, discussing:

- Delivery and engagement in terms of a decolonising toolkit and guidance material
- A roll-out strategy
- Monitoring and reporting mechanisms
- Next steps - the authoring of guidance material and assembling the resources for the toolkit. A draft will be circulated to the DWG and there will be an invitation for feedback. A discussion session may be thought appropriate at that point, though it was noted that the DWG has been closed for now.

In terms of the guidance material and toolkit resource:

- Primary authors are Karen Halliday and Srinjoy Mitra
- Karen Halliday has been collecting information and resources for the toolkit
- Draft guidance is in progress and has been shared with Karen Halliday, Srinjoy Mitra, Alasdair Spratt for comment/development

3) Continue to review and prioritise the health and wellbeing of all staff including PhD students, improving work environments. Progress will partially depend on University investment in estate and training opportunities.

- The College Postgraduate Research Committee has continued to review and prioritise health and wellbeing of PGR students, which was one of its priorities for 2022/23. Two particular issues monitored by the Committee were the negative impact of the introduction of the People & Money finance system on PGR student wellbeing and continued pressure within Schools on PGR desk space. Committee members were encouraged to share details of local initiatives or policies in place to address issues or enhance student wellbeing to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practice.
- The Committee felt that PGR student wellbeing and the improvement of work environments are of continued importance and has retained “monitoring and improving the health and wellbeing of PGR students” and “improving research culture and community” as two of its priorities for 2023/24. An action plan is being introduced for 2023/24 to set out specific actions that the Committee intends to undertake to progress each of its priorities.

4) Review international partnerships and develop an understanding of the flow of visiting students. This will include reflection on how to support visiting students under the student support model and the timing of student exchanges.

- The College continues to support the work being carried out by Schools towards the creation and renewal of a number of international partnerships. A review of the processes involved and the flow of work required in order to set up a collaboration has taken place, with a number of steps currently being taken to improve the processes involved and communications across the Schools and the different teams involved. Particular attention is being paid to due diligence steps, ensuring consistent understanding of the requirements and obligations involved. The College Academic Affairs Team and College Curriculum Approval Board continue to work closely with the Global Partnerships Team and other relevant parties in order to maintain this area of work.
- The College Academic Affairs and Recruitment and Admissions teams, along with key staff in Schools, are currently reviewing the approach to managing visiting undergraduate students in the College, to determine whether there would be benefit in introducing a dedicated Visiting Student Office, mirroring the well-established approach in CAHSS. This would move all related work out of School Teaching Organisation and Student Support teams in CSE, and relocate it within a dedicated College Office service. Discussions are ongoing, with a draft proposal nearing completion, and next steps will include the production of an Equality Impact Assessment and consultation with staff whose roles currently include an element of support for visiting student processes (in partnership with HR). If it is agreed that CSE should move towards the CAHSS model, the hope would be that this would be in place for the start of 24/25.

5) Implement phase 2 of student support project (SSP) rolling out new model to all students in CSE from 23/24.

- Phase 2 of SSP was implemented across the entirety of the College of Science and Engineering for the start of AY 23/24, delivering the new model for student support to all students across Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught degree programmes. This was an extension to Phase 1 which was implemented in AY 22/23 with all UG1 and PGT students across all Schools and DSTI and EPCC. Implementation has gone as well as possible for all Schools and areas, with the College continuing to work with Schools to support embedding student support with fidelity to the model.
- The implementation has seen nearly 50 Student Advisers joining the College, across all seven Schools plus DSTI and EPCC. Utilising staff feedback, an improved and more robust training and induction programme was delivered to all Student Advisers – whether new to the University, new to Student Support Teams, or transitioning from previous student support roles. This training and induction programme included aspects from the Central Project Team, Central Services, the College and Schools for induction to local processes.
- Cohort Leads have been recruited across every School and area in the College, with the College and Central Project Team providing a range of resources to support Cohort Leads in their roles. The College has additionally overseen the development of the Cohort Leads Network as a community of good practice and hub for information and resources for Cohort Leads.
- The Student Wellbeing Service (SWS) has been effectively utilised across all Schools in the College, with the SWS continuing to work with Schools and their Student Support Teams to further improve working relationships and communication across teams. Wellbeing advisors are also available to PGR students.
- The next steps for the College regarding the Student Support Project will be to work with Schools to ensure the model has embedded successfully and support Schools with any concerns moving forward, and to work with the Central Project Team to support the

development of good practices for governance as the Project Team is closed and the model moves into Business As Usual practice.

2. Changes to/additions made to actions from last year

Challenges:

Systems:

- During the 2022/23 Academic Year there has been a continuation of system issues, resulting in challenges to the continuity of service delivery.
- Specifically, the roll out of the Finance element of the People and Money system caused significant challenges at the beginning of the Academic Year, which affected all students but caused the most disruption to PhD students, some of whom did not receive stipend payments. Local teams have had to adapt processes to find appropriate ways of working, which has increased workloads and caused high levels of stress.
- Timetabling, including exam timetabling, has also caused challenges for colleagues. Appropriateness of rooms for teaching activities also remains challenging.
- The late confirmation of the resit diet (which was caused in part by ongoing industrial action) delayed planning and in some cases student's ability to return to Edinburgh to sit their exams.

Opportunities:

Teaching Organisation Support Team

- It has been a successful first year of the Teaching Organisation Support Team, with the service providing support to nearly all Schools within CSE.
- Feedback from colleagues has been positive, with Schools appreciative of support from trained members of staff, and the reduction in reliance and expense of using temporary workers from external agencies.
- A review of the first year of the service is underway, with feedback being sought from Heads of Student Services to determine how best to develop the team further in the year ahead.

Student Support Implementation

- Roll out of Phase 2 is in progress.
- The CSE project team are in the process of review and reflection on the first year of the model, gaining detailed feedback from Schools on what has worked well, and where there is room for improvement. This will be shared with all Schools, DSTI and EPCC.

Curriculum Transformation

- Plans around Curriculum Transformation have continued to develop, with the College engaging with the Project team as plans develop further.

Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities

- Following the roll-out of the University-wide Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities guidance, the College is reviewing these with a view to developing a consistent approach across the College to providing appropriate feedback to students.

3. Actions

Actions identified for the College:

- 1) Continue the work of the Progression and Attainment Working Group, reviewing initial data and determining whether any actions can be recommended for Schools to implement ahead of the 24/25 Academic Year.

- 2) Continue to review and prioritise the health and wellbeing of all staff including PhD students, and improving work environments. This will involve developing and implementing the Committee action plan to ensure these priorities progress.
- 3) Reflect on the implementation of the Student Support model across the College and continue to set up the move to business-as-usual activity
- 4) Work with staff and students to develop shared assessment and feedback good practice

Actions requested of the University:

1) Staff wellbeing and workload

- Schools have once again highlighted staff wellbeing as an area for concern, especially given the ongoing industrial action throughout the Higher Education sector.
- It is clear that staff are feeling overwhelmed and overworked after the last few years of continuous change and challenge.
- Ongoing industrial action has highlighted the ongoing issues, as well as having a huge impact across the University.
- The Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB) has been a particular challenge for students, with many not receiving their degree classification or progression decision.
- The need for large volumes of manual editing contributed to MAB related workload in teaching offices, and has once again highlighted the need for updated University Systems.

2) Estate, Systems and timetabling (including resit examination diet)

- The opening of the KB Nucleus has been a welcome addition to the University estate at King's Buildings. However, it is clear that Schools are still struggling to find appropriate teaching spaces for their requirements and needs.
- Several Schools have highlighted issues with timetabling and the impact of delays to timetabling decisions – for example, some Schools have noted they have had to resort to using lecture theatres for workshops due to lack of access to appropriate spaces.
- The delay to the release of the exam and resit exam timetables caused a lot of stress and unease for both students and staff. Whilst this was a clear impact of the Marking and Assessment Boycott, it did lead to students receiving late notifications for resit examinations and some struggling with arranging their travel and accommodation to Edinburgh.
- There is a need for good centrally-collated and systematically produced data on turnaround times for assessments.

3) Extensions and Special Circumstances

- Once again, Schools have raised concerns around the Extensions and Special Circumstances policy. Of particular note is that students are able to apply without the knowledge or support of the School.
- There is also a feeling of inconsistency in approach to decision making, which could do with further review and resolution.

4) Use of Generative AI at the University

- There has been much discussion around the rise of Generative AI and its use by students.
- Whilst the University has produced some helpful guidance, the discussion needs to evolve and an action plan in place for ensuring students are aware of the use and misuse of this technology in completing assignments.

5) Student Feedback

- It has been noted that Schools are struggling to engage students in providing course and programme feedback, especially given the removal of central Course Enhancement Questionnaires.
- It would be helpful for the University to consider how it may support all Schools to engage students in providing meaningful feedback on their courses and their broad university experience.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

7 December 2023

External Examiners: Exceptional Appointments Report 2022/23

Description of paper

1. Report on College approvals of exceptional External Examiner appointments made during 2022/23.

Action requested / recommendation

2. To formally note the report and consider future reporting arrangements.

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 Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, to support quality assurance processes and future policy development, Colleges were invited to provide details of approved exceptional appointments.
4. The Covid pandemic was declared ended by the World Health Organisation in May 2023, however there are other factors that may impact on requests for External Examiner appointment in terms of the Policy. The Policy does not state that exceptional appointments must be reported beyond College level approval. The Committee is asked to confirm whether it is still valuable to receive reports on approved exceptional External Examiner appointments in future.

Discussion

College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences:

5. The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences had 10 exceptional appointments. There were 11 exceptional appointments in the previous academic year.

New exceptional appointments

6. There were eight in the Law School*, and one each in the Schools of Literatures, Languages and Cultures (LLC), and Health in Social Science (HiSS).
7. The Law School received five concessions granted by the College following advice from Academic Services. These concessions were made due to the unique nature of certain subject areas, especially Scots Law, which is exclusively taught in Scotland, resulting in a limited pool of available External Examiners. An additional three nominations raised concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest, as the nominees were affiliated with the same institutions as External Examiners already appointed in the School. Despite these concerns, the College approved the concessions, as they determined that there was no risk of overlap in the responsibilities of the External Examiners from the same institution.

8. In LLC one nominee raised concerns due to their affiliation with the same institution as another External Examiner already serving on the School's Board of Examiners. Nevertheless, the fact that the board operated asynchronously and had a low overall ratio provided valid reasons for granting the concession.
9. In HiSS, one appointment was made despite the nominee already serving as an External Examiner for another School. This decision was based on the unforeseen challenges faced by HiSS in finding a suitable nominee. The College, after an evaluation, found no risk of overlap between the two roles and therefore granted the concession.
10. *The College notes that the Law School has a high number of External Examiners due to its niche subject areas and operates two large Boards of Examiners which makes it difficult to avoid using more than one External from the same institution.

Extensions to existing appointments

11. There were 10 exceptional extensions, distributed as follows: three in Moray House School of Education and Sport (MHSES), two in the School of Social and Political Science (SPS), and one each in HiSS, the Business School, LLC, the Schools of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (PPLS), and History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA). The majority of these extensions were granted based on evidence provided by Schools facing challenges in finding replacements due to industrial action.
12. In one case, an exceptional extension was granted because two out of three External Examiners from the same programme resigned, leaving the single remaining External Examiner with valuable knowledge of the programme. Therefore, their tenure was extended to ensure consistency.
13. In two other cases, exceptional extensions were approved due to changes in course structure/assessment, justifying a 5th-year extension for consistency.

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine:

14. The College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine had five exceptional appointments. There were seven exceptional appointments in the previous year.

New exceptional appointments

15. There were three new exceptional appointments: one each in the Deanery of Clinical Sciences, Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (Vet School) and Deanery of Molecular, Genetic and Population Health Sciences. One appointment in Clinical Sciences had previously tutored on the programme but as the profession is still impacted by the pandemic there was a limited pool of expertise available. The other two appointments were from the same institution as the outgoing External Examiner but again there was a limited pool of expertise in the Vet School and in Molecular, Genetic and Population Health two External Examiners were appointed to cover this large programme. Courses previously covered by

the outgoing External Examiner will be covered by the second External Examiner to this programme and not the nominee.

Extensions to existing appointments

16. Two one-year extensions were made to External Examiner appointments. Of these, one was in Molecular, Genetic and Population Health where the programme had experienced continued resourcing issues during the academic year. The other was a late extension request from Clinical Sciences ahead of the Board of Examiners and the College will support the Deanery to proactively approach recruiting a new External Examiner.

College of Science and Engineering:

17. The College of Science and Engineering had two exceptional appointments. There were four exceptional appointments in the previous year.

New exceptional appointments

18. There were no exceptional new appointments.

Extensions to existing appointment

19. There were two exceptional one-year contract extensions, mainly granted for continuity purposes. Both of these extensions were to increase an initial three-year appointment to the standard four-year term. The requests were to provide continuity and consistency to examining following the Covid-19 pandemic. The final exceptional extension request was granted to increase an initial three-year appointment to the maximum five-year appointment to ensure stability following the pandemic years when the Examiner initially began in their role.

Concession

20. The College was granted an APRC (semester 1) Concession for one programme to run without an External Examiner due to industrial action making finding a new appointee challenging.

Resource implications

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

Risk management

22. The paper is a report on activity and no risks are identified in relation to this report.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

24. 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

25. 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
28 November 2023*

Presenter

Brian Connolly

Freedom of Information

The paper is **open**.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

7 December 2023

Evaluation of Course Level Feedback

Description of paper

1. This paper presents a recommendation for Senate Quality Assurance Committee to oversee a review of the current approach to course level feedback. The Student Voice Policy paper presented to SQAC in May 2021, which approved the move away from centrally managed to locally managed course feedback, is attached as an appendix.

This paper was considered via e-SQAC after the September 2023 meeting. Due to the requests for further discussion on this item, the presenter has resubmitted this item for the December meeting of the Committee.

Action requested

2. The Committee are asked **to approve** a review of course level evaluation across the University. The Committee are asked **to approve** the proposed next steps.

Background and Context

3. A new approach to course level evaluation was introduced in September 2021. This removed the centrally administered Course Enhancement Questionnaires (CEQs), moving to devolved model of course evaluation, where Schools/Deaneries were responsible for determining the appropriate feedback mechanisms for their courses in accordance with the [Student Voice Policy](#). Schools are asked to report *“on the approach and effectiveness of student voice activities in line with the new Student Voice Policy and the move to locally managed course level feedback”* within their annual quality reporting.
4. A Student Voice Task and Finish Group has been set up through the Student Lifecycle Management Group. Through this group, academic colleagues representing Schools/Deaneries have requested that a review takes place as the devolved model of evaluation moves into its third year.
5. The University performs consistently below sector peers in the National Student Survey (NSS) question *“How clear is it that students’ feedback on the course (programme) is acted on?”* (Positive outcome - 46.2% - 8.4% below Russell Group peers, NSS 2023). In order to understand how the University can improve student experience in this area, a clearer understanding of the current approach to course level evaluation (and how effective it is) is needed.

Discussion

6. To understand how effective the new approach to course level feedback is, the Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling (SAIM) team propose a review is undertaken in early 2023/24. This review would be undertaken by SAIM in

conjunction with key academic and professional colleagues across the University, and would be overseen by SQAC.

7. If approved, a proposal for undertaking this evaluation will be developed and presented to the Committee for approval. The evaluation would consider the approach from a staff, student, School and institutional perspective, and would utilise existing data from the annual monitoring process and internal periodic reviews, as well as any new data collection required.

Resource implications

8. Resource requirements will be outlined as part of an evaluation proposal.

Risk management

9. Failure to improve student experience is a reputational risk for the University.

Equality & diversity

10. The development of evaluation proposal will consider equality and diversity implications.

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

11. If approved, an evaluation proposal will be developed and approved ahead of any wider communication.

Freedom of Information (*Is the paper 'open' or 'closed'*) *open*

Open

Author

*Marianne Brown
Head of Timetabling, Examinations and
Student Analytics
04/09/2023*

Presenter

*Marianne Brown
Head of Timetabling, Examinations and
Student Analytics
04/09/2023*

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

20 May 2021

Student Voice Policy

Description of paper

1. Attached is the new Student Voice Policy.

Action requested / recommendation

2. SQAC are asked to **approve** the new policy.

Background and context

3. SQAC approved the principles embedded in the policy at the last meeting. This version provides an update based on the discussions at the last meeting.
4. University Executive approved the move away from centrally managed to locally managed course feedback last summer.
5. An Equality Impact Assessment has now been completed on the policy.

Discussion

6. The policy has been developed following extensive consultation with staff and students.
7. The policy provides a new framework for student feedback at the University of Edinburgh.
8. Supporting guidance and a toolkit will be developed, in consultation with Schools and Colleges, over the summer.

Resource implications

9. There will be resource implications for the development of a new approach to course level feedback in Schools however it is anticipated that this resource cost will be compensated by the time saved as Schools no longer have the administrative burden of Course Enhancement Questionnaires. The Policy encourages Schools to develop approaches to feedback collection that are appropriate and proportionate – there is no requirement for Schools to make a like for like replacement of end of course feedback surveys.

Risk management

10. N/A

Equality & diversity

11. EQIA completed and attached.

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

12. Communications planned with Schools, Colleges and to students via the Students Association and Student Representatives.

Author

CEQ Review Board
17/05/21

Presenter

Paula Webster,
Head of Student Analytics, Insights &
Modelling

Freedom of Information – open

2021 paper

Student Voice Policy

Introduction

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

To maintain a high-quality student experience, it is essential that all students have opportunities to reflect on and evaluate their experiences of academic study and the wider service offering. To this end, we engage our students through a variety of mechanisms with a view to learning from and responding to their feedback individually, collectively and through their representatives.

Our commitment to working in partnership with our students is articulated at the highest level in the University's Strategy 2030. We work in partnership with the Students' Association to:

- ensure that students are central to governance and decision making;
- ensure that students are central to quality assurance and enhancement;
- provide opportunities for students to become active participants in their learning;
- foster collaboration between students and staff.

Throughout this Policy, the student experience encompasses the learning, teaching and assessment experience and the wider student experience, including the experience of student support services. By its nature, experience is subjective and context specific. Student feedback is therefore an important counterpart to other quality measures such as summative assessment, employment destinations or the professional accreditation of programmes and the professional recognition of staff.

Students are not a homogenous group and as such there will be a range of student voices within the University. All conversations with students should recognise that our student body is diverse and that students will have varied views on issues. When seeking feedback from students, colleagues should ensure that conversations are inclusive and enable all students to participate so that as many student voices as possible may be captured.

Students' views of their University experience and student voice mechanisms are an essential part of the University's (including Colleges and Schools) Quality Assurance and Enhancement framework.

Quality Assurance Agency expectations

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education sets out the expectation that students are actively engaged, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.¹ This includes engaging students in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience. Formal structures of collective student representation and individual student feedback are twin core elements.²

¹ The Revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education, 2018, 3, at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code#>.

² UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance: Student Engagement, 3–5, at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/student-engagement>.

Student engagement should be strategically led but widely owned by both students and staff at all levels, with students considering, deliberating and developing informed views independent of the University. The purposes of engagement are enhancement, innovation and transformation, and their effectiveness should be monitored and evaluated regularly, including via key performance indicators. Engagement should be inclusive and adequately resourced and supported, with responses to feedback communicated back to students.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee, as a key part of the University's Quality Assurance and Enhancement framework, ensures adherence to these external expectations. Schools are required to report on student feedback and actions taken in response through their Annual Quality Report and periodically via Internal Programme Review, which also includes reflection on the effectiveness of the School's approach to student voice activities.

Underlying principles for student voice activities

- **Be enhancement-focused:** Ensuring each student has a voice, whether via representation or other feedback mechanisms, enables students to be co-creators of an improved educational experience.
- **Include all students:** It is essential that student representation and feedback activities be inclusive and accessible to all.
- **Celebrate and share positive practice as well as identify areas for improvement:** Representation and feedback should be valued by all as opportunities to celebrate strengths as well as to identify and share concerns, and student voice activities should enable both to be captured.
- **Involve students in the co-creation of feedback mechanisms:** To ensure greater engagement by students, and open, honest and balanced feedback, students should, as far as possible, be given opportunities to collaborate in the design and delivery of feedback activities³. Students should be made aware of the opportunities they will have to give feedback.
- **Adhere to ethical standards and be conducted with dignity and respect:** Feedback mechanisms must adhere to ethical standards, and feedback should be given and received in accordance with the University's Dignity and Respect Policy⁴. Students should be free to give honest feedback with no undue influence.
- **Adhere to data protection regulation:** Any activities that involve the gathering and storing of data must adhere to the University's Data Protection Policy⁵. This includes ensuring the use of compliant software (such as survey and polling tools). Where feedback results are shared, steps should be taken to protect respondent anonymity unless the student or students have consented to share their feedback without anonymity.

³ Good practice examples of

⁴ [dignity_and_respect_policy.pdf \(ed.ac.uk\)](#)

⁵ [Policy and handbook | The University of Edinburgh](#)

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

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give open and constructive feedback • Ensure feedback is in line with the University's Dignity and Respect Policy
Course Organisers/ Programme Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer at least one opportunity for students to provide feedback on their course each year • Ensure that all students have an opportunity to provide feedback • Engage with students in the design of feedback collection and explain how students can provide feedback on their course • Listen to student feedback and let students know how their feedback has or has not been acted on and why
Heads of School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out the School's approach to collecting course, programme and School level feedback, ensuring that the principles in this Policy are followed • Ensure that all students are offered appropriate ways of providing feedback at course, programme and School level • Ensure that students are engaged in the design of feedback processes • Ensure that School approaches to student feedback are reported and reflected on in the School's Annual Quality Report
Senate Quality Assurance Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there are a range of appropriate ways for students to provide feedback • Review School Annual Quality Reports to ensure student voice activities are in line with the expectations in this Policy
College Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide fora for sharing best practice and resources • Advise on areas for development in the student voice guidance and toolkit

When can students expect to be able to give feedback?

This list is not exhaustive. Links to relevant policies and guidance are included.

Course feedback	All courses should offer at least one opportunity for students to provide feedback. This can be in the middle of the course, towards the end or both.
Student representatives ⁶ / Student–Staff Liaison Committee ⁷⁸	All appropriate School, College and University committees include student members who are supported to enable meaningful student participation.
School-specific channels	Schools may offer town hall meetings or other opportunities to provide feedback on School-specific issues.
University-wide surveys	Annual surveys offer an opportunity to provide feedback on a range of issues and more general feedback on how the University is doing. All feedback is anonymised and respondent anonymity is protected in published results.
Student Panel	Participation enables students to provide feedback on specific questions and to shape service design and delivery.
Have Your Say mailbox	Students may post comments about specific issues. These are shared with the relevant team and summaries of comments received are published on the University website.

Monitoring student voice activities

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

⁶ [Student representation | The University of Edinburgh](#)

⁸ [sslcguidance.pdf \(ed.ac.uk\)](#)



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Equality Impact Assessment Template

Before carrying out EqIA, you should familiarise yourself with the University's EqIA Policy Statement and Guidance and Checklist Notes, and undertake our online training on Equality and Diversity and EqIA. These, along with further information and resources, are available at www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment

EqIA covers policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services, but will be referred to as 'policy/practice' hereinafter.

<p>A. Policy/Practice (name or brief description):</p> <p>Student Voice Policy</p>
<p>B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (Mark yes against the applicable reason):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed new policy/practice • Proposed change to an existing policy/practice • Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice • Other (please state):
<p>C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Job title:</p> <p>School/service/unit:</p>
<p>D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any of the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affects primary or high level functions of the University • is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)? • It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA?
<p>E. Equality Groups</p> <p>To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Disability • race (including ethnicity and nationality) • religion or belief

- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership¹

The Student Voice Policy replaces the old Course Enhancement Questionnaire and Student Voice Policies. As part of the policy development process the Review Group consulted students and staff about the existing approaches to collecting student feedback – particularly at course level. Staff reported concerns that female staff and staff from BAME backgrounds were disadvantaged under the old system and pointed to evidence in academic literature that some groups are systemically disadvantaged. The decision to collect anonymous feedback at course level prevented us testing whether students from different populations were more or less likely to express satisfaction.

The new Student Voice policy emphasises the need to consider and be inclusive of all students and recognises that there is not one homogenous student voice. The policy requires colleagues to consider how they can make the collection of student feedback inclusive so different student voices are captured.

The policy will be relevant to all the equality groups listed above as it is essential as part of our Quality Assurance processes to test whether students in different groups report significantly higher or lower levels of satisfaction or engagement and to understand why this might be the case. This supports the University in its work to ensure all students have an excellent student experience.

The policy emphasises the need to be mindful of respondent anonymity to ensure students feel able to share their experiences. Anonymity should be presumed unless students explicitly consent to their feedback being shared.

The policy has been developed via consultation with staff and student groups and will be communicated widely. Guidance and a toolkit are being developed to support staff in implementing the policy. The group who developed the policy are working with the Students Association to ensure that students are aware of the changes.

F. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision

Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.

Option 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.

Option 3: Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified

¹ Note: only the duty to eliminate discrimination applies to marriage and civil partnership. There is no need to have regard to advancing equality or opportunity or fostering good relations in this respect.

Option 4: Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.

G. Action and Monitoring

1. Specify the actions required for implementing findings of this EqIA and how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above).
Senate Quality Assurance Committee will review Schools' approaches to collecting student feedback as part of Annual Quality monitoring. Equality impact should be considered as part of this process.
2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?
Annually.

H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? **Yes/No**

If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:

I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)):
Paula Webster, Head of Student Analytics, Insights & Modelling

Accepted by (name):
[This will normally be the person responsible for the policy/practice named above. If not, specify job-title/role.]

Date:

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

7 December 2023

Internal Periodic Review: Forward Schedule

Description of paper

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

Action requested / recommendation

2. For discussion and approval of action(s).

Background and context

3. Existing requirements for institution-led reviews are that all aspects of provision are expected to be reviewed systematically and rigorously on a cycle of not more than six years to demonstrate that institutions meet the expectations set out in the UK Quality Code. It is not known how the new tertiary quality framework will affect the current schedule for internal review. The University was previously advised by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Quality Assurance Agency that no further extensions to the review schedule would be permitted. However, we do not need to seek SFC approval to hold reviews earlier than the maximum six year cycle.

Discussion

4. Due to the large number of rescheduled Internal Periodic Reviews (IPR) over the past two to three years, mainly caused by the Covid pandemic, we had a large number of reviews in 2022/23 (12 in total). This will lead to a similarly large number of reviews in six years time. This presents some challenges in managing reviews due to limited resources within the Academic Services team. There is also additional burden on Committee members in reviewing a large number of IPR reports. (Final IPR reports, 14 week and one year on response reports are submitted to the Committee for approval.)
5. In 2024/25, there will be a smaller number of IPRs than usual when four reviews are scheduled. The following years have increasing numbers of reviews; 2026/27 six reviews, 2027/28 nine reviews, and 2028/29 11 reviews. A recent Committee induction event highlighted the potential to rebalance the IPR schedule to provide a more even spread of work in relation to reviews. The Committee is asked to consider opportunities to reorganise the review schedule and increase the number of reviews scheduled for 2024/25.
6. Schools and Deaneries are subject to a number of externally and internally driven challenges and initiatives. Internal Periodic Review is a useful mechanism to help Schools explore challenges and enhancement activity with input from both students and external expertise.
7. [Past IPR Schedule](#) shows the number of postponed reviews.

8. [Forward IPR Schedule](#) shows review scheduled between 2024/25 – 2028/29.

Resource implications

9. Managing IPRs is expected to be met from within existing Academic Services resources (see 4 above). Participation in IPRs by Schools and Deaneries is expected to be met from within existing resources.

Risk management

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

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

12. The paper itself does not require an Equality Impact Assessment. The Equality Impact Assessment for internal periodic review processes is published at:
<https://edin.ac/2p3B7WZ>

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

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

Author

Susan Hunter
31 October 2023

Presenter

Brian Connolly

Freedom of Information Open