



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Enhancement-led Institutional Review

**Reflective Analysis**



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# 1 Introduction

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*The University of Edinburgh is a large and diverse research-intensive university, with a clear commitment to excellence in learning and teaching. In this section, we present an overview of the University, its structure, governance and strategy in support of learning and teaching, emphasising our devolved structure, our encouragement of local innovation, and our agenda-defining Senate committees. We include separate sections on our student association, Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), with whom we work in close and effective partnership, and our merger with Edinburgh College of Art (eca), which redefines our potential in the fields of art and design. We present an update of key developments since our last Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR), and set out our key challenges for future development. We close the section with a brief overview of our collaborative approach to producing this document.*

## 1.1 Overview of the University

- 1.1.1 The University of Edinburgh (the University) is one of Scotland's ancient Universities and its largest with a population of some 28,000 students, comprising 19,000 undergraduates (UG) and 9,000 postgraduates (PG). The University has a staff of just under 8,000, of which nearly half (3,300) are categorised as academic (see Appendix 3). Edinburgh is a distinctively Scottish University, based in Scotland's capital, but our reach and aspirations are global. Around 30 per cent of our total student population comes from over 120 countries outside the UK and our international affiliations include membership of Universitas 21 (U21) and the League of European Research Universities (LERU).
- 1.1.2 The University offers an extensive range of courses and programmes: we teach across the most comprehensive range of subjects in Scotland and the third most comprehensive in the UK (after Leeds and Manchester Universities). Our students currently study in 101 of the 144 principal subjects defined by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and this is set to increase to 103 following our merger with eca. This breadth is one of our great assets and a characteristic that appeals greatly to potential and current students. Our four-year UG degrees articulate well with national and international qualification frameworks and provide a significant level of flexibility. We also offer an expanding range of PG masters degree programmes and, as is to be expected at one of the UK's leading research intensive universities, there are excellent and extensive opportunities for postgraduate research (PGR) students.
- 1.1.3 The University aims to ensure that its students, at both PG and UG level, are taught in a way that is informed and enhanced by our research activity. Our strong commitment to research is reflected in the results of the last Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which showed that 63 per cent of the University's research activity is in the highest categories (4\* and 3\*), with one third of this 63 per cent being recognised as 'world-leading'. The University's submission was among the largest and most comprehensive in the UK. The results of RAE 2008 place the University among the top 5 in the UK and number one in Scotland by volume of 4\* 'world-leading' research.

## 1.2 Structure of the University

- 1.2.1 The University's organisational structure is depicted in Appendix 4. The academic structure of the University is based on three colleges: the College of Humanities and Social Science (CHSS), the College of Science and Engineering (CSE), and the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM). Colleges have significant devolved powers and authority. Each is headed by a Vice-Principal who has responsibility for the delivery of college plans, including those relating to learning and teaching. Whilst there is a notable difference in terms of the numbers of students taught within each of the three colleges (roughly 58 per cent of all students are in CHSS, 13 per cent in CMVM and 29 per cent in CSE), as 'business units' they are roughly equal in size (principally because of the much greater cost and volume of externally-funded research in science and medicine than in humanities).
- 1.2.2 The colleges are divided into schools (22 in all). Schools are the core units for teaching and research, particularly in CSE and CHSS; in CMVM teaching is organised via three Teaching Organisations (Biomedical, Veterinary and Postgraduate) and the Centre for Medical Education. Since our last ELIR the number of schools has increased by one with the establishment of the School of Economics, which was separated out from the Business School so that it could pursue its own strategic priorities more effectively.
- 1.2.3 Colleges and schools have a significant degree of freedom to develop local best practice within overarching policy and structures set down at university level. All subscribe to, and work towards, the University's overall strategic vision as set out in the Strategic Plan (further details on which are found in section 1.4.1). Senior college office holders sit on all Senate committees, and Heads of College report to the Principal via the central financial and strategic management committees (sections 1.3.3 and 1.3.4).
- 1.2.4 A devolved management structure reflects the sheer size and scale of the University. The University has an annual turnover of around £600 million and an estate which encompasses some 200 buildings with a gross academic area of approximately 588,900 m<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>. One of the principal benefits of the devolved structure is the ability to implement local innovations responding appropriately to the particular needs of students and staff in that area. Interestingly, the devolved model has recently been adopted by a number of other Scottish universities, including Aberdeen, Glasgow and Stirling as well as English universities (such as Birmingham).
- 1.2.5 The University's governance and support structure is centred on three support service groupings:
- Student and Academic Services Group (SASG), which is headed by the University Secretary. This provides a wide range of services in support of the University's academic mission. The SASG structure chart<sup>2</sup> explains the support group's structure and further information on each department is available from the department overview webpage<sup>3</sup>;
  - Corporate Services Group (CSG), which is headed by the Director of Corporate Services. This provides the physical, operational and commercial

<sup>1</sup> The University of Edinburgh Estate Strategy 2010-2020: <http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EstatesBuildings/Strategies/EstateStrategy.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Student and Academic Services Group (SASG) Structure Chart: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.10262!fileManager/SASGStructure.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.10262!fileManager/SASGStructure.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Further information on each SASG department: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-academic-services/departments>

environment and professional expertise to underpin the University's activities.

The CSG structure chart<sup>4</sup> explains the support group's structure and further information about the group's ten business units is available from the unit's webpage<sup>5</sup>;

- Information Services Group (ISG), which is headed by the Vice Principal for Knowledge Management. ISG has responsibility for, among other things, the information technology infrastructure, user support and the libraries. The ISG structure chart explains the support group's structure and further information about the group's six divisions is available from the organisation overview page<sup>6</sup>.

### *Institute for Academic Development*

- 1.2.1 A recent positive strategic development within the University's structure is the establishment of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD). This brings together three existing units that provide academic development and study-skills support. These are the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA), the Postgraduate Transferable Skills Unit (transkills), and the Researcher Development Programme (RDP). This restructuring began in January 2010 and continued through academic year 2010/11, in readiness for the launch of the IAD at the start of 2011/12. The IAD remit includes Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and dissemination of best practice in teaching and supervision, promotion of student study-skills, professional and transferable skills development for PGR students and researchers, as well as the development of innovative strategies in teaching and assessment. Its establishment is integral to the University's achievement of its key strategic goal of excellence in learning and teaching. Further details on the IAD are included in section 2.6.

## **1.3 Governance of the University**

### *Court, the Senate and main management committees*

- 1.3.1 The governing body of the University is the University Court. Court has ultimate responsibility for the deployment of resources in the University and for its strategic plans. It also has a monitoring role in relation to the overall performance of the University. Court is chaired by the Rector, who is elected every three years by students and staff, and cannot be a student of the University or a member of its staff. Court receives regular reports from the Senate, which it is formally required to consult on relevant matters, and will only very exceptionally debate curricular issues (see Appendix 5 for reporting relations between Senate and Court).
- 1.3.2 The supreme academic body is the Senatus Academicus (Senate), which is chaired by the Principal and meets three times per academic year. Each meeting of Senate is preceded by a set period of electronic business (or 'E-Senate'). Senate has the ultimate responsibility for the academic standards of the University. Senate meetings begin with a presentation and discussion session on an issue of strategic importance, followed by consideration of formal business. The majority of recent Senate discussions have been on learning and teaching, including feedback, e-learning, employability and graduate attributes<sup>7</sup>. The discussion topic is agreed in advance by the Senate Agenda Committee, which is chaired by the

<sup>4</sup> Corporate Services Group (CSG) Structure Chart: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.5788!fileManager/081111\\_csg\\_structure.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.5788!fileManager/081111_csg_structure.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Further information on each CSG business unit: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/corporate-services/about/units>

<sup>6</sup> Information Services Group (ISG): <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/about/organisation>

<sup>7</sup> Senatus Academicus: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/senate>

Principal and includes a EUSA representative. The way in which Senate devolves its powers to its committees is described below in sections 1.3.5 to 1.3.19.

- 1.3.3 The Principal's Strategy Group (PSG)<sup>8</sup> comprises the University's most senior officers with overview of resource allocation, and is convened by the Principal. Its purpose is to discuss and advise on issues of strategic importance to the University as a whole. Its role includes considering new strategic initiatives prior to wider consultation in the University's committee structure, identifying internal strategic priorities, and ensuring that opportunities for the University are exploited appropriately. It has no statutory functions and is advisory to the Principal.
- 1.3.4 The Central Management Group (CMG)<sup>9</sup> oversees planning and budgeting at a central level and is formally advisory to the Principal. It reports to Court via Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GPC), makes regular reports to Senate, and receives reports from a number of other University committees and groups. Its members include all the major budget holders in the University and all Vice Principals. It is responsible for integrating the academic, physical and financial aspects of University planning, and for monitoring performance.

### *Committees of the Senate*

- 1.3.5 At the time of the last ELIR the Senate committee structure was under review. The ELIR Report (2006, para 161) encouraged us: "to consider the effectiveness of the current remits and operation of the Senate and its key academic committees to clarify the model by which taught and research postgraduate provision are considered. Consideration should also be given to the most effective location for the audit function which is currently shared between the senatus undergraduate and postgraduate studies committees and the Senatus Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee".
- 1.3.6 At its meeting on 22 October 2008, Senate considered the report of the Review Group on Academic Governance<sup>10</sup> and gave its approval for substantial changes to the Senate committee structure. These changes included the creation of a new set of committees (operational since the start of 2009/10) and changes to the framework of operation for these committees. In addition to addressing the recommendations of the ELIR Report (2006), the objective was to strengthen academic governance within the University and enhance the student experience. The restructured committees aim to achieve this by delivering a better quality of discussion, decision making and action through new working practices (in particular the formation of short-life task groups) and wider involvement in the work of the committees from a broader spectrum of the academic body. Care was taken to formulate the action plans for these committees in an articulated and strategic way and to ensure the effectiveness of the committees' operation is evaluated<sup>11</sup>. This aspect is continuously overseen by the Convenors' Forum, and includes holding an annual Senate committees' away-day. The Convenors' Forum submitted its first annual report to Senate in June 2010, which provided an early indication that the objectives are being achieved<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Principal's Strategy Group (PSG): <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/governance/university-committees/othercommitteesandgroups/principals-strategy-group>

<sup>9</sup> Central Management Group (CMG): <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/governance/university-committees/othercommitteesandgroups/central-management-group/overview>

<sup>10</sup> The report of the Review Group on Academic Governance, S:22.10.08, A2: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/Senate/2008-09/20081022AgendaAndPapers.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Summary report on the changes arising from the Review of Academic Governance, S: 03.06.09, B3: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/Senate/2008-09/20090603AgendaAndPapers.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Annual Report of the Senate Committees, S: 16.6.10, B5: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/Senate/2009-10/20100616AgendaAndPapers.pdf>

- 1.3.7 Over the same period there has been a significant change in how we manage quality assurance (QA) and quality enhancement (QE). These developments represent a progressive transformation of structures and mechanisms, as well as the ethos and cultures with respect to learning and teaching, and the wider student experience. These are underpinned by the reorganised committees in concert with a new leadership and management structure.
- 1.3.8 The new leadership and management structure marked a significant shift from a single Vice-Principal Teaching and Learning (with responsibility for QA and QE) to the appointment of a Vice-Principal Academic Enhancement, an Assistant-Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (whose title changed from Director of Academic Standards and Quality Assurance following approval at Court in June 2011), and an Assistant-Principal Taught Postgraduate Programmes. Together with the existing Vice-Principal External Engagement (whose title changed from Vice-Principal Research Training and Community Relations following an expanded remit approved by Court in May 2011), and in tandem with the respective committees, this provides an effective model for QE related to both the postgraduate taught (PGT) and PGR student experience, and a single location and responsibility for the QA function.
- 1.3.9 The operation of the committees is further strengthened by their membership, which not only includes college senior officers but is also aligned with key posts of responsibility in colleges and schools, including cross-membership to maximise opportunities for dissemination of good practice and the identification of common issues. The detailed remits, membership and overviews of recent work undertaken by the committees are available on the Academic Services committees' webpages<sup>13</sup>.
- 1.3.10 The Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) is convened by the Vice-Principal Academic Enhancement. It is responsible for UG, PGT and other forms of taught academic provision. The committee also provides a forum to facilitate and encourage the development of academic strategy and also discusses and promotes academic developments, whether internally driven or externally indicated. Responsibility for QE at University level is vested in this committee.
- 1.3.11 In the last two years, the committee has undertaken major work on feedback, academic and pastoral support, innovative learning week, assessment futures, employability and graduate attributes, and the development of an Edinburgh Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR). These enhancements are described in further detail throughout section 2. The committee has been actively engaged in the production of a nested set of enhancement strategies operating at University, college and, in due course, school level. Details on management of enhancement are further outlined in section 4.
- 1.3.12 Several committees and groups report to LTC including college committees with oversight of learning and teaching, the Employability Strategy Group, and the Student Induction Working Group. LTC also receives appropriate reports from the Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group. The Director of the IAD is an ex-officio LTC member and provides updates on IAD activities.

<sup>13</sup>Academic Services, Committees Overview: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees>

- 1.3.13 The Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) is convened by the Assistant-Principal Taught Postgraduate Programmes. It is responsible for the academic regulatory framework apart from those aspects which are primarily parts of either the Code of Student Discipline or the QA Framework. The committee discusses, amends and approves unusual or novel degree pathways, including those that cross college boundaries. The committee gives final approval to one-off concessions which allow students to undertake individual, remedial learning plans outside of the normal set of assessment regulations. Strategically, the committee is the forum which oversees the process of maintaining and disseminating the academic regulations and related guidance, in light of policy developments and changes in the internal and external environments.
- 1.3.14 Since October 2009, CSPC has undertaken a review of the match between the University's courses and programmes and the level and programme descriptors produced by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). It has developed the degree programme specification to allow for the identification of graduate attributes in every programme, reviewed Board of Examiners' guidelines, and initiated a major revision of assessment regulations. The latter includes the integration of the University and eca academic regulations to ensure a regulatory framework that enables high-quality studio-based activities to thrive. CSPC took an early lead on promoting the value to the University in providing a HEAR for students in addition to a degree transcript or European Diploma Supplement.
- 1.3.15 The Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is convened by the Assistant-Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance. It is responsible for the University's academic QA framework. The committee oversees the monitoring and review arrangements of colleges and student support services, and acts as a planning forum for the discussion and promotion of developments in academic QA, whether internally driven or externally indicated.
- 1.3.16 Since its inception, QAC has initiated a number of developments in support of the University's QA framework including: review and subsequent enhancement of our internal review processes; revised guidance on college annual QA reports; review and subsequent development of an enhanced review method for student support services; revised Code of Practice for External Examiners; enhanced inclusion of PGR in annual monitoring; development of a web-based database for professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRB) accreditations; redevelopment of the quality web pages resulting in the provision of clearer guidance on quality monitoring and review; development of enhanced guidance on collaborative provision; and a review of teachability, the process of creating an accessible curriculum and enabling environment for students with disabilities, with a view to refocusing and further embedding it as 'accessible learning' across all provision. Specific details of the enhancements to the QA framework are described further in section 3. Members of QAC have also taken a lead in the development of successful applications to two Higher Education Academy (HEA) programmes: our INTEGRATE project in the *ScotPID* programme on graduate attributes and PDP (INTERlinking and Embedding GRaduate ATtributes at Edinburgh), and our involvement in developing an inclusive culture in higher education, further details of which can be found in sections 2.3 and 2.5 respectively.

- 1.3.17 The Senate Researcher Experience Committee (REC) is convened by the Vice-Principal External Engagement. It is responsible for both the strategic development and QE of PGR degree training, higher degrees, and provision for the training of other early career researchers. The committee provides a forum to facilitate and encourage the development of appropriate strategy and also discusses and promotes relevant developments, whether internally driven or externally indicated.
- 1.3.18 Since its inception REC has developed a number of initiatives to enhance further the PGR student experience. In support of induction there has been a review and redesign of induction events. In support of the learning environment, working groups have evaluated what PGR students most need at the University and are improving study spaces centrally and locally as a result. In support of researcher skills and career development there have been significant developments to complement the sector-leading position that the University occupies in this area, including: enhanced skills courses in direct response to student feedback; introducing more courses on entrepreneurship, team building and career options; introduction of the Principal's Career Development Scholarships where PGR students specialise in teaching, public engagement or knowledge exchange alongside their research to gain a broader CV; and small project funding available to groups of students to conduct specific projects designed to enhance their skills. Working in partnership with EUSA, the postgraduate fair was launched in 2010 comprising a week-long set of activities, networking, career building, and skills training. REC has also been investigating non-traditional PGR provision and has already developed some online courses about the PhD journey for students who are researching remotely from Edinburgh or who arrive out of the normal academic cycle.
- 1.3.19 As part of the restructuring of the Senate committees a Senate Convenors' Forum was established with the purpose of facilitating the role of the convenors in ensuring that the work of the committees is coordinated and properly interlinked, and to allocate specific, cross boundary responsibilities. The Forum, which meets monthly, also plays an active role in supporting the agenda-setting process for the committees through the organisation and delivery of an annual away-day which is attended by all Senate committee members and key stakeholders across the University. Progress against the annual agenda is reviewed throughout the year at the Convenors' Forum, and any changes to priorities for Senate committees are discussed at the Forum as they arise to allow agendas to be adjusted as necessary.

### *College committee structure*

- 1.3.20 Each college has its own committee structure<sup>14,15,16</sup> organised in a way that best suits the needs of that college while addressing the following common issues (though the titles and configuration of committees varies from college to college):
- Planning and resources;
  - Quality assurance;
  - UG and PG learning and teaching;
  - Research;
  - Boards of Studies.

<sup>14</sup>CHSS Committees: <http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/Admin/Committees/>

<sup>15</sup>CMVM Committees: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/medicine-vet-medicine/staff-students/staff/committees>

<sup>16</sup>CSE Committees: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/science-engineering/staff/committees>

1.3.21 Responsibility for quality enhancement within college committee structures is vested in the respective UG and PG learning and teaching committees for taught provision, in the respective research committees for research degrees, and in the college Learning and Teaching Strategies, further details of which are provided in section 4.

## 1.4 University strategy

1.4.1 The University's current Strategic Plan<sup>17</sup>, covering the period from 2008-2012, articulates our vision as being: "To shape the future by attracting and developing the world's most promising students and outstanding staff" and has as its mission the creation, dissemination and curation of knowledge. As a world-leading centre of academic excellence we aim to:

- enhance our position as one of the world's leading research and teaching universities and to measure our performance against the highest international standards;
- provide the highest quality learning and teaching environment for the greater wellbeing of our students and deliver an outstanding educational portfolio;
- produce graduates fully equipped to achieve the highest personal and professional standards;
- make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world, promoting health, economic and cultural wellbeing.

1.4.2 Excellence in learning and teaching is identified as one of the University's three strategic goals. This overarching goal is developed in greater detail in our University, college and school-level enhancement strategies (see section 4). The Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP) section of the University website<sup>18</sup> identifies a number of other key University strategies and plans which are complementary to, and underpin, the University's Strategic Plan, including those relevant to the quality of learning and teaching.

1.4.3 Work on developing the next Strategic Plan, covering the period 2012-2016 is beginning during the second half of 2011. All stakeholders will be given an opportunity to contribute to the process. The new plan will be in place by 1 August 2012. In preparation for this, the Senate committees have given some forethought to the sections of the next Strategic Plan that will be relevant to learning and teaching at the away-days for 2010/11 and 2011/12. The away-day outcomes indicate that our general priorities in learning and teaching are unlikely to change significantly and will include an ongoing commitment to excellence in learning and teaching, to employability (in the broadest sense) and to a sustained position where our student body is more international and more focussed on PG students than currently. In the light of this, the Senate committees feel confident using the current strategy for planning beyond the end of 2012 at this time.

<sup>17</sup>The University of Edinburgh Strategic Plan 2008-12: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-plan-2008-12>

<sup>18</sup>Strategic Planning, Complementary Strategies: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/complementary-strategies>

## 1.5 Edinburgh University Students' Association<sup>19</sup>

- 1.5.1 Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) is run by students, for students, and seeks to secure a 'world-leading student experience' for its members. It runs societies and unions and gives advice on academic and non-academic matters. It is a member of the National Union of Students (NUS).
- 1.5.2 EUSA provides support, advice and activities for all the University's students, and works to represent its members professionally and effectively both within and outwith the University. Its activities derive from the needs of the student body with permanent staff and elected student sabbaticals providing operational and strategic support and direction for these activities. Sabbaticals and other elected students sit on University, college and school committees, as well as on EUSA's Student Council. EUSA supports a well-established class representative system, which ensures representation for students at every level of University life, and runs the Advice Place, an impartial, accessible, free, confidential advisory service.
- 1.5.3 EUSA and the University work in close partnership and a number of activities and projects, which have directly improved students' day-to-day experience, have only been possible because of this strong relationship. EUSA regards itself, and is regarded by the University, as a key partner in enhancement, and the University seeks to involve EUSA in the early planning of key activities and strategic developments. Not only does EUSA play a key role in assuring quality, it strives to promote, propose and deliver innovative activities which enhance the student experience. In the period since the last ELIR significant developments have included: internationalisation developments; introduction of sector-leading Teaching Awards; development of an annual Inspiring Teaching Conference; new models of peer support; and activities focusing on enhancing employability, including student volunteering. Further details of these developments are provided throughout the Reflective Analysis.

## 1.6 Edinburgh College of Art merger

- 1.6.1 In September 2010, following widespread consultation and discussion, the Board of Governors of Edinburgh College of Art (eca) and the Court of the University formally agreed to propose to the Scottish Government that the two institutions merge from 1 August 2011<sup>20</sup>. Having taken advice from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Cabinet Secretary approved the proposal and an Order for Merger was subsequently passed by the Scottish Parliament in March 2011.
- 1.6.2 The primary aim of the merger is to create a world-class centre for research and education in the visual, creative and performing arts, drawing on the knowledge, skills and expertise available in both institutions, and building on the international reputation they already command. Merger will enhance provision beyond the capability of two independent institutions, allowing the focused development of new areas of research and teaching, such as design and informatics, or digital animation; the expansion of activity in film; and an extension of knowledge exchange activities to connect better with the cultural and creative industries. While the fundamental objectives of the merger are academic, the merger should ensure that, within future funding constraints, eca's academic strengths can be maintained

<sup>19</sup>Edinburgh University Students' Association: <http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/>

<sup>20</sup>Merger discussions: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/merger-discussions>

and enhanced in a way that would prove extremely difficult in the current and anticipated economic and public funding environment were eca to remain an independent institution.

- 1.6.3 Following the merger, eca will be established as an academic entity within the University, integrated with the academic provision currently within the University's School of Arts, Culture and Environment (ACE). The new enlarged school, named Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) will contain five academic disciplines: Art; Design; Architecture and Landscape Architecture; History of Art; and Music. In formal terms, it will have the authority of a school within CHSS. It will however retain the brand and profile of a college. The University will ensure that the arrangements for the merger enable the continued academic strength of the merged institution and that the identity, ethos, teaching practices and studio-based culture of design, art, architecture and landscape architecture in eca will continue to develop and flourish in the future.
- 1.6.4 Our experience of having accredited eca's programmes since 2004 has enabled us to be confident about the high quality and standard of its programmes of study. Successive positive Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) ELIRs have also confirmed this. From the date of the merger, ECA's provision will operate within the University's academic regulations and QA arrangements. This overarching framework is sufficiently flexible to accommodate the needs of a wide range of disciplines, and will enable ECA to maintain appropriate QA and academic regulatory arrangements for its disciplines. The institutions have reviewed all the University's academic regulations and policies to ensure that they meet the needs of ECA disciplines.
- 1.6.5 During the 2010/11 academic year the two institutions undertook extensive planning and implementation activities to ensure that eca could be integrated into the University's normal support and academic structures while modifying these where necessary to accommodate its particular needs. These planning activities have been highly demanding, particularly in relation to information technology and human resources. As far as possible, the aim has been that these arrangements should be established from the merger date, while minimising disruption to the student experience.

## **1.7 Key developments since the last ELIR**

- 1.7.1 Since our last ELIR, we identify the following key developments in our structures and strategies within the University of Edinburgh, many of which address action points in the ELIR Report (2006) (see Appendix 6):
- formation of new and more strategic Senate committees with responsibility for the learning and teaching agenda (detailed in this section);
  - creation of the integrated IAD (see section 2.6);
  - our merger with eca (detailed in this section);
  - substantial investment and redevelopment of the learning environment (see section 2.4);
  - implementation of EUCLID (our new student records system, see section 3.4);

- introduction of an Edinburgh HEAR (see section 2.3);
- development of a set of Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategies for each level of the University (see section 4).

## 1.8 Key challenges in the next five years

- 1.8.1 Our key challenges in the next five years originate in the changes we are planning in the demography of our student body, and in an external environment where greater scrutiny and less resource is likely to be an ongoing feature.
- 1.8.2 As our student demographic moves towards a greater emphasis on international and PG students, there will be an increased focus for all students on induction, language support and the articulation of our graduate attributes and skills training.
- 1.8.3 Our curriculum is well placed to evolve in line with the proposals outlined in the recent Scottish Government Green Paper on higher education<sup>21</sup>. We are in a position to develop appropriate flexible entry and exit points for our degree programmes, based on the expertise gained from developing our International Foundation Programmes.
- 1.8.4 The University is better positioned than many to cope with the challenging and uncertain financial environment. Maintaining our focus on increasing our income and reducing our costs will be essential over the next five years. We will make full use of the high quality developments to our estate and IT infrastructure as well as developing new means of delivering programmes online and at a distance.

## 1.9 Method used to produce the Reflective Analysis

- 1.9.1 A collaborative approach has been taken to producing the Reflective Analysis (RA). The process was overseen by a Steering Group<sup>22</sup> led by the Assistant-Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance in consultation with relevant staff from across the University. EUSA was involved at all stages of the process and has made an active contribution to the content.
- 1.9.2 The RA was produced against the background of the guidance in the ELIR handbook and the Teaching Quality Forum publication 'Good practice in Reflective Analysis when preparing for Enhancement-led Institutional Review'. It also draws on good practice from the RA's of eca and the University of Glasgow.
- 1.9.3 Three Case Studies accompany this RA. The decision on the selection of Case Studies was taken by the Steering Group to: highlight key developments in our management of the student learning experience; demonstrate our approach to strategic management of enhancement and the student learning experience consistent with our devolved structure; provide an opportunity for each college to highlight a key priority within its enhancement strategy, providing us with examples of good practice to share across the University. The Case Studies were developed collaboratively within each of the three colleges and led by: the former Deputy Head of College, CSE (Case Study A), Associate Dean, Quality Assurance, CHSS (Case Study B), Dean, Postgraduate Taught and International, CMVM (Case Study C).

<sup>21</sup>Building a Smarter Future: Towards a Sustainable Scottish Solution for the Future of Higher Education: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/12/15125728/11>

<sup>22</sup>ELIR Steering Group: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/institutional-review-elir/2011/steering-group>

The three case studies are:

- Case Study A – Learning and Teaching Spaces for Enhancing Student Engagement (CSE);
- Case Study B – Research-Teaching Linkages: Enhancing Graduate Attributes (CHSS);
- Case Study C – Enhancing Postgraduate Distance Learning (CMVM).

1.9.4 The process of developing the RA has been beneficial for University staff and for colleagues at EUSA. It has provided an opportunity to reflect on our approach to learning and teaching and QE, to take stock of where we are and to consider where we need to develop further as we approach the end of the current strategic planning cycle and look ahead to emerging strategic priorities.

1.9.5 The RA was approved by QAC at its meeting on 25 May 2011 and by Senate at its meeting on 8 June 2011. It was endorsed by Court at its meeting on 20 June 2011.

### **Comment**

1.9.6 This section has provided an overview of the University, its structure, governance and strategy in support of learning and teaching. Our approach to learning and teaching is guided and developed within a strategic framework that emphasises a robust commitment to excellence in learning and teaching. Since our last ELIR in 2006 we believe there has been a progressive transformation of not only structures and mechanisms but also ethos and cultures in respect to learning and teaching and the wider student experience. This transformation, which is underpinned by the reorganised Senate committees in concert with a new leadership and management structure, provides an effective model for QE and maintenance of standards. The recent developments we outline in this section are beginning to have a significant impact on enhancing the student experience. Current and planned developments ensure that we are well placed to meet the challenges ahead.

## 2 Management of the student learning experience

*In this section we provide an overview of our approach to the management of the student experience. This approach is underpinned by our strategic framework, including the Strategic Plan (outlined in section 1) and our University Learning-Teaching Enhancement Strategy and supporting college Learning and Teaching Strategies (as detailed in section 4). The four overarching priorities, as set out in our Learning-Teaching Enhancement Strategy, include: employability (section 2.3); student feedback; student guidance and support (section 2.2); and the enhancement infrastructure, comprising the learning environment and staff development (sections 2.4 to 2.6). All of this is tailored to the evolving demography of our student population (section 2.1).*

### 2.1 Key features of our student population and the effectiveness of our approach to managing information about it

- 2.1.1 Our Strategic Plan sets out our aspirations to be a global University, providing first-class learning and teaching. This involves moving towards having a greater proportion of international students and a greater focus on postgraduate masters level teaching where international demand is particularly strong.
- 2.1.2 In line with our commitment to research, we are also growing our postgraduate research (PGR) student numbers. We are achieving this through work with research councils to host training programmes, such as the Scottish Graduate School for Social Science, and through the Principal's Career Development Scholarships.
- 2.1.3 Home undergraduate (UG) student numbers are capped annually by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), leading to high demand for places and excellent UG students at entry.

#### Student population

- 2.1.4 In academic year 2010/11 the University has approximately 28,000 students, comprising almost 19,000 UG and around 9,000 PG students. Following our merger with eca, total student numbers are expected to increase to almost 30,000, including an increase of around 1,300 UG and over 400 PG students. Our non-EU international students number just over 6,000. The vast majority of our students (over 80 per cent) are engaged in full-time study. An additional 13,000 lifelong learners take continuing professional education (CPE) and continuing professional development (CPD) courses each year. A detailed breakdown of our student population is provided in Appendix 7.
- 2.1.5 UG applications to the University for entry in 2010/11 were 47,258 for approximately 3,800 places. Postgraduate taught (PGT) applications for entry in 2010/11 were 21,454 (of which 5,595 were home/EU applications and 15,859 were full fee applications). PGR applications for entry in 2010/11 were 4,797 (of which 1,817 were home/EU applications and 2,980 were full fee applications).

*International student mobility*

- 2.1.6 The University has stated in its Strategic Plan that it will increase the proportion of its students attending another international institution by 50 per cent between 2008 and 2012. As with all other UK institutions, we find the implementation of this goal challenging. In 2007/08 430 students from the University undertook a formally approved period of study abroad, mainly at UG level; in 2010/11 it was 577 representing a 25 per cent increase. A further increase is forecast for 2011/12 with applications for the exchange programme increasing by around 25 per cent on last year's figures. The main issue we identify, that prevents students from taking these opportunities, is a lack of proficiency in a foreign language. We maintain credit-bearing language provision for all non-honours students according to demand, and partner with EUSA to offer non-credit-bearing language courses as well. Our long-term commitment to language teaching should enable us to place more students into the European educational system in the future.
- 2.1.7 There has been a similar increase in the incoming visiting student exchange population. In 2007/08 516 students (407 FTEs) studied at the University under the auspices of our approved student exchange agreements. This number increased to 557 (436 FTEs) in 2009/10 and rose again in 2010/11 to 673 (525 FTEs). The University also welcomes a modest number of independent visiting students each year and we had 370 FTEs of such students in 2009/10.

*PGT student growth*

- 2.1.8 The University's Strategic Plan outlines a commitment to increasing the number of PGT students by 50 per cent between 2008 and 2012. In 2010/11 the University has 5,404 PGT students compared with 3,829 in 2007/08, representing an increase of almost 30 per cent.
- 2.1.9 In order to support this growth, the University has been engaged in the development of innovative PG masters programmes and the exploration of new means by which they can be delivered. In 2005/06 there were 159 programmes on offer and in 2009/10 this had increased to 259 programmes. Emphasis in this area during the period of the Strategic Plan has focused on clarifying the nature of an Edinburgh Masters, using these principles to help schools to deliver innovative new masters programmes. Particular examples are Carbon Management, Food Security and the suite of distance learning programmes delivered under the umbrella of the Global Health Academy.
- 2.1.10 The Distance Education Initiative (DEI)<sup>23</sup> is also aimed at addressing PGT student growth, focusing initially on new PGT programmes and courses, delivered online and at distance. This represents a significant investment (£4.5 million over 4 years) and a significant new direction for our learning and teaching. We feel confident that we can deliver significant growth, at high quality, in this area because of our track record in designing distance education programmes in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) (Case Study C) which is now acting as our pilot study for this larger, University-wide initiative.

<sup>23</sup>Distance Education Initiative, LTC 10/11 2 N: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/2010-11/20101103AgendaPapers.pdf>

### *PGR student growth*

- 2.1.11 As part of the University's drive to continue to build on its research strength, and to promote a thriving research community to feed into our teaching, the University's Strategic Plan gives a commitment to increase our number of PGR students at a greater rate than the Russell Group average. In 2010/11 the University has 3,605 PGR students. Between 2007/08 and 2009/10 our number of PGR students increased by 4.6 per cent, compared with the Russell Group average of 3.2 per cent for the same period. This growth is underpinned by a commitment to double the recorded number of skills training and development opportunities taken up by our PGR students over the period of the Strategic Plan.
- 2.1.12 The University offers a large number of PhD scholarships. In 2010/11 the Principal's Career Development Scholarships were launched as a significant new initiative offering 120 new scholarships over two years that promote the career development aspects of a PhD. Under these scholarships students have the opportunity to do an excellent research project supplemented by additional training in, and opportunities to develop, skills and experience in one of several strands including learning and teaching, public engagement, knowledge exchange and additional research skills. Each scholarship covers the UK/EU rate of tuition fee and pays a generous stipend: £14,000 in year one, £14,500 in year two and £15,000 in year three.
- 2.1.13 PGR growth is also being supported by research pooling (for example ECOSSE, SUPA) and the emerging trend towards national graduate training centres (such as in Social Sciences) in which the University takes a leading role.

### **Arrangements for managing information about the student population**

- 2.1.14 At the time of our last ELIR our new student record system, EUCLID, was planned, with part of its objective being to enhance the management of information about our student population. In the last four years a portfolio of solutions has emerged to help us achieve this goal. EUCLID plays a significant part, especially in giving us a longitudinal profile of students from application to graduation, and facilitates our statutory returns. However, we also make increasing use of WebCT in our local management of courses, of EEMec and EEVec in CMVM, of SMART in the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) and of the PG database for taught and PGR students. In addition, new sources of information about our students have emerged through student surveys.

### *Internal management information reporting*

- 2.1.15 With control of intake numbers becoming ever more critical, consultation between colleges, Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA) and Planning representatives over student numbers led to the setting up in 2005 of a Monitoring Student Numbers Group. High level update reports on UG and PGT recruitment are circulated by email every month once the recruitment cycle is under way. The Group has monthly meetings scheduled in advance and these are held whenever there is sufficient business to discuss.

## 2.2 The effectiveness of our approach to engaging and supporting students in their learning

- 2.2.1 In this section we present the main elements of our approach to engaging and supporting students in their learning, derived from the University's Learning-Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES). These comprise: induction and ongoing support; engagement with learning activities and outcomes, and engagement with the decision-making around learning processes.
- 2.2.2 Induction and ongoing support includes, in this context, formal induction at the start of study, on-programme pastoral and academic support, student support from specialist services, and the management of student exchanges. Engagement with learning activities and outcomes are covered throughout the Reflective Analysis (RA): in this section we focus on how we gather and respond to feedback from students, in particular on the issue of 'feedback and assessment' as highlighted by the National Student Survey (NSS). Engagement with decision making around learning processes is discussed in terms of our comprehensive system of student representation and in our communication strategy to and with students.

### Approach to learning and teaching at the University

- 2.2.3 The University's approach to learning and teaching, in relation to UG and PGT provision, is necessarily diverse, but is broadly encompassed by four main elements: lecturing and large-group teaching; group-based discussions and interaction between small numbers of students; the practicum (including laboratory, studio, clinical, field, and other professional elements of study); and the provision of learning support for independent study, which is core to our provision. Across these four components, developments in information and communication technology have increasingly reshaped and enriched the student experience. All of these activities take place in a research-intensive environment that places value on learning by enquiry and by the development of autonomous and critical habits of mind.
- 2.2.4 The University's approach to the PGR student experience operates within a number of broad principles, but includes flexibility to take account of discipline variations in research traditions. Each student is enrolled on a programme with an individual research project. Two supervisors are appointed to each candidate from the outset, and in many research programmes other staff members will be involved in an advisory capacity (if specialised equipment is to be used) and in assessing progress as the student passes through the degree. The first year of the research degree is regarded as probationary. This initial period allows the student to assess his/her aptitude for research and to develop and refine the topic. It also allows University staff the opportunity to assess the candidate's potential to complete a PGR degree. The research experience at the University includes a significant and sustained focus on research training, development of transferable skills, and career development. All PGR students have access to research training that is delivered within their own school and tailored to the specific needs and research conventions of the discipline. Additionally, all students have access to a range of transferable

skills training from their first year right through to their final year, covering a wide range of relevant subject areas, provided by the IAD. Increasingly employability and transferable skills are becoming embedded into the PGR experience and the Principal's Career Development Scholarships are a good example of this.

- 2.2.5 Within this overall context, local variation enables the appropriate delivery of a wide range of subjects and levels. Schools and programmes have the flexibility and freedom to develop local, appropriate solutions to the demands of teaching in their discipline that are responsive to the cultures and traditions of their subject area. Support for these activities is provided by the IAD.
- 2.2.6 Larger scale, non-discipline-specific, strategic enhancements of our approach to learning and teaching and the research experience are promulgated through the Senate committees, in particular through the work of the Vice Principal Academic Enhancement for taught programmes and the Vice Principal External Engagement for the research student experience.

## **Induction and ongoing support**

### *Induction*

- 2.2.7 Significant work has taken place over the past 18 months under the auspices of the Student Induction Working Group (SIWG) to take a strategic view of induction across the University as well as to develop and coordinate induction activities for UG, PGT and PGR students, both home and international, arriving at the University and also those studying remotely as distance learners. SIWG has also been active in sharing good practice in this area and encouraging discussion and facilitating new developments such as: the production of a common timetable for Freshers' Week; the provision of a pre-induction website for new students; an emerging scheme to provide international students with local 'buddies'; and the piloting of a virtual PG open week.
- 2.2.8 Induction is defined in its broadest sense (both social and academic) with the aim of enhancing the student experience from the start and ensuring students have the support and background knowledge they need to start their studies confidently. We also recognise that induction is an ongoing process and the SIWG plans to look at the longer term aspects in more detail in the future. These will include, for example, induction to Honours as well as induction available to students arriving throughout the academic year such as visiting UG and PGT students. The specific needs of the distance learning students are also under consideration.
- 2.2.9 The SIWG is convened by the senior academic managers in the College of Humanities and Social Science (CHSS) and CMVM. All stakeholders are represented in the membership: the three colleges, Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA); Information Services; the IAD; SRA and the International Office (IO).
- 2.2.10 One of the main early aims has been to work towards Freshers' Week being jointly managed by the University and EUSA with a carefully coordinated programme of events being developed. This is expected to be rolled out in 2011/12. A highly successful Student Induction website was launched in 2009. Further development

of the student support presence on the University website, both in MyEd and the public website, are currently underway. New technologies including social networking and Second Life are being harnessed to support the work of the SIWG and a project on developing online open days and induction is underway.

- 2.2.11 Induction for PGR students poses an interesting challenge in that many of them begin their studies at different points throughout the year, not just at the start of the academic year. The University has put in place an online induction course to ensure that students who are unable to attend the induction events at the start of the year are still provided with the information that they need.

#### *Pastoral and academic support*

- 2.2.12 The ELIR Report (2006, para 170) noted: "The University is encouraged to establish a clear understanding of the director of studies role which should be communicated to all staff and students. Given the importance of the role, there would be benefit in ensuring that adequate training and ongoing support is provided to all directors of studies." Since then the framework of academic and pastoral support has been comprehensively reviewed and strengthened.
- 2.2.13 Academic and pastoral support to students is provided through networks of academic staff with a designated role as Director of Studies (DoS). Underpinning the DoS role is a specified set of core expectations and responsibilities, with complementary expectations of students, as summarised in box 2.1<sup>24</sup>, which forms part of the University's Standards and Guiding Principles on Pastoral and Academic Support introduced at the start of 2010/11.
- 2.2.14 The DoS role is not a uniform one across the University, but varies in certain respects from one college to another to reflect more localised needs and structures.
- 2.2.15 CHSS introduced changes to its DoS system<sup>25</sup> in 2007/08 involving the creation of the new administrative role of Student Support Officer (SSO) in all schools, with a defined set of responsibilities. SSOs remove many of the routine administrative tasks from DoSs, freeing up time for them to focus on more academic-related aspects of student support. Reviews of the arrangements conducted in Spring 2008 and in 2008/09<sup>26</sup> revealed some variation in the implementation of the arrangements across schools but, on the whole, the SSO arrangements represented a substantial improvement on the previous DoS-only system. The SSO system in the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures is a particularly good example that was showcased at the Sharing Good Practice from Internal Review event held on 25 May 2011. With effect from 2009/10 schools in CHSS standardised student support arrangements for students on PGT programmes in the same manner.

<sup>24</sup>Academic and Pastoral Support Standards and Guiding Principles: [http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Academic\\_Pastoral\\_Support\\_Standards\\_Guiding\\_Principles.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Academic_Pastoral_Support_Standards_Guiding_Principles.pdf)

<sup>25</sup>Enhancing Student Support in the College of Humanities and Social Science, HSS UGSC 06/07 3F: [http://www.cuglat.hss.ed.ac.uk/docs/open/3F\\_Enhancing\\_Student\\_Support.doc](http://www.cuglat.hss.ed.ac.uk/docs/open/3F_Enhancing_Student_Support.doc)

<sup>26</sup>Report of the Review Group for the Review of the Enhanced System of Direction of Studies, April 2008, HSS UGSC 07/08 5B: [http://www.cuglat.hss.ed.ac.uk/docs/open/5B\\_HSS\\_UGSC\\_DoSReviewRep.doc](http://www.cuglat.hss.ed.ac.uk/docs/open/5B_HSS_UGSC_DoSReviewRep.doc)

**Box 2.1: Pastoral and academic support: expectations of staff and students****Expectations of Directors of Studies and equivalent advisors**

- To welcome new directees, and to follow the progress of all their students;
- To guide the students in their course choices and advise them on study difficulties;
- To offer advice and support when personal or health problems are affecting the students' studies;
- To refer the students where appropriate to more specialist sources of information and guidance;
- To provide a reference for a future employer or programme of study;
- To respond promptly (normally within 3 working days) to a request for contact. Where this is not feasible the DoS should alert the relevant person in the school;
- Should the case arise, to advise and support the student in, for example, special circumstances, disciplinary or appeal matters.

**Expectations of students**

- To check their University email account regularly for communication from their DoS, and to respond promptly to requests for information;
- To ensure their details are up-to-date on MyEd. This includes updating contact details, and notifying their DoS of any discrepancies in course details;
- To meet with their DoS when asked to do so;
- To inform their DoS in good time of any problems affecting their studies, and so enable effective support to be offered;
- To provide their DoS with background information s/he needs, for example, to advise on special circumstances or to write a reference;
- To take due account of advice or information given;
- To make themselves aware of regulations and procedures relevant to their studies and to seek advice where they are unsure of what is required.

- 2.2.16 Within CMVM the prescribed nature of the curriculum means that, whilst some academic guidance is required, the element of curriculum choice is not as prominent as in the other two colleges. The pastoral aspect of the directing role is therefore to the fore. CMVM operates two organisations of co-located support staff: the Centre for Medical Education and the Veterinary Teaching Organisation. A system of Year Coordinators aims to give students one contact point for all information relating to their specific year of programme. Mentoring and appraisal of students on the MBChB programme provides all UG medical students with professional and pastoral support, guidance and advocacy throughout their studies via a professional development plan. The arrangements reflect the specific professional cultures in the college.
- 2.2.17 The role of DoSs in CSE is both academic and pastoral. Support for DoSs in CSE is provided through the Teaching Organisation model which operates in all seven schools. The Teaching Organisations normally consist of a co-located team of support staff who provide support for UG teaching in each of the schools. Within this structure some schools already provide tailored support for PGT students, while others are moving to incorporate this support.

2.2.18 While both EUSA and the University's senior management see the developments described above as positive, and both see the need to monitor their ongoing effectiveness and to ensure that they become embedded in the normal practice of all those engaged in student support, EUSA has ongoing concerns about the consistency of support provision across the institution. A review of the implementation of the Standards and Guiding Principles will be undertaken by the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) in the Autumn of 2011 with an explicit focus on this issue including wide consultation with students and relevant staff.

#### *Other sources of advice and support*

2.2.19 Complementing college, school-based and EUSA provision is a wide array of centrally managed high-quality support services<sup>27</sup> including: Academic Registry; Academic Services; Accommodation Services; Careers Service; Chaplaincy; Counselling Service; Centre for Sport and Exercise; University Health Service; Student Disability Service; Library; Information Services; International Office; and the EUSA-run Advice Place<sup>28</sup>.

2.2.20 Information on these services is provided to students at induction. DoSs or other members of University staff will direct students to the appropriate source of professional advice as required.

2.2.21 The ELIR Report (2006, para 171) asked us to "...consider how the supply of [support] services can be kept in adequate proportion to student demand." Since the last ELIR two significant developments have occurred in student support services: the opening of a new Student Centre in Old College in January 2011, and, from Summer 2011, the co-location of a core set of student support services (Careers Service, Student Disability Service and Counselling Service) in the redeveloped Main Library. These represent major investments in the infrastructure of support for students, and the University's high level of commitment to the provision of these services.

2.2.22 As our student population and teaching methods evolve, including a greater emphasis on distance education, we are preparing to meet more diverse student support needs. Up to 20 per cent of the £4.5 million DEI fund can be used to ensure that technology, library and direct student support services meet the needs of the programme. The new Student Support Services Review method (outlined in sections 3.1.20 to 3.1.22) will enable trends in student support needs to be monitored and responded to as appropriate.

#### *Peer support*

2.2.23 We also encourage and facilitate peer support among students and have many good examples across the University. LawPALS in the School of Law provides an opportunity for first year LLB students to attend weekly group sessions, led by third or fourth year LLB students, designed to ease transition into the school both academically and socially. The concept has been adopted by Psychology (PsyncPALS), English Literature (PALS) and Politics. Another model of peer support is the Maths Base<sup>29</sup> in the School of Maths, a student-led maths help desk run by honours students to assist non-honours students with maths problems. Students

<sup>27</sup> Student Services: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/students/student-services>

<sup>28</sup> The Advice Place: <http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/>

<sup>29</sup> Maths Base: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Quality/QE/2ndYRMathsBase.pdf>

using the Maths Base are able to build their confidence in an informal context while student tutors develop skills in communication. The concept is also used in other schools (such as Economics). EUSA piloted a successful peer proofreading service<sup>30</sup> in 2010/11 which it expects to roll out in 2011/12.

### *Supporting international students*

- 2.2.24 International students have access to the support described above, and are additionally supported through the IO and EUSA. This includes practical support (such as visas and accommodation), cultural integration and academic support. An ongoing programme of events, to support cultural integration and the making of new friends, is organised by the IO and EUSA through the year. EUSA currently have 270 registered societies, with 38 international societies, which provide year-round, peer-led student support. In direct response to international student needs, recent developments include EUSA peer proofreading and development of the International Buddying Scheme, a collaborative pilot project between EUSA and the IO, to be fully implemented in 2011/12. In addition, courses in *English for Academic Purposes* are available to students, pre-session or during session, on an independent-study or supported basis. The SIWG, IO, Edinburgh Global and EUSA all have further plans to enhance support to international students over the next 12 months.

### *Promoting and managing international exchanges*

- 2.2.25 To meet the University's commitment to increase international student mobility, a dedicated team in the IO manages and promotes opportunities for international exchanges, in partnership with colleagues in the colleges, schools, Careers Service and EUSA.
- 2.2.26 The Mobility Team in the IO has developed a series of promotional activities. These include publications and information sessions to inform prospective students about the opportunities prior to application, an information stand about exchanges for new students during Freshers' Week, exchange clinics held weekly during semester times, direct mailing of eligible students about the programmes, an annual Exchanges Fair, an improved website, innovative promotional materials (including beer mats in the students' unions) and subject-specific talks.
- 2.2.27 The Mobility Team manages all of the University's formal exchange links, the International Exchange Programme and the Erasmus Exchange Programme. The IO provides practical support and advice to all outgoing students on exchange from their selection to their return to the University. Academic support continues to be provided by the relevant school/subject area through the mechanisms described in sections 2.2.13 to 2.2.17. Each student receives a Guide which provides information and advice about a range of issues that they might encounter during their study abroad, from health and safety concerns to selection and changing of course options. All students must also attend a compulsory pre-departure briefing. Students make initial course selections prior to departure and in consultation with their DoS/Erasmus coordinator. These are included in a Student Release contract. Any changes must be approved by the DoS/

<sup>30</sup>EUSA Peer Proofreading Service: <http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/academic-advice/proofreading/>

Erasmus coordinator. On return the student's academic transcript is reviewed in association with the agreed arrangements in the Student Release contract. The Year Abroad Progression Committee (comprising membership from the colleges and an external examiner, and serviced by the Mobility Section) meets each year in September to consider the transcripts from all the exchange students and to recommend progression. The purpose of this committee is to ensure parity of treatment in the award of credit across all subject areas.

### **Gathering and responding to feedback from students**

- 2.2.28 The University has well established feedback channels at course and programme levels, and opportunities for students to provide feedback via staff-student liaison meetings and various committee meetings at school, college and university level. Some schools have developed additional feedback mechanisms (see box 2.2). The established channels build on the well-established student representation system in operation (see section 2.2.36 onwards). In addition, the University participates in several externally-run national surveys of students; the National Student Survey (NSS); the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES); the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES); and the International Student Barometer (ISB), which provide further feedback and evaluation from students and ensure that all students' views are considered. Further details on these processes are provided in section 3.4.
- 2.2.29 The feedback mechanisms are used at various levels to engage students in their learning and to enhance the student experience. The results from programme surveys are used at a local level to improve programmes and are reported as part of the annual programme monitoring process to colleges. At university level, the national benchmarking surveys are used to address key university-wide issues. Recent outcomes and responses have included: plans to build a PG accommodation block as a result of the outcome from the PRES survey; improved information materials provided to international students prior to arrival and additional international student support arrangements, in response to the outcome of the ISB; substantial and wide-ranging efforts to improve the quality of feedback to students on their performance, as highlighted in the NSS and, to a lesser extent, PTES surveys. The following sections provide further details on how we have responded to the issue of feedback.

#### **Box 2.2 Informatics: Facilities, Teaching and Learning Group<sup>31</sup>**

The Facilities, Teaching and Learning (FTL) group meets weekly to deal with immediate issues concerning the teaching facilities and teaching and learning issues. Its membership comprises the Director of Teaching, any Informatics Class Rep who wants to attend together with a representative from the Informatics Teaching Organisation and, when possible, a member of the Research and Teaching computing support group. The FTL group is intended to deal with pressing matters urgently, in order that Teaching Committee, Boards of Studies and Staff Student Liaison Committees are able to take a longer term view.

<sup>31</sup>Informatics, Facilities, Teaching and Learning Group: <https://wiki.inf.ed.ac.uk/FTLwiki/WebHome>

### *Feedback to students*

- 2.2.30 The issue of feedback was highlighted in the ELIR Report (2006, para 169), which stated: “The University should build on the work it is undertaking to improve its management of assessment and, in particular, should seek to improve the arrangements for providing feedback on students’ assessed work as an aid to learning.” This was subsequently given substantial additional momentum by the disappointing findings from the NSS, in which the University had participated for the first time that same year. The significance of the issue, and the strength of the University’s commitment to enhancing the quality of provision, was further underscored in the University’s Strategic Plan, which adopted a formal target to “increase the level of satisfaction expressed in the assessment and feedback section of the National Student Survey and enter the upper quartile of institutions surveyed.”
- 2.2.31 Subsequently there have been substantial and wide-ranging efforts, within and across schools and colleges, to review and enhance the quality and consistency of feedback. The strategy is led by the Vice-Principal Academic Enhancement and has four principal goals:
- a) setting and communicating standards and expectations for feedback;
  - b) monitoring schools’ performance and actions to strengthen the provision of feedback;
  - c) identifying and promulgating effective feedback practices;
  - d) promoting the review and development of feedback and assessment practices.
- 2.2.32 Goal (a) has been pursued through the adoption of the Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles<sup>32</sup>, approved by Senate in June 2010, and complementary initiatives in the schools and colleges. Feedback to students on their progress and performance inevitably varies considerably across subject areas. Whatever form provision takes, it has to accord with the Standards and Guiding Principles that require feedback to be prompt, informative and helpful, while at the same time clarifying what is expected of both staff and students if feedback is to be effective.
- 2.2.33 Goals (b) and (c) have been taken forward by a variety of measures to enable NSS data on feedback to be monitored and targeted more systematically and to place more stringent actions on those schools where performance has fallen short of the University’s expectations. A fuller account of the development and implementation of the strategy is given in Appendix 8.
- 2.2.34 Goal (d) has been addressed through a combination of a website, workshops and seminars, and a handbook and database (see section 4.4.6).
- 2.2.35 Progress in implementing the strategy on feedback, and updates on its effectiveness, are regularly reported to Senate and other bodies, complementing regular review and interchange at college and school levels as well as with EUSA representatives.

<sup>32</sup>Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/policies>

## Student representation

- 2.2.36 The ELIR Report (2006, para 167) noted: “There is considerable student engagement in the University’s representative arrangements, particularly at university and college levels, and the University, correctly, considers this has a significant impact across the institution. The University has a positive partnership with the Edinburgh University Students’ Association (EUSA)” and encouraged us to “...continue to work with EUSA to develop student engagement in a range of ways including securing the links between school and class representatives, facilitating improved PG representation, particularly at school and college levels, and involving students as members of Teaching Programme Review panels.”
- 2.2.37 Taking account of this feedback, the University and EUSA continue to work in partnership to develop student representation. This has resulted in a number of key developments since the last ELIR, and we are confident that all of these routes to enhanced student engagement have now been developed.
- 2.2.38 Effective student representation is a vital aspect of the University’s quality assurance (QA) processes and the University and EUSA work in partnership to promote student representation and engagement. Students are represented at programme, school, college and university-level committees.
- 2.2.39 Through ongoing work with sparqs<sup>33</sup> during 2009/10 and 2010/11, EUSA and the University, overseen by the Assistant-Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, are exploring ways of further improving and streamlining the system, for implementation in 2011/12.

### *At course level*

- 2.2.40 The class representative (class rep) system underpins all other student representation at the University: it is the grassroots requirement for such representation. The system is overseen by EUSA, with committed support from the University. This role will be recognised in the HEAR from 2011/12 to demonstrate the importance attached to it.
- 2.2.41 The term ‘class rep’ refers to any student who is elected to represent fellow-students at a local, programme level. The number of class reps per course will depend on the size of the course. The way in which class reps are elected, and the mechanisms through which they engage with course organisers and fellow students will differ between schools, reflecting the variety of structures, courses and programmes across the University. With assistance from sparqs, EUSA and the University are working to ensure clear guidance about the class rep system is readily available to all students and staff and that the system is well promoted, especially at the beginning of semesters.

### *At school level*

- 2.2.42 EUSA school representatives (school reps) represent all the students within a school. They are elected during the annual EUSA elections, and they sit on EUSA’s student council.
- 2.2.43 There are two school rep positions available for each school and any UG student matriculated in that school is eligible to stand. Not only do school reps provide a

<sup>33</sup>Student representation structure, QAC 10/11, 5K: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2010-11/20110414AgendaandPapers.pdf>

link between class reps and EUSA's student council, they are encouraged to meet with, and provide support for, class reps within their school, taking issues forward to school-level committees and staff as appropriate. The revised guidance clearly outlines the responsibility and expectations of schools in supporting the class rep role.

- 2.2.44 EUSA notifies schools of who their school reps are as soon as they are elected in March, and school reps are encouraged to introduce themselves to the Head of School and staff in the school office.
- 2.2.45 School reps provide a very important link between class reps at programme level, and staff at school level, as well as being the link between class reps and EUSA's student council. As with the class rep system, school reps play a valuable role in enhancing the academic community in which students and staff work.

*At college level and beyond*

- 2.2.46 Student representatives (student reps) sit on college level committees, dealing with learning and teaching issues and QA. In most cases the student reps who sit on college level committees are elected from members of EUSA's student council. Student reps also sit on university-level Senate committees. In most cases these student positions are filled by the relevant student sabbatical officer.
- 2.2.47 Students also participate in limited life working groups addressing particular issues at college and university level. The revised Senate committees structure has resulted in a number of task groups being formed to take forward the work of the committees. All task groups have included either a student member or a member of EUSA. From EUSA's point of view, the formulation of university task groups has proved particularly effective in working to make progress on particular issues, and to ensure that students are influencing key university developments. EUSA has particularly welcomed the inclusion of students in the Feedback and Assessment Task Group and the Academic and Pastoral Support Task Group. Student participation has also been noted as an asset to the Senate committee away-days.

*PG representation*

- 2.2.48 PG representatives are elected in the cross-campus EUSA general and by-elections, but by PG students only. They all deal with university-wide rather than subject-specific issues. Both PGT and PGR students are provided with the opportunity to get involved in representation, although EUSA's experience is that PGT students are reluctant or unable to take time out of a very intensive course to become involved in University representation at a central level.
- 2.2.49 EUSA has sought to ensure that PG representation and engagement is strengthened, organising a PG festival and induction activities to this end. EUSA is currently undergoing a governance review and restructuring the student council is part of this. A key aspect of this review will be the place PG students take within representation structures.

### *Working within a devolved structure*

- 2.2.50 Student sabbatical officers attend a wide variety of University committees, develop effective working relationships with committee members and key senior management, and have the support of professional EUSA staff to ensure they are up-to-date with key issues and developments. EUSA feels confident that representation at this level is valued and supported by the University, and that the representatives at this level can effect change.
- 2.2.51 However EUSA does not have the same level of confidence in the college and school level representation where student representation is unsupported and has to be accommodated within the time demands of full time study. Student representatives elected at college level are not full-time sabbatical officers, so representatives do not have the same scope to develop effective working relationships.
- 2.2.52 The University's devolved structure gives significant power to colleges and many key decisions are made at this level. Hence the ability to provide professional and consistent representation here is vital. This is a key concern for EUSA and the University and is being addressed as part of the work with sparqs throughout 2010/11. EUSA feels that developing better support and stronger relationships and communication mechanisms with class representatives will, in the long term, positively impact on its ability to provide more representative input at that level.

### **Arrangements for communicating with students**

- 2.2.53 Effective communication with students is essential to ensure that students are kept informed. Communication comes from various sources. Overall communication on courses and programmes is devolved to relevant units across the University.
- 2.2.54 In 2009 a Student Communication Protocol was developed which covers administrative communication with students. It does not seek to address academic communication which is the responsibility of schools and colleges. The Protocol identifies primary and secondary channels of communication. The former must always be considered; the latter if resources allow. Primary channels are: MyEd (the University's web portal); the University website; email; and WebCT (the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)). Secondary sources include plasma screens, noticeboards, printed material, text messaging, EUSA publications, instant messaging, online chat, and electronic forums.
- 2.2.55 Email is the standard mechanism for communicating with students and communication with the student body tends to be on a school basis. The University also works with EUSA to communicate through its channels, or seek guidance on the best ways to communicate to students for example on improvements to student orientation, to the website on pre-arrival information, or information on the recent eca merger discussions.
- 2.2.56 Communication of a wider impact (such as disruption to examinations caused by adverse weather, pandemic flu or other emergencies) is usually managed by Academic Registry, but in consultation with relevant colleagues/departments to ensure appropriateness and consistency of message content.

- 2.2.57 Increasingly text messaging, Facebook and twitter are being used. Communications and Marketing have developed a University twitter and YouTube account, and some schools also have their own social media accounts.

### Comment

- 2.2.58 The University's approach to engaging and supporting students in their learning has improved substantially since the last ELIR. We have made a number of significant developments in all three aspects of student engagement and support illustrated in this section, working in close partnership with our students and alert to our devolved University structure and the increasingly diverse nature of our student body.
- 2.2.59 This is an area which we will continue to develop, acknowledging that there is no static solution to the support and development of our students. In the next academic year, for example, we will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Standards and Guiding Principles for Feedback and Pastoral and Academic Support to ensure they have the intended impact on the student experience, and we will do this through the Senate committees throughout 2011/12.

## 2.3 The effectiveness of our approach to promoting employability and graduate attributes

- 2.3.1 Our Strategic Plan makes clear that a key part of the University's mission is to produce graduates equipped for high personal and professional achievement. We are planning for a long period of attention to graduate attributes beyond the end of our current Strategic Plan, driven internally by an ongoing commitment to this aspect of the University experience, and externally by the hostile employment market.
- 2.3.2 Since the last ELIR the University has made significant developments in the area of employability and graduate attributes. The key events in this journey are: the formation of an Employability Consultancy (the Consultancy) in response to SFC funding in 2007; the effectiveness of this Consultancy in devising a set of Edinburgh graduate attributes<sup>34</sup> and beginning the roll-out of these to schools, along with other school-specific employability activities; engagement with the QAA enhancement theme Graduates for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, from 2009; the decision to engage with the HEAR from 2009; the ongoing work to embed graduate attributes in degree programme specifications; our participation in Learning to Work 2, which enhances our understanding of graduate attributes in the postgraduate arena; and the decision to pilot an Edinburgh award that will allow students to reflect on their acquisition of graduate attributes (funded in 2011). Further detail on these activities is presented below.
- 2.3.3 Partnership with EUSA means that we are working towards the development of graduate attributes in co- and extra-curricular activities, with EUSA leading the way in developing opportunities for volunteering and enhancing the training for students in their role as class reps.

<sup>34</sup>Graduate Attributes Framework: [www.employability.ed.ac.uk/GraduateAttributes.htm](http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/GraduateAttributes.htm)

## Employability consultancy

- 2.3.4 In response to the four years of strategic funding received from the SFC, the University established the Employability Steering Group (ESG) and the Consultancy in autumn 2007<sup>35</sup>. The Consultancy is managed by the Director of the Careers Service and its work is overseen by the ESG.
- 2.3.5 The ESG leads the institutional approach to employability, linking to the University's strategic objectives. It is responsible for championing the importance of enhancing employability and its fundamental impact on the quality of the student experience. The ESG seeks to advance employability-related efforts to strengthen learning and teaching, linking with other relevant initiatives and agendas where appropriate and facilitating the exchange of good practice.
- 2.3.6 The Consultancy's work falls into four broad areas: school- or subject area-specific projects; work with the colleges in supporting employability; university-level projects; and a small number of sector-level projects. Success has been enjoyed in each since 2007. Illustrative projects include:
- **at school level:** development of employability inputs comprising lectures and tutorials tailored to the disciplinary setting; support for academic staff in relation to school programme employability reviews (in the Business School and the School of Engineering); work with various schools/subject areas exploring and developing PDP-related opportunities within the curriculum (the Schools of Engineering; Chemistry; Divinity; Economics; History, Classics and Archaeology; Health in Social Science; Literatures, Languages and Cultures; Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences; and the Business School); and an employability module within the compulsory year one academic skills course for divinity students;
  - **at university level:** the graduate attributes development work (see sections 2.3.9 and 2.3.10); development and dissemination of Taking Advantage of Time Away (TATA), a WebCT resource to help students take advantage of time spent away from the University as part of their academic experience (such as study abroad or placements); incorporation of employability/graduate attributes within the Teaching Programme Reviews (TPRs) and Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPRs); and employability resources developed for class reps in conjunction with EUSA and for Resident Assistants within Accommodation Services.
- 2.3.7 One of the key successes and benefits of the employability funding has been increased connectivity on employability matters within the University. This has arisen primarily through the existence of the ESG and through networking by the Consultancy. This has enabled new opportunities to be identified and valuable bridges to be built that, within a highly diverse institution, are critical in terms of sharing practice and enhancing overall provision. In 2010 we broadened the remit of the ESG, and modified its name to Employability Strategy Group<sup>36</sup> to reflect this wider agenda<sup>37</sup>. This allows us to draw on synergies between our different activities in this area to help move us all forward.

<sup>35</sup>The Employability Consultancy: [www.employability.ed.ac.uk/](http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/)

<sup>36</sup>Employability Strategy Group: <http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/ESGmembershipandremit.htm>

<sup>37</sup>Employability Strategy Group, LTC 10/11 3G: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/2010-11/20110323AgendaPapers.pdf>

- 2.3.8 The University has chosen to enhance the information set it makes available to prospective students via the Unistats website<sup>38</sup> by including an outline of its approach to fostering student employability through both diverse curricular and co-curricular provision.

### Graduates for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- 2.3.9 The University has been a full participant in this QAA theme, with an institutionally led, cross-University team. Because of the scale and diverse nature of the University, we took a targeted approach and worked closely with a small number of schools to articulate and embed graduate attributes at the discipline level, with the aim of further roll-out across the University.
- 2.3.10 Case studies from the Business School, School of Law and School of Divinity have produced insights which will be shared with colleagues across the University as we seek to embed graduate attributes further within the student experience. Complementary approaches to gap analyses in the Business School (comparing the experiences and understandings of current students, recent alumni and staff) and in the School of Law (a triangulation between current penultimate year UG students, programme outlines and employers) have enabled identification of potential areas for development and indicators for success. Further case studies are being developed at the time of writing. Case Study B illustrates how the University's graduate attributes framework facilitates the integration of Research-Teaching Linkages.

### HEAR

- 2.3.11 Students graduating from 2013 onwards will receive a HEAR. We have identified a set of co-curricular activities that will be visible within this electronic document, and anticipate that the developing HEAR will be available online to all students by January 2012. These activities will include the award of academic prizes, class representation, elite sporting activity, being a key postholder in a University society or a sabbatical officer for EUSA<sup>39</sup>.
- 2.3.12 The HEAR offers us scope to reflect on our graduate attributes at programme level and to embed them in this enhanced transcript. We are currently undertaking a process of revision of our Degree Programme Specifications (DRPs), as part of which we are developing a style and content guide for the programme description in the HEAR. Plans for modifying degree programme specifications have been developed by each School and will be delivered as part of the existing periodic review process.
- 2.3.13 This work has been developed and deepened through a secondment to the IAD from the School of Divinity allowing Divinity to be used as a case study of best practice in this area. The University is enthusiastic about the capacity of IAD secondments to deepen our work and to make research in these practical areas widely available through conference participation and publication. Further details on the IAD and secondments can be found in section 2.6.

<sup>38</sup>Unistats: <http://unistats.direct.gov.uk>

<sup>39</sup>Higher Education Achievement Report: Task Group Final Report, LTC 10/11 3 E3: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/2010-11/20110323AgendaPapers.pdf>

## Learning to Work 2

2.3.14 The University successfully bid for funding through the SFC Learning to Work 2, to support placement-based dissertations for master's level students. Working in partnership with the Universities of Aberdeen and Stirling, this three-year project will enable us to increase the range and depth of employer contacts, focusing on target sectors within the Scottish economy, and to export intellectual capital into Scottish businesses, particularly to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). At the same time students will enhance their employability and their learning experience, and we will enhance our understanding of PG attributes to complement the graduate attributes framework.

## Edinburgh Award

2.3.15 In January 2011 the University began work on the development of an Edinburgh Award, which will be an interactive activity which students can participate in to reflect on, and develop, their graduate attributes. This work will be carried out jointly by the Consultancy and the IAD. This work will complement and build on our use of PebblePad (see section 2.3.19) and will be piloted with students in 2012.

2.3.16 As it becomes available to a growing cohort of students, completion of the Edinburgh Award will be visible on the HEAR, and will go some way to addressing the equality and diversity (E&D) issues that are inevitably identified by the addition of section 6.1 of the HEAR.

## Personal (and professional) development planning

2.3.17 The ELIR Report (2006, para 174) noted: "A variety of effective personal development planning (PDP) schemes is in place within particular schools and the University has operated a number of PDP initiatives over the last decade but, as yet, progress towards introducing a University-wide arrangement has been slow." We were encouraged to "...make more rapid progress with institution-wide implementation in order that the benefits of its introduction can be realised by all students."

2.3.18 We have excellent examples of PDP across the University. In CMVM Personal and Professional Development Planning (PPDP) is a requirement of the external accrediting bodies for the professional programmes of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine. The aim is to ensure that at graduation the successful student is able to demonstrate a reflective, self-directed approach to the ongoing study and practice of medicine or veterinary medicine, in order that the graduate can enhance patient care, maximise effectiveness and enjoy career-satisfaction. The portfolio is a personal record of documentary evidence, reflection and self-audit that allows students to keep a working record of their progress towards becoming a professional and a reflective practitioner throughout their time at the University.

2.3.19 In 2009/10 the University procured PebblePad as its institutional e-portfolio system and it has been available to all staff and students via MyEd since the start of 2010/11. We anticipate that progress with PDP will develop at a faster pace in the future. We acknowledge that PebblePad is not an end in itself but a means to an end, and it must be embedded in the student experience to have the greatest

impact on learning and teaching. This is an important finding of an evaluation study conducted by CHSS of a number of PDP pilot projects<sup>40</sup>. The focus of support and development activities now is on working with school/course teams to develop tools and resources tailored to the local context, which can then be closely linked to course activities. In the first two months of rollout, Information Services worked with 15 courses to embed use of PebblePad. This number continues to grow: in January 2011 we had 5,525 users but would consider only about 30 per cent of those to be active.

- 2.3.20 Our adoption of PebblePad is timely and coincides with a number of other PDP-related activities such as graduate attributes and HEAR. Through PebblePad we can interlink these various activities and make them more relevant to students. For example, we have replaced the 'off-the-shelf' graduate skills profile tool with a single graduate attributes profile matching the University graduate attributes, and complemented with a MyEdGE webfolio to provide contextual background and prompts for reflection. This resource introduces users to the University-wide Graduate Attributes Framework and stimulates their reflection on their aspirations and development achieved. This process can be self-directed and/or integrated into students' formal learning experiences, as happens, for example, as part of tutorials within the Business School in a compulsory year one class. The interlinking of various PDP-related activities is a key focus of our INTEGRATE project (INTERlinking and Embedding GRaduate ATtributes at Edinburgh) as part of the HEA ScotPID Programme<sup>41</sup>.

### **Postgraduate researcher employability and skills development**

- 2.3.21 The ELIR Report (2006, para 172) acknowledged the considerable work the University had undertaken in the area of graduate skills development and the national reputation the University had achieved.
- 2.3.22 The development of transferable and professional skills for PGR students has been facilitated by Roberts funding and led by the transkills programme. Roberts funding has supported the development of extensive University and School-level skills training workshops, as well as an innovative researcher-led fund (see box 2.3). The University was short-listed for four years running in the Times Higher Outstanding Support for Early Career Researchers Award, and was awarded the HR Excellence in Research Award by the European Commission in 2011<sup>42</sup>. With the end of ring-fenced Roberts funding from the Research Councils in 2010/11 the future security and sustainability of this important area of support has been secured through the establishment of the IAD. Ongoing University commitment to this area is further illustrated by the inclusion of a target to "double the recorded number of skills training and development opportunities taken up by PGR students" in the Strategic Plan.
- 2.3.23 Roberts funding from the Research Councils has been used to raise the profile of PhD student employability across the University. The funding has been used to develop dedicated PhD support within the Careers Service and run careers focussed workshops through transkills (including the Edinburgh local GRADschool and Career Strategies for PhD Students) and in several schools and at college level (e.g. the CMVM Summer School on enterprise and entrepreneurship).

<sup>40</sup>Personal Development Planning, LTC 09/10 4J: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/2009-10/20100323Agenda.pdf>

<sup>41</sup>Scottish PDP Institutional Development Programme (ScotPID): <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/scotland/ourwork/institutional/pdp>

<sup>42</sup>HR Excellence Award: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/research-roles/research-only-staff/advice/concordat/hr-award>

- 2.3.24 The establishment of the new Principal's Career Development Scholarships scheme reflects the importance of career development within PhD programmes. Whilst all University PhD students have access to a wide range of professional and career development opportunities this scheme allows scholarship holders to focus in more depth on a specific career area (such as university teaching, public engagement, enterprise and entrepreneurship). Alongside their main PhD research project students will be provided with training and development opportunities tailored to their career area. The first cohort of 50 scholarship holders joined the University in September 2010 and their progress and experience will be monitored and supported during the three year PhD study period.
- 2.3.25 The University's commitment in this area is also reflected in its hosting of the Vitae Hub for Scotland and Northern Ireland and the inclusion of PhD careers in college supervisor briefing events. Work is, however, still needed to improve PhD student and supervisor awareness of the PhD employability and employer engagement agenda. This is a significant national as well as local issue (as discussed in the Research Councils UK independent review of Roberts).

### **Employer engagement**

- 2.3.26 Employers consistently rank Edinburgh graduates as highly employable. The University ranked 26 in the QS World University Rankings 2010<sup>43</sup>.

#### **Box 2.3: Researcher-led initiative fund<sup>44</sup>**

A special University of Edinburgh fund for researcher-led initiatives has enabled PhD students and research staff to establish a wide range of innovative, tailored, local projects which focus on development opportunities for fellow researchers. In many cases these are collaborative initiatives, building links between disciplines and between research staff and PhD students. All are focussed on the career and professional development of research students and staff, with an emphasis on skills development and application.

Activities supported through the fund include workshops and conferences, an arts-science collective, societies of researchers, science outreach events in local schools, as well as networks to support collaboration, interconnectivity between individuals and career development.

In addition to the main outputs of each initiative, a key benefit of the scheme has been the skills developed by applicants as a result of devising, applying for, managing and reporting on the initiative. Examples of projects funded through the initiative include:

'Encounters - An Intercultural CD of New Music'—The community of PhD Music Composition students at the University are working in partnership to realise a common career goal; the production of a professional quality CD of their work. Students are developing and experiencing an array of transferable skills beyond music creation, for example, managerial, financial, accounting, computing, marketing, administrative, and editorial skills.

Festival of Legal Theory I and II – PhD students in the School of Law have organised two Festivals of Legal Theory in association with researchers from Political Science and Philosophy. Skills developed through participation in, and organisation of, these events include presentation, communication, organisational, team working, networking, and collaboration, together with plenty of opportunities for confidence building.

<sup>43</sup>QS World University Rankings 2010: <http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2010/indicator-rankings/employer-review>

<sup>44</sup>Researcher-led Initiative Fund: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/researcher-development/staff/researcher-led-activities/initiative-fund>

2.3.27 Engagement with employers occurs in a variety of ways across the University at the discipline level, for example: explicit involvement in curriculum design within the professional programmes; industrial placements in the School of Chemistry; the use of work-related learning such as case studies within the School of Engineering; and centrally offered employer presentations and workshops through the Careers Service. Recent enhancements include employers participating in the final presentation stage of a core course for third year Business Studies students and inputting to a professional skills programme within Veterinary Medicine.

### **EUSA student volunteering service<sup>45</sup>**

2.3.28 EUSA secured funding to provide a student volunteering service in mid-2010. Since that time, the service (housed within a resource centre in Potterrow) has linked over 200 students with volunteering opportunities in the local community, working directly with 50 organisations, from the Scouts and the National Trust for Scotland to smaller grassroots organisations like community cafes. From 2011/12, the service will also be running an Introduction to your Community taster volunteering scheme for up to 50 home and international students, who will volunteer to assist with local community events. It is hoped that in the second semester these 50 trainee volunteers will be confident enough then to sign up for a regular volunteering role with one of our partners.

2.3.29 Feeling connected with the wider community is just one of the ways volunteering can enhance the student experience and employability. Some of the unusual volunteering experiences on offer have included being a volunteer weaver or knitter at a local homelessness project on the Grassmarket, a one-to-one IT 'buddy' for a retired person and helping with kayaking at a Quadrathlon. There are also course-related opportunities that actively enhance learning. Many volunteers in the Business School are currently volunteering as finance and marketing assistants in their spare time, putting into practice the theories that they are learning through their formal academic studies. The service has also placed six archaeology volunteers into a volunteering project run by the National Trust's head of archaeology and created exclusively for University students. This kind of 'service learning' adds a whole new dimension to academic study, as theoretical and academic knowledge are translated into real, hands-on understanding.

2.3.30 It is important to students that their higher education experience is relevant to the needs of today's society, and equips them for their future lives and careers. Ensuring students can access a range of formal and less formal opportunities to engage with the public through volunteering provides students with a much richer experience, and develops employability and life skills.

### **Comment**

2.3.31 The University has made excellent progress with the employability agenda. With the ending of SFC Learning to Work 1 funding during 2010/11 we have used the re-named ESG to set out a broad strategy for future work on employability. This was refined at the May 2011 Senate committees away-day and supported through funding to extend the Consultancy and explore options for the development of an Edinburgh Award during 2011/12. We have made good progress with

<sup>45</sup>EUSA student volunteering service: <http://volunteering.eusa.ed.ac.uk>

graduate attributes and developments are increasing in pace and include a growing understanding of the attributes of PGT and PGR students. Momentum has also increased with PDP and we now have a standard platform from which developments can take place across the University.

## **2.4 The effectiveness of our approach to managing the learning environment**

2.4.1 Our UG and PG learning environments are mainly a blend of the digital with the physical, reflecting both the campus-based nature of the majority of our programmes and the technology-rich nature of the University as a world-class research institution. Infrastructure is very well developed in scale and reliability - on a par with our UK peers in library, e-learning and IT areas - and underpins learning in classrooms, study spaces and via the internet.

2.4.2 For example:

- secure wireless access, through eduroam, is available at all University wi-fi access points;
- almost all teaching rooms of 50 seats and over are well-equipped with AV & IT equipment;
- the majority of UG courses use a VLE (either the central WebCT/Blackboard or the Medicine/Vet Medicine EEMeC/EEVeC) that are accessed regularly by almost all students;
- most students access their learning materials, including VLEs and the digital library, via MyEd, which registers millions of logins per annum.

2.4.3 Examples of significant developments in the learning environment in the past few years and since the last ELIR have included:

- significant investment in the estate such as the ongoing redevelopment of the University's Main Library including innovative hi-tech, group-study 'pods';
- an e-portfolio service (PebblePad);
- a video-conference virtual classroom;
- a lecture capture and replay service (CapturEd);
- expansion of selected digital readings (e-reserve);
- a virtual worlds service (including graduations);
- laptop e-exams;
- student mobile computing services.

Some of these are detailed further in the following sections.

### **Approach to managing the learning environment**

2.4.4 Infrastructure investment and development of the knowledge-based/IT learning environment is overseen by a Court committee (Knowledge Strategy Committee) with sub-committees in IT, Library and e-Learning, all convened by the Vice-Principal Knowledge Management and all of which have student representation. The University's Strategic Plan guides the strategies and implementation plans in these separate areas, and progress in them is reported annually. College-level committees address more local aspects and feed into the University-level committees.

- 2.4.5 The University's estates management and strategy is overseen by the Estates Committee (EC), reporting to Court, with a Space Management Group (SMG). SMG reports to EC and is concerned specifically with the efficient usage of all categories of space within the estate.
- 2.4.6 For many years learning, teaching and study spaces were provided and managed in a hybrid fashion. Two key developments have taken place to address this:
- the formation in 2006 of the Learning and Teaching Spaces Advisory Group (LTSAG)<sup>46</sup> to provide a holistic approach to the current requirements and future development of learning and teaching spaces;
  - the Shared Academic Timetabling Project (SATP)<sup>47</sup> (established in February 2010) that seeks to improve the effectiveness of learning and teaching spaces management across the University. The SATP is in the early stages of development and is managed from Academic Registry.
- 2.4.7 LTSAG is a multidisciplinary forum bringing together estates staff, Information Services staff, the Vice-Principals for Academic Enhancement and Knowledge Management, academic staff from the three colleges and the EUSA Vice-President (Academic Affairs). It follows many of the principles laid down in the SFC and JISC/HEFCE reports on learning space development. LTSAG recommends standards and proposes strategies and plans to ensure good quality infrastructure for all aspects of learning, teaching and study spaces, advises central services in their prioritisation of investment and is consulted on the learning space aspects of all capital projects.
- 2.4.8 LTSAG reports directly to SMG with an additional direct line to EC and a further requirement to report to LTC as appropriate (the Convenor of LTC being an ex-officio member of LTSAG).
- 2.4.9 As an illustration of its activities, LTSAG appointed a former EUSA Vice-President (Academic Affairs) 2006/07 to undertake its 'Learning, Teaching & Study Spaces Project' with the aim of "learning from the learning and teaching space developments across the sector, reviewing existing learning spaces in the University and considering future aspirations for development." As part of this project LTSAG organised a day-long University workshop in January 2007 (attended by 80 staff including the Principal and a number of Vice-Principals) to raise awareness of sector-wide developments and to seek views on the new ideas. This work formed the basis for a discussion paper<sup>48</sup> which went to the Academic Policy Committee (APC) in April 2008. In February 2009, LTSAG coordinated a special meeting of Senate at which projects were showcased. Subsequently it has developed a set of Guiding Principles for Development of the Learning & Teaching Estate<sup>49</sup> which have been endorsed by EC and LTC (May 2010) and are due to return to Senate. They will form the basis for future strategy development and have already informed the University Estates Strategy (2010-2020)<sup>50</sup>.

### Development of the physical learning and teaching environment

- 2.4.10 The University has a policy of upgrading learning spaces as part of major capital refurbishment projects and has made significant investment in the learning and teaching environment since the last ELIR. Investment of approximately £317million

<sup>46</sup>Learning and Teaching Spaces Advisory Group (LTSAG): <http://www.ltsag.isg.ed.ac.uk/>

<sup>47</sup>Shared Timetabling at the University of Edinburgh: A white paper, LTC 10/11 2P: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/2010-11/20101103AgendaPapers.pdf>

<sup>48</sup>Report of the Learning, Teaching and Study Space project, APC 07/08 4 A1: <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/105554389/20080410AgendaPapers.pdf?version=1>

<sup>49</sup>Guiding Principles for the Development of the Learning and Teaching Estate: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/2009-10/20100323Agenda.pdf>

<sup>50</sup>The University of Edinburgh Estate Strategy, 2010-2020: <http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EstatesBuildings/Strategies/EstateStrategy.pdf>

in major estates projects between 2005/06 and 2009/10 has provided many new facilities and modernised many existing learning and teaching spaces. We estimate that over 40 per cent (£132million) has been invested directly in learning and teaching spaces.

- 2.4.11 Many successful projects have been delivered<sup>51</sup> including, for example, the Main Library Refurbishment Project, the development of the Adam Ferguson Building for the Business School, the new Veterinary School at Easter Bush, and the Edinburgh Centre on Climate Change.
- 2.4.12 Additionally a rolling refurbishment/upgrade budget is allocated; initially for large lecture theatres, but now including other types of spaces. LTSAG advises on the deployment of a central budget of £300,000 per annum which is available for the refurbishment of centrally managed teaching spaces and, as described in Case Study A, it has taken the opportunity to support several innovative projects.

### *Library buildings*

- 2.4.13 Since the last ELIR in 2006, the University has committed to investing £60 million in the redevelopment of the Main Library building to provide a learning environment appropriate for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The vision of the redevelopment project is to create the Main Library as an intellectual hub, supporting learning in a research-rich environment.
- 2.4.14 Since 2005 students have been closely involved with the planning of the redevelopment and have participated in focus groups and evaluation of the six out of eight floors completed. Students have responded well to the redevelopment, with increases in usage being significant. Between 2008/09 and 2009/10, when the ground and first floors were completed, usage<sup>51</sup> of the Main Library increased by around 50 per cent, with further increases of around 33 per cent in 2010/11. This has led to challenges with heavy use at peak times. To address this we are adding in more seats and working with EUSA to find suitable solutions. For example, we have committed to redesignating space originally intended for staff to students and books, although this will not be completed until summer 2013.
- 2.4.15 Key to the success of the redevelopment has been the creation of a variety of study spaces, zoned and controlled through signs indicating the expected 'menu of behaviour' in each area. This provides students with increased choice about where to work, depending on the nature of their work. For example, the Library now offers 'silent spaces', 'quiet spaces', and spaces where talking is the norm. On the advice of focus groups, the silent study spaces have been located in parts of the Library that take longer to reach compared with the easily accessible general study spaces, ensuring that those spaces are preserved for silent study. The usage patterns indicate that the quiet places are the most popular, particularly just before exams. Consequently, we are installing more of this type of space to respond to demand. Another feature of the redevelopment is the 'study pods' (see box 2.4).
- 2.4.16 Recently we introduced an area of silent space dedicated to PG students. It is our intention to expand this when we have more study space available from 2013, and to hold focus groups with PG students to ensure that this meets their needs. The IS Website<sup>52</sup> includes up-to-date information on the Library redevelopment including information on any disruption caused by the ongoing building work.

<sup>51</sup>Estates and Buildings, Completed Projects: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/estates-buildings/about/completed-projects/overview>

<sup>52</sup>Main Library Redevelopment Project (MLRP): <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/services/library-museum-gallery/using-library/mlrp>

This latter information is also communicated to students via other channels to minimise the impact on them.

- 2.4.17 The Main Library has other facilities, including a popular Library Café, which also functions as an informal work area; three student services (Careers, Counselling and Disability) moved in during summer 2011; exhibition space; and a number of artworks.

#### **Box 2.4: Study pods: supporting collaborative learning**

A special feature of the Library redevelopment is the group-study 'pods'. There are 30 pods, for group discussions in semi-enclosed spaces. Students were closely involved in the development of the concept. Each pod has a computer and screen, the ability to connect laptops for display on the screen, and for six people to listen via earphones. There tends to be fairly rapid turnover with groups forming and re-forming during the day, so there is no booking system. These pods are used imaginatively by groups of students preparing for group projects, for language exercises, by students who like to work beside others and for exam revision in groups.

- 2.4.18 We continue to reflect on the success of the Main Library and to improve the facilities. We are holding a series of focus groups towards the end of 2010/11 which will feed into developments for 2011/12. The Main Library is the largest of the University libraries. There are currently 13 other subject libraries, located within schools. We are rolling out the lessons of the Main Library redevelopment to other libraries across the campus. We are currently working on the completion of the Easter Bush Veterinary Library and building a new Kings Buildings Library (for completion in summer 2012), details of which can be found in Case Study A.

### **Development of the IT environment**

- 2.4.19 The technology-rich environment enables students to be much more flexible with time and place of study, to be supported whilst off-campus, and to develop up-to-date study and work skills. At PGT level we support distance learners through courses specifically designed for them, the majority in CMVM which reach medical and para-medical professionals worldwide (see Case Study C). Some of these courses have high levels of innovation in pedagogy and the use of leading edge internet software, for example the MSc in e-Learning in Education.

#### *MyEd*

- 2.4.20 MyEd<sup>53</sup> is the University's web portal. Launched initially in January 2004, it provides staff, students and alumni with a personalised, secure gateway to web-based services within the University and beyond. It is particularly useful to students in providing easy access to features such as: personal and registration details; programme and course information; examination results; EUSA events; news and discussion; personal and shared announcements; VLE access; library access; and other general services. Of our 28,000 students, 87 per cent use MyEd regularly averaging more than 10 logins each per week. It is available worldwide, at any time, to all University students, following their offer of an unconditional place of study.

<sup>53</sup>MyEd: <https://www.myed.ed.ac.uk/>

*Digital learning environment*

- 2.4.21 Since their introduction in the late 1990's, the University's VLEs have formed the backbone of the online learning and teaching systems used widely across the campus. Almost all courses use technology; some do so intensively and others more sparingly.
- 2.4.22 The VLEs, and their integrated student administration core, include features for content provision, including e-submission, grade-books and discussion forums. In addition, there is also a wide range of further e-learning applications in use that make up the wider digital learning environment (DLE). The applications in use include: e-portfolios; virtual worlds; wikis; blogs; e-assessment (objective tests and essay style e-exams); plagiarism-checking; a virtual classroom; and podcasts (some in iTunesU and YouTube). Not all services are operated within the University: some are procured as externally-hosted (such as the PebblePad e-portfolio), and some are only available 'in the cloud' (such as YouTube, Googledocs). Guidance in the use of the latter is updated regularly.
- 2.4.23 Underpinning the whole DLE is a very extensive digital library, which is essential to a modern, research-informed degree. Direct links from VLEs to the digital library make compiling reading lists and accessing digital publications easier.
- 2.4.24 The various components of the DLE are provided by Information Services, college services (such as Learning Technology Service in CMVM) and various levels of direct support in some schools. This range of support enables close understanding of the pedagogical and technological needs of a very diverse academic community. It also provides a sensible balance between innovation and stability of services against a backdrop of rapid development of new and useful applications from the Internet.
- 2.4.25 This rich DLE will also be crucial in the University's planned ten-fold expansion of online distance education from the current approximately 800 students. In addition, online student support will be expanded to provide the same quality of service off-campus as on-campus via web-based interfaces (see section 2.2.22).
- 2.4.26 Keeping up with the rapid change in opportunities for using online methods for learning and teaching continues to be a challenge to busy academic staff. More support staff with expertise in e-learning have been appointed centrally and in schools, and support for the whole e-learning community is provided by the e-Learning Professionals & Practitioners' Forum (eLPP) which is an active and successful community of practice. eLPP organises regular informal events, including the annual eLearning@Edinburgh conference. It is underpinned by support and finance from the Vice Principal Knowledge Management.

### Box 2.5: Live lecture capture 'CapturEd'

In 2008/09, under the direction of the Vice-Principal Knowledge Management, IS piloted a Lecture Capture project in a small number of locations to record live lectures for students to be able to watch and listen to again at a later date. The system used automatically records audio, screen capture and a video of the lecturer speaking at the scheduled time. Beyond using the microphone no special action is required by the lecturer during the course of the lecture.

Lecture capture is viewed as a valuable supplement to lecture attendance, particularly for students for whom English is not a first language, for students requiring additional support or with specific learning difficulties, and for revision.

The experience of those who participated in the pilot was positive with 73 per cent of staff involved stating they would record lectures again and 90 per cent of students supporting the concept<sup>54</sup>. There is some debate as to the degree of usefulness of the video recording of the lecturer (as opposed to only audio plus presentation), especially given the additional cost and effort required to capture video and presentation simultaneously. As of yet subtitles are not automatically added. However, there is the provision to request subtitling to be added on a lecture-by-lecture basis.

Following the pilot the project has now moved to service and is called 'CapturEd'. There are now 12 equipped locations with three more due in 2010/11. Early 2010/11 figures show that roughly 40 events per location were captured in the first semester with 12,000 views or downloads during October 2010 alone. The majority of use has been on UG programmes, although PG usage is increasing, and the majority of access has taken place during the exam revision period.

In response to suggestions from numerous academic staff to have a location where Lecture Capture video files could be placed for students and externals to find them, IS and Communications and Marketing negotiated agreements with YouTube and iTunesU in 2008/09.

EUSA and the wider student body have applauded the use of this facility and see it as a vital development to the accessibility of teaching at the University.

## Student involvement

- 2.4.27 The Academic Services Liaison Group (ASLG), organised and chaired by EUSA, meets several times each year and promotes discussion of issues of immediate concern to both IS and EUSA, enabling problems to be addressed promptly, and impending or potential service changes to be discussed. It is a very productive forum and is particularly helpful in dealing with building-planning-related issues. During 2007/08 this group was involved in the development of the study pods which have proven so popular in the Main Library.
- 2.4.28 Each year the IS senior management team holds pre-planning-round talks with EUSA (comparable to those with the colleges and support groups) to make EUSA officials aware of the likely major developments that IS plans to put forward, and for EUSA to make IS aware of what changes to facilities and services it would like

<sup>54</sup>Lecture Capture Pilot Project Report: [http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/areas/itservices/media/APS019/Lecture\\_Capture\\_Pilot\\_Report.pdf](http://www.projects.ed.ac.uk/areas/itservices/media/APS019/Lecture_Capture_Pilot_Report.pdf)

to see, and not see, take place in the coming year. These are very constructive planning discussions that are of value to both parties.

- 2.4.29 EUSA have active representation on the Library, IT and eLearning Committees, and are therefore party to discussions about future developments and resolving any problems that have arisen in these areas. Where possible we aim to have UG and PG representation, the latter becoming of increasing importance with the steady rise in PGT students.
- 2.4.30 In recognition of the limitations of formal approaches to gathering student views, given the problems for representatives of speaking for a diverse student population, IS gathers information directly from samples of the appropriate student communities through surveys, focus groups and interviews. These have proven to be very useful in providing more robust and in-depth data. Examples of this approach are in the design of the floors of the refurbished Main Library, the provision of water and vending facilities in microlabs, 24hr opening of facilities, the IS training courses offered and the format in which they are provided, and expansion of the MyEd portal facilities. IS also initiated discussions with the other direct student services and EUSA to assess the best ways to communicate with our multiple student communities which should result in a more joined-up approach to this activity between the services.

#### *'Pimp my School'*

- 2.4.31 In 2009/10 EUSA, in conjunction with the University, ran a competition called 'Pimp my School', to provide an opportunity for students to identify and submit ideas for spaces within the University's buildings that could benefit from improvement. A proposal to upgrade the Crush Hall area in the School of Engineering was chosen as the winner from 36 entries across the University. The winning entry was subsequently taken on as a funded project by the University to provide a new and relaxing environment for students in 2010/11. The LTSAG has approved another round of the competition for 2011/12.

#### **Comment**

- 2.4.32 The University has developed an effective approach to the management of the learning environment, including the physical estate and the IT/IS infrastructure. Significant developments have taken place to the learning and teaching environment since the last ELIR. Lessons learned from projects are being employed in subsequent projects to enhance the development. The condition of some teaching spaces, in particular spaces with a capacity of fewer than 50, still requires investment, which will be a challenge to the University given the economic climate we find ourselves in.

## **2.5 The effectiveness of our approach to promoting equality of opportunity and effective learning for all of our students**

- 2.5.1 We strive to build a culture which supports inclusion, celebrates difference, challenges prejudice and promotes fairness. Within this context we are committed to widening participation, increasing diversity and providing equality of opportunity for all prospective and current students.

- 2.5.2 Promoting equality, diversity, sustainability and social responsibility is a strategic theme in the University's Strategic Plan. We have had a Vice-Principal Equality and Diversity (E&D) since 2007, the first such appointment in Higher Education in Scotland. This appointment reflects the University's strong commitment to E&D as evidenced in the developments outlined in this section.
- 2.5.3 The University has had an E&D Strategy since 2003. The Strategy and its action plan are currently under review. As part of this we are also currently reviewing our Gender, Race and Disability Equality Schemes and the associated Action Plans with a view to incorporating these into the E&D Strategy and a single Action Plan.

### **E&D framework<sup>55</sup>**

- 2.5.4 The Vice-Principal Equality and Diversity has established separate action groups, including EUSA representatives as well as a cross-section of academic and administrative staff, to identify and progress action plans on gender, race and disability. These groups, combined with E&D coordinators in each school and college, aim to promote E&D in the University and incorporate E&D perspectives into all our activities. Key elements of the E&D framework are the:
- Equality and Diversity Management Board, convened by the Vice-Principal Equality and Diversity. This is the University's senior E&D management group and it is responsible for advising the Central Management Group (CMG), the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GPC) and Court, supporting the development of policy and strategy, setting management and operational priorities for E&D and monitoring delivery;
  - Equality and Diversity Committee, the overall aim of which is to promote the mainstreaming of E&D issues within the University. It achieves this by bringing together staff and students with interest and expertise in the area to discuss, advise on and take forward all aspects of policy and its implementation;
  - E&D coordinators in each school, whose role it is to promote E&D and to feed into college E&D structures and to the University E&D Committee and processes;
  - Gender Equality Scheme Implementation Group (GESIG), the establishment of which has already made a significant impact on enabling the University to embed gender equality into its operations, to promote the role of women in science, engineering and technology (SET) subjects, and more generally (for example, via the annual International Women's Day Lecture);
  - Disability Committee and the Disability Equality Scheme Implementation Group (DESIG), administered by the Student Disability Service;
  - Race Equality Action Group, that has proved invaluable in considering race matters in the University and identifying priorities for action;
  - The Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) (formerly the Equal Opportunities Technical Advisory Group (EOTAG)), that produces comprehensive statistical reports on the position of the University.

### **Widening participation**

- 2.5.5 We seek to attract a wide range of applicants from different social, cultural and educational backgrounds, including those who come from schools or colleges

<sup>55</sup>Equality and Diversity Framework: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.15436/file/Manager/framework\\_diagram.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.15436/file/Manager/framework_diagram.pdf)

where relatively few students progress to university, and those who will be the first generation of their families to become university students. We seek to encourage applications from students from all backgrounds who are currently under-represented in higher education.

2.5.6 The University has been at the forefront of the initiation, design and implementation of Widening Participation (WP) projects since the early 1990s and is a leader and innovator in this area. A comprehensive summary of all the University's WP activities is available on the University website<sup>56</sup>. Some of the key initiatives include:

- Pathways to the Professions<sup>57</sup>, a project providing information and guidance to school students interested in studying Law, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine or Architecture open to students from all 46 state schools in Edinburgh and the Lothians. This was highlighted as a best practice example in the Millburn Report 'Unleashing Aspiration' by the Cabinet Office Panel for Fair Access to the Professions in 2009;
- Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS)<sup>58</sup>, a partnership with the other higher education institutions in Edinburgh and the 4 local authorities in Edinburgh and the Lothians. It promotes higher education amongst young people whose school careers have been affected by adverse economic or social circumstances, or who come from communities with little or no experience of higher education;
- Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP)<sup>59</sup>, which brings together colleges and universities to work collaboratively on the development of access courses to address the needs of mature students from backgrounds which had previously been under-represented in higher education. The University's contribution to the programme includes a well-developed part-time access programme with Stevenson College<sup>60</sup> and its own Credit for Entry programme offered through the Office of Lifelong Learning<sup>61</sup>.

2.5.7 The published Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) performance indicators for students from under-represented groups show a year-on-year increase in entrants from state schools. The performance indicators for low participation neighbourhoods using postcode data no longer apply in Scotland. A particular challenge we face is encouraging more prospective students from under-represented groups to take advantage of the opportunities we offer.

2.5.8 We are committed to pre-application outreach to, and ongoing support and guidance for, prospective students who are or have been 'looked after or accommodated' by their local authority. The University has achieved the Frank Buttle Trust Quality Mark for good practice in this area.

2.5.9 EUSA, with support from the University, piloted a shadowing scheme in March 2011, the aims of which were:

- to give current S6 pupils from WP backgrounds, holding the offer of a place at the University, the chance to experience student life first hand;
- to enable them to spend time with current students studying similar disciplines, and get a student-eye view of the University;

<sup>56</sup>Widening Participation: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-recruitment/widening-participation>

<sup>57</sup>Pathways to the Professions: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-recruitment/widening-participation/projects/pathways-professions>

<sup>58</sup>Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS): <http://www.leapsonline.org/>

<sup>59</sup>Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP): <http://www.scottishwideraccess.org/index.php>

<sup>60</sup>Part-time Access Course: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/access-courses/access>

<sup>61</sup>Credit for Entry: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying/access-courses/credit>

- to provide an opportunity for them to experience the range of facilities on offer (including libraries, computing facilities, accommodation, support services and EUSA);
- to enable them to feel confident about their application to the University, and comfortable with the living, working and social environment;
- to ease participants' transition to study at the University.

### Access funding and bursaries

- 2.5.10 The University is able to offer a substantial number of access, accommodation and further education transition bursaries for students whose financial circumstances might be a barrier to their progress through university<sup>62</sup>. We work hard to ensure that bursaries are awarded to those students who meet the academic requirements for entry to the University but are most in need of financial support. Other factors, such as personal or family circumstances, are also taken into account. The bursaries also mean that students need to do less part-time work and so can concentrate more fully on their studies. Scholarships are also available for PGR students. Prior learning and life/work experience are taken into account when assessing applications. In addition, the expansion of existing alternative routes, such as part-time PhD study, is currently under consideration.
- 2.5.11 In 2009/10 the University allocated UG bursary funds of £775,000 to assist talented UK students who might have been deterred from starting their studies at the University due to lack of necessary financial resources. This provided 634 UG students with a bursary.
- 2.5.12 In 2009/10 the University awarded 54 accommodation bursaries, each with a value of £1,000. In 2011/12 the University will make up to 90 accommodation bursaries available.
- 2.5.13 Edinburgh Global Scholarships offer an extensive range of international awards to try to ensure that we attract the best and the brightest international students who may be constrained from study abroad due to resources. Some of these scholarships are targeted at developing nations, such as the Dr Julius Nyerere Scholarship for Tanzania and The Most Reverend Desmond Tutu Scholarship for The Republic of South Africa. The University also works with international organisations to provide targeted scholarships, including the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission and the China Scholarships Council.
- 2.5.14 A range of other financial assistance including hardship funds, childcare and disability funding is also available<sup>63</sup>.

### Students with disabilities

- 2.5.15 The number of students disclosing a disability has increased in percentage terms since our last ELIR (from around 5.7 per cent to 7.7 per cent between 2005/06 and 2009/10). Within this total we are witnessing more students disclosing specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia and autism. There has been a 91 per cent increase in the number of disabled international students during this period, compared with a 28 per cent increase in the number of international students

<sup>62</sup>Bursaries: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-funding/undergraduate/uk-eu/bursaries>

<sup>63</sup>Additional Financial Assistance: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-funding/financial-support/additional-financial-assistance>

overall. There has also been a very high percentage increase in the number of students disclosing mental health difficulties between 2005/06 and 2009/10 (209 per cent), although the absolute numbers remain low in the context of the total student population, at 142 in 2009/10. The Student Disability Service website<sup>64</sup> provides a detailed breakdown of the statistics according to type of disability by college and school.

- 2.5.16 The University allocated £57,860 from discretionary funds received from the Scottish Government to meet some of the costs of diagnostic assessments for dyslexic students, as these costs cannot be met from the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA).
- 2.5.17 The Student Disability Service recommends the necessary adjustments to support students in their learning. Adjustments are written into a Learning Profile. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that Learning Profiles are cascaded to the relevant programme organiser for implementation. In 2009/10 a total of 870 Learning Profiles were issued, 615 of which were new profiles, representing an increase of 31 per cent on the previous year. Ensuring effective implementation of such a large number of Learning Profiles is an ongoing challenge. The Teachability Task Group (see section 2.5.18) is attempting to address this by looking at ways in which common adjustments can be embedded into normal teaching and assessment practice.

### Teachability

- 2.5.18 At the time of our last ELIR the University was undertaking a number of activities in relation to Teachability, the process of creating an accessible curriculum and enabling environment for students with disabilities which aims to anticipate student needs and to create programmes that are 'accessible by design' to all students. As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting an inclusive curriculum, the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) established a Teachability Task Group<sup>65</sup> in 2010/11 to take a fresh look at Teachability and to ensure that our current policy and practice remains fit for purpose and contributes to the enhancement of the University's provision as being inclusive of all students. The work of the task group is currently ongoing. To develop work in this area further members of the task group submitted a successful application for the University to join the HEA's one year programme Developing an Inclusive Culture in Higher Education starting in February 2011.

### E&D monitoring

- 2.5.19 We have a robust framework for monitoring and analysing the E&D data about our students. The Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) has members from senior academic and administrative staff across the University. It produces annual reports in which data on both students and staff are analysed by age, disability, ethnicity and gender. EDMARC reports analyse both the intake of students and their outcomes. Recent reports have identified a 'highlight' issue for more focused analysis, such as student ethnicity in the 2007/8 report. Where issues arise they are investigated, with a view to action being taken. In 2010, EDMARC has enabled schools to look at E&D data at a local level.

<sup>64</sup>Student Disability Service, Facts and Figures: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/disability-office/about/facts-figures>

<sup>65</sup>Teachability Task Group remit, QAC 10/11 1D: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2010-11/20100909AgendaandPapers.pdf>

- 2.5.20 A particular area noted for development from the E&D coordinators and the Race Equality Action Group (REAG) is the support of international students, particularly those on one-year courses. We have recently developed a Dignity and Respect Policy covering staff and students. There are plans to provide short courses for academic and student services staff on 'Cultural Diversity in the University Community', which a number of staff have been trained to deliver.

### Comment

- 2.5.21 The University clearly demonstrates its commitment to E&D at a high level in its Strategic Plan and in the leadership and support through University structures. Our achievements in access and WP have been recognised externally. We have a number of mechanisms in place to support students to participate fully in University life, including support from the Student Disability Service and financial support. We have robust means of measuring and reporting E&D data and respond to the data appropriately. Ongoing activities, with regards to the promotion of a Dignity and Respect policy for all staff and students and our involvement in the one-year HEA programme, will further enhance our efforts in relation to E&D.

## 2.6 The effectiveness of our approach to supporting and developing staff to promote effective learning

- 2.6.1 The University has adopted a number of local and University-level approaches to supporting and developing staff. This includes formal orientation and CPD workshops, informal support in schools and programme teams, financial support for pedagogic or development work and other initiatives linked to the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) and college Learning and Teaching Strategies.
- 2.6.2 A significant development since the last ELIR has been the establishment of the IAD, providing an important opportunity to consolidate and coordinate University-level staff support in effective learning and teaching. This was previously provided by the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA), transkills and the Researcher Development Programme. This development was in direct response to the ELIR Report (2006, paras 149 & 178) which asked us to "...consider the extent to which the Centre [for Teaching, Learning and Assessment]'s training and staff development activities are sustainable in its current form and location."
- 2.6.3 Other notable recent developments include the EUSA Teaching Awards and associated Inspiring Teaching Conference, guiding principles and advice on areas such as feedback and academic and pastoral support, and ongoing work to recognise and reward excellence in teaching.

### The Institute for Academic Development

- 2.6.4 In 2009, the University conducted a fundamental review<sup>66</sup> of its provision in support of academic development, to meet the needs of both staff and students. The main recommendation of this review was the establishment of the IAD to bring centrally provided academic development and study skills support together into a single organisation.

<sup>66</sup>Review of Teaching and Learning Support for Staff and Students at the University of Edinburgh, June 2009, LTC 09/10 1B (Closed Paper). Paper copy available.

- 2.6.5 Restructuring linked to the establishment of the IAD began in January 2010 ready for the formal launch of the IAD at the start of 2011/12. During 2010/11 support has continued to be provided through the pre-existing structures. Work is underway to review and refresh the provision of staff support and development opportunities from the IAD, with new opportunities being developed alongside existing programmes of support and training. Bringing responsibility for the strategic leadership and direction of academic development under the auspices of a single dedicated unit means that it will be possible to ensure an improved level of development provision which far more closely matches the individual needs of academic staff and University and college strategic priorities.
- 2.6.6 The IAD is hosted by CHSS and housed in a new central location from which it provides a University-wide service for staff and students in all three colleges, working closely with other support services and schools.
- 2.6.7 The work of the IAD includes: the orientation of new academic and teaching staff, as well as a range of CPD workshops and other events; dissemination of best practice in teaching and supervision; promotion of student study-skills; professional and transferable skills development for PhD students and researchers; and the development of innovative strategies in teaching and assessment. This is complemented by leadership training provided by HR and a range of College events and networks, as well as events and professional networks focused on particular areas or topics (such as the annual eLearning@Edinburgh Conference).
- 2.6.8 A particularly innovative feature of the IAD is the opportunity for colleagues from schools and support units to work in collaboration with the IAD through secondments. A small number of secondments are being piloted during 2010/11 and as of March 2011 there were eight secondees. The results are already encouraging and we plan to increase and potentially double this number for 2011/12. Secondments are providing an opportunity for staff to build stronger links between local effective learning initiatives and strategic University and IAD activities.
- 2.6.9 Resources for staff and associated events (organised by the IAD and others) are also targeted on specific University strategic priorities or the work of Senate committee task groups. Recent examples include a range of activities to promote and enhance feedback in support of the work of the LTC's Feedback Task Group (including the development and promulgation of University Standards and Guiding Principles on feedback and an extensive Enhancing Feedback website) and to promote and enhance pastoral and academic support (including the development of new workshops for academic and other staff in support of the pastoral and academic support Standards and Guiding Principles).

### *Support for new staff*

- 2.6.10 In June 2007 the University introduced a new Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching<sup>67</sup>. The Certificate includes an orientation to University teaching for academic and other staff supporting learning and teaching who are new to the University. A total of 281 staff registered for the orientation to University teaching sessions between June 2007 and December 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching: <http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/courses/PGCert/index.htm>

- 2.6.11 Schools also provide a range of orientation arrangements for new staff, including mentoring and lower teaching loads, particularly for early career teaching staff in their first year of teaching to provide development time.

*Support for existing staff*

- 2.6.12 The Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching provides an opportunity for more experienced staff to broaden and enhance their teaching expertise through a range of modules (including assessment, course design, organisation and management, student diversity, autonomy and engagement, learning and teaching online, and the disciplinary dimensions of teaching). There have been more than 800 registrations for individual modules since June 2007. The Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching is accredited by the HEA so that award holders are automatically eligible to become Fellows of the Academy. As at March 2011 a total of 32 staff have graduated and a further 33 staff are currently matriculated.
- 2.6.13 From December 2011 the Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching will be known as the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, externally accredited by the HEA against Standard Descriptor 2 of the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education. A key change is to broaden its focus more generally to academic practice by including two new modules linked to research leadership and modifications to assessment arrangements. The Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice will continue to be awarded through the School of Education and taught through the IAD with active contributions from experienced University teachers and researchers.
- 2.6.14 In addition to an annual eLearning@Edinburgh Conference the IAD usually organises at least one large, thematic symposium each year with a mix of internal and external speakers, as well as learning and teaching forums.
- 2.6.15 Online and printed resources are an important element of support for staff, particularly when time is short. IAD handbooks and guides continue to be accessed online.
- 2.6.16 Colleges and schools also organise a range of staff development events, for example the peer feedback session organised by CSE in December 2010. Informal support from colleagues within schools or programmes and connections within disciplinary networks are further important elements of staff support.

*CPD*

- 2.6.17 During 2011 the IAD will take part in an HEA project looking at the accreditation of CPD for academic and teaching staff. This is part of a major review and renewal of current IAD and University CPD provision.
- 2.6.18 While there is a broad range of CPD opportunities available to staff, the establishment of the IAD and participation in the HEA accreditation of CPD project provides the University with an important opportunity to review and extend this provision. Particular priorities will be to use the IAD as a vehicle for supporting the development of CPD tailored to college and University priorities and to have greater involvement of school staff in University and college-level learning and teaching enhancement activities.

- 2.6.19 More focused CPD workshops and events include new sessions on teaching linguistically and culturally diverse classes, supporting students with disabilities and new workshops for DoSs.

*Support for PhD Supervisors*

- 2.6.20 Under the remit previously held by transkills the IAD works with colleges and schools to organise a series of supervisor briefing events (around 12 events each year). Over the last four years more than 1,500 staff have attended a supervisor briefing event and it is a University requirement that all supervisors should attend an event at least once every five years. The aims of these events are: to provide supervisors with information on what is expected from them by the University, funding bodies and students (including regulations and administrative structures); to provide an opportunity to hear from experienced supervisors; and to reflect on the supervision of PhD students including what is needed at each stage and how to deal with the challenges this presents. Consideration is given to support for supervisors and supporting students to take advantage of skills training, career advice and other development opportunities. Contributors include graduate school directors and other experienced supervisors along with college office and IAD staff. The events include a mix of short presentations, a case study discussion, and a question and answer session. School-level sessions follow broadly the same structure as college-level sessions but are tailored to address school-specific issues (such as submission rates, local training and monitoring arrangements) and are organised at a time and location suited to the school.

*Support for tutors, demonstrators and casual teaching staff*

- 2.6.21 The University employs a large number of tutors and demonstrators in teaching, in particular PGR students. The ELIR Report (2006, paras 124 & 173) urged the University to "...ensure that all students who fulfil a teaching role undertake the training which is provided and that they receive ongoing support for their teaching activity." A paper was presented to the Principal's Strategy Group (PSG) on 20 November 2007 as a result of which Heads of Colleges agreed in principle to ensure awareness of this requirement across their Heads of Schools. Tutor training and development will form the subject of an LTC task group in 2011/12.
- 2.6.22 The IAD provides a wide range of support for tutors and demonstrators including orientation courses for first-time tutors, demonstrators, markers and field demonstrators as well as courses for more advanced development. Schools provide additional support as required for local teaching requirements. For example, the School of Biological Sciences' tutors are required to attend a tailored induction session to prepare them specifically for teaching in the laboratory environment. The session also includes preparation, marking, feedback, general good practice and safety in the laboratory. The School of Economics runs a weekly lunchtime session bringing together tutors, course organisers and lecturing staff. These sessions provide a useful forum for mentoring, discussing problems, sharing good practice and training and guidance.
- 2.6.23 Since the last ELIR Roberts funding has been used to increase and enhance<sup>68</sup> support for graduate teaching assistants, tutors and laboratory demonstrators

<sup>68</sup>Principal's Teaching Award Scheme: <http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/centre/PrincipalsTeachingAward/PrincipalsTeachingAward.htm>

<sup>69</sup>Support for Tutors and Demonstrators: <http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/services/tutdems/documents/webintro.htm>

through the IAD. This has included support for more schools to develop local induction for tutors and demonstrators. This complements ongoing central orientation sessions, new enhanced development workshops for more experienced tutors and demonstrators who are especially interested in developing their teaching experiences further, and the development and promotion of an extensive set of reference and programme materials for tutors and demonstrators in WebCT.

### *Support for Directors of Studies and other support staff*

- 2.6.24 DoSs and others in equivalent roles have access to a number of web-based publications, for example Helping Distressed Students and the Handbook for Directors of Studies<sup>70</sup>. The Counselling Service, in association with the Student Disability Service, provides a course entitled the caring DoS, focusing particularly on the needs of students who may be experiencing mental distress. DoSs are provided with annual college and school briefings and update events, as well as college-specific and school-specific web pages. In many schools additional informal support is offered by Senior DoSs and peers. In some schools in CHSS, SSOs offer support and training sessions to DoSs. SSOs across the College meet regularly and arrange cross-college seminars with speakers from support services.
- 2.6.25 To complement these activities, and in response to the new Standards and Guiding Principles document (see section 2.2.13), the IAD is currently piloting three strands of support and development activities for DoSs, SSOs and other staff who offer academic and pastoral care: an event in each college to acknowledge and celebrate the work that is being done and to encourage networking; a series of cross-university workshops<sup>71</sup> designed to spread good practice and consider topics including finding your feet, maintaining appropriate boundaries and sources of support; and an online café providing easy access to relevant information as well as opportunities for community-building.

### *Principal's Teaching Award Scheme*

- 2.6.26 The Principal's Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) provides an important opportunity for staff to apply for grants for either discipline-specific pedagogical research projects or development projects aimed at enhancing teaching, learning or assessment practices within their school. The scheme was approved by the Development Trust in May 2007. An important feature of the Award is that it does not reward past excellence in teaching but encourages better understanding of student learning through pedagogical innovation and research. The level of funding allocated to the Scheme for 2010/11 is £110,000. Details of current and past projects are published on the website<sup>68</sup>.

## **HR leadership development**

- 2.6.27 Another major area of importance to promoting effective learning is leadership development, which is led by Corporate HR through an extensive range of programmes, workshops and other interventions designed to help staff develop specific skills in leading and managing people. The University recognises that excellent academic leadership is essential to ensuring excellence in learning and teaching. This has particular resonance in a University which offers one of the largest ranges of academic disciplines in the UK, across both UG and PG

<sup>70</sup>Guiding and Supporting Students: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/resources/institute-resources>

<sup>71</sup>Academic and pastoral Support Network: <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/insacdev/Academic+and+Pastoral+Support+Network>

educational provision. The University has taken a strategic decision to invest in the development of Heads of Schools, who play a pivotal role in providing academic leadership and fostering a high performance culture. There is an established leadership development programme, through which academic leaders and future leaders develop the skills to continue to build and enhance the capabilities of our academic community to promote effective student learning.

### Peer observation of teaching

- 2.6.28 The ELIR Report (2006, paras 148 & 177) asked us to "...develop the [Peer Observation of Teaching] system in ways that will demonstrate to staff the advantages of peer review in facilitating reflection on learning and teaching practices across the institution." While it is expected that all teaching staff engage in peer observation of teaching it is not a requirement. In order to increase engagement in this process, with the aim of facilitating reflection on and sharing of good practices in learning and teaching, schools have been given the flexibility to decide how best to use peer observation of teaching in their own area and have reported on their use of peer observation of teaching in their annual QA reports. LTC intends to give further consideration to the development of Peer Observation of Teaching in liaison with IAD.

### Recognition and reward of excellence in teaching

#### *Chancellor's Awards*

- 2.6.29 The Chancellor's Awards<sup>72</sup> were first introduced in 2003 and are one of the most important ways in which the University recognises and promotes outstanding contributions to teaching and research by individual members of staff. Three awards are made each year: The Chancellor's Award for Teaching; The Chancellor's Award for Research; and the Rising Star Award, introduced in 2006. The first two Awards go to current members of the University community who have, in the last five years, made an outstanding contribution to teaching and research and achieved national and international recognition for their work. The Chancellor's Award for Teaching seeks to honour a colleague who has enhanced the teaching reputation of the University, through a significant contribution to improving or invigorating student learning at any level. The Rising Star Award was introduced particularly to recognise the achievements of an early-career colleague who has not previously worked for more than five years in a similar broad discipline, and who has in this shorter time span made a particularly significant contribution in either teaching or research.

#### *Student-led initiatives, including EUSA Teaching Awards*

- 2.6.30 One of the most positive developments in recent years has been the work that EUSA has undertaken to recognise and encourage inspiring teaching. This began with the launch of the UK's first students' association Teaching Awards scheme, which is organised entirely by EUSA. In 2010/11 students nominated 777 academic staff, 277 programmes and 73 departments for a Teaching Award. Building on the Teaching Awards, EUSA launched an Inspiring Teaching Conference in 2010. The Inspiring Teaching Conference (which had more than 200 delegates in 2010) attracted a mixture of students and staff, providing an opportunity to showcase

<sup>72</sup>The Chancellor's Award: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/news/all-news/awards>

EUSA award winners and, through exhibition stands, for schools and support services to share best practice. Engagement and collaboration with EUSA, particularly as a way of building student engagement and hearing the student voice, and is a key element of the University's approach to promoting effective learning.

- 2.6.31 Student-led initiatives have also been important at the PG level. The Roberts researcher-led funding scheme (box 2.3) has provided PhD students with opportunities to bid for funding and to develop approaches to skills and career development tailored to their requirements. We have also seen a growth in the number of student led e-journals, conferences and research methods fairs. We continue to encourage student engagement and leadership in learning and teaching through funding opportunities, investments in learning and teaching spaces, student representation on committees and task groups, and joint events for staff and students.

#### *Promotion*

- 2.6.32 As in many other research-led institutions, the more obvious strand of academic career progression at the University (particularly at Reader and Professorial level) has been that which relates to excellence in research. However contribution to student learning has always played a significant role in promotion to Senior Lecturer and in the award of incremental advance. Reward Modernisation explicitly recognised the need to reward leadership in both teaching and research. The Leadership Development Programme (see section 2.6.27) has been developed specifically to support colleagues in such areas.
- 2.6.33 In addition the University has grown conscious of the need to increase the recognition and reward given to innovation in learning and teaching at the highest level. Consequently in 2003 Senate approved the introduction of Personal Chairs in Student Learning. Since then there have been seven promotions to Personal Chair in Student Learning, four of which have been since our last ELIR in 2006.
- 2.6.34 The University's academic promotions processes and criteria enable and encourage staff to promote effective learning for students by recognising achievements in, and responsibilities for, the development of student learning. In particular the Academic Grade Profiles, which form the criteria for promotion, take specific account of curriculum development and course design, development of innovative approaches to learning and teaching, and enhancing the quality, breadth and diversity of our teaching provision.
- 2.6.35 Recent changes to the Academic Grade Profiles have been developed to give more prominence in particular to teaching-focused roles, knowledge exchange and public engagement, and to align them with the goals within the Strategic Plan to recognise:
- excellence in learning and teaching
  - excellence in research
  - excellence in commercialisation and knowledge exchange.

These changes are currently under discussion with UCU and it is planned to introduce them for 2011/12.

## Comment

2.6.36 We have continued to enhance our range of development and training opportunities for staff to promote effective learning for our students. This is being significantly strengthened with the establishment of the IAD. We are aligning our development and training to key strategic priorities and staff needs. Significant strides have been made in the area of recognition of excellence in teaching, in particular the work by EUSA. This is helping the University to raise the profile of teaching and to share good practice to the benefit of the student experience. We are also making good progress in relation to the reward of excellence in teaching through the promotion process.

## 2.7 The effectiveness of our approach to managing the student learning experience on collaborative programmes

### Key features of our collaborative provision

- 2.7.1 The University's collaborative provision includes accreditation agreements, jointly awarded degrees, articulation agreements, and student exchanges. The Collaborative Programmes Repository<sup>73</sup> holds the up-to-date list of collaborative provision in relation to awards made either wholly or jointly in the University's name. Appendix 9 provides an overview of all collaborative provision as at April 2011, including student numbers on programmes.
- 2.7.2 The University's main accreditation agreement is with the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC). The University agreed to move from a previous validation arrangement to an accreditation arrangement in 2011, facilitating greater devolved powers of QA to SAC which are now overseen by an Accreditation Board and an annual report to CSE. The arrangement resembles that which SAC has with Glasgow University.
- 2.7.3 We have a small but growing number of joint taught degree programmes which we offer in collaboration with other universities, mostly with their own degree awarding powers, and with other institutions, such as the Royal College of Surgeons. Most of the established programmes are jointly taught and jointly awarded by the collaborating partners, most are PG programmes and most are with other UK partners.
- 2.7.4 We have a small but rapidly increasing range of PhD collaborations including Memoranda of Understanding with the Universitas 21 (U21) group of universities, Macquarie University, and a small number of universities in France, Germany and Italy.
- 2.7.5 We also offer our students a wide range of voluntary study abroad opportunities, mostly undertaken by UG students in their third year of study. The University has Erasmus agreements with 180 universities in more than 20 countries and a further 65 partner institutions in North and South America, Australasia and Asia through the IO's International Programme. In 2010/11, a total of 583 students spent a year abroad at a partner university, 334 of these on the Erasmus Programme and 249 on the International Programme. Further mandatory year abroad schemes are provided via schools and are specific to the requirements of the programme.

<sup>73</sup>Collaborative Programmes Repository: [http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Collaborative/Collaborative\\_programmes\\_repository.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Collaborative/Collaborative_programmes_repository.pdf)

2.7.6 The Collaborative Programmes Repository details the complete list of current collaborative provision in relation to joint degree programmes. The Governance and Strategic Planning section (GaSP) maintains the golden copy of the Repository, which was completely reviewed and updated throughout 2009/10. GaSP has also been working towards improving the way the University records collaborative provision in the student records system, particularly for teaching load and SFC returns; both were reviewed in 2010 as part of work on satellite projects for the new student record system, EUCLID. This aimed to improve the way we record collaborative provision for internal resource allocation (through teaching load) and for our statutory returns. This will help ensure that we have more accurate information relating to our students on collaborative programmes, and give us a better picture of our students' activity. The IO maintains the Erasmus and International Programme links with partner institutions.

### **Engaging and supporting students on collaborative programmes**

- 2.7.7 Partner institutions will have their own arrangements in place for student representation. Students on collaborative programmes can feed into those and into University structures in the normal way. The effectiveness of such processes is taken into account in TPRs and PPRs or equivalent.
- 2.7.8 With regards to student feedback, mechanisms are in place in partner institutions for the provision of feedback to students that are equivalent to our own. Students taking part in collaborative programmes also have the opportunity to provide feedback to the University on the courses they are studying. Feedback from students is considered as part of the routine review process.
- 2.7.9 The IO gathers feedback from returning exchange students on their academic experience. This information is used to monitor the quality of the provision and is shared with outgoing exchange students via the Web and blogs<sup>74</sup>. Due to the nature of the information gathered, which is qualitatively rich, it has not been possible, within the limited resources of the IO, to conduct a systematic analysis of the data. However, we believe that the key issues requiring attention do surface and are responded to appropriately.
- 2.7.10 As part of the approval process for partner institutions the University assures itself that there are appropriate support mechanisms in place for students. The effectiveness of the arrangements is reviewed as part of the routine review process. All students on collaborative programmes at Edinburgh have access to pastoral and academic support from either their DoS or from the Programme Director. Students on a Study Abroad Year retain their DoS at the University, providing a key point of contact with the University and a channel to feed back any problems or concerns students may be experiencing while abroad, but they may also have access to additional support locally at the host institution. The MBA in International Business has operated a buddy system since 2009/10 where a member of staff will call the Edinburgh MBAs on a regular basis to check that they are doing well, solve any problems and generally take any feedback.

<sup>74</sup>Study Abroad Office, student blogs: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office/exchanges/student-experiences/blogs>

## Development of graduate attributes

- 2.7.11 In addition to the development of subject-specific knowledge, a key reason for collaboration is precisely to provide students with the opportunity for development of graduate attributes, skills development and training. This is particularly evident in our research pooling collaborations, for example the Scottish Universities Physics Alliance (SUPA), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Scottish Doctoral Training Centre and the Scottish Institute for Research in Economics (SIRE).

## The learning environment

- 2.7.12 The University's procedures for the approval of a partner institution, particularly in relation to joint awards, require that the partner institution is financially stable and has appropriate resources to support the learning and teaching environment, in particular in relation to learning spaces, library and IT resources. We would not enter into an agreement with an institution that was not in a position to provide adequate resources to support learning, whilst acknowledging that these will not necessarily be identical to ours but nonetheless equivalent. In the case of student exchanges, the emphasis is on partner institutions that align with us in terms of education and reputation.
- 2.7.13 Students and teaching staff involved in the validated programmes of accredited institutions have access to the Library and a borrowing entitlement equivalent to University staff and students. Teaching staff will also have access to a selection of electronic resources that are not constrained by licence restrictions. For jointly awarded PhD collaborations we support staff exchanges to facilitate supervisory arrangements and use of local facilities.

## Equality of opportunity and effective learning

- 2.7.14 Accredited institutions are required to have E&D policies in place and this is considered at initial approval stage. Any matters of concern relating to E&D would be reviewed and discussed as part of the annual monitoring process. For joint degrees and exchanges with international partners we cannot always guarantee that partner institutions will have an equivalent approach in place for the management of equality and opportunity, due to different legislative requirements in other countries. Where there may be concerns, for example in relation to students with disabilities, we work on a case-by-case basis in liaison with the Student Disability Service to ensure that students' needs are capable of being met. The IO provides pre-exchange information on partner institutions to enable all students to make informed decisions about the choice of institution for their year abroad.

## Supporting and developing staff

- 2.7.15 As part of the approval process, we ensure that partner institutions have appropriate mechanisms in place to support and develop staff and ensure that they are appropriately qualified for teaching. Subject to availability, staff related to programmes validated by the University can have access, on the same financial basis as University staff, to staff development courses and events relevant to learning and teaching provided by the University. We also support exchange of teaching staff and PhD supervisors in support of staff development.

### Comment

- 2.7.16 We have an effective approach to the management of the student learning experience on collaborative programmes. GaSP's Collaborative Programmes Repository is proving valuable in providing a University-wide view of collaborative arrangements. This will be particularly useful as the range and number of collaborative arrangements grows into the future.

## 3 University-led monitoring and review of quality and standards

*The underlying principles of our QA framework remain constant and have not changed since the last ELIR. These are that: every member of staff involved in learning and teaching has a role to play in ensuring teaching quality; monitoring and review should add value and should not be formulaic or 'tick-box'; monitoring and review should lead to enhancement of the student experience; monitoring and review should take place as close as possible to delivery; assurance that monitoring and review is comprehensive and that consequent appropriate action is taken should be undertaken at the next closest level.*

*Formal responsibility for routine monitoring of teaching quality at the University is largely devolved to the three colleges. This affords greater flexibility to the colleges to operate slightly different approaches for their QA arrangements to reflect the particular structure and context of the college, while at the same time operating within the University's framework for QA and enhancement. We have a University-wide approach to periodic review, with arrangements which are sufficiently flexible and responsive to changing internal and external requirements.*

### 3.1 Key features of our monitoring and review arrangements and the extent to which they meet sector-wide expectations

3.1.1 Our QA framework continues to evolve and mature. The key features of University-led monitoring and review arrangements at the University include:

- programme creation and approval (see section 3.1);
- course creation and approval (see section 3.1);
- annual monitoring (see section 3.1);
- periodic review (TPRs and PPRs) (see section 3.1);
- Involvement of students (see section 3.2);
- External examiners (see section 3.3);
- Boards of Examiners (see section 3.5);
- External reference points (see section 3.3).

3.1.2 The ELIR Report (2006, para 162) commented: "Overall, the University's policies and procedures for internal monitoring and review are effective in their construction and implementation. They are undertaken systematically and make a significant contribution to the assurance of quality. The processes themselves are, generally, in line with the Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, published by QAA, and the Scottish Funding Council guidelines for internal review at subject level." We are confident that our arrangements for monitoring and review continue to meet sector-wide expectations and have been strengthened by recent enhancements to processes. Recent reviews of a number of elements of our QA framework, mentioned throughout this section, have confirmed this.

- 3.1.3 In relation to planned committee restructuring the ELIR Report (2006, para 161) noted: "Consideration should also be given to the most effective location for the audit function which is currently shared between the senatus undergraduate and postgraduate studies committees and the Senatus Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee." As a result, a key change since the last ELIR is that all QA matters now fall within the remit of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) (see section 1) allowing overview of both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) provision.
- 3.1.4 Other key changes since the last ELIR include:
- inclusion of students on all reviews (UG and PG);
  - revised periodic review remits;
  - revised student support service review method;
  - new quality website (providing enhanced information).

### **Programme creation and approval**

- 3.1.5 Proposals for new programmes usually feature in the annual plans of colleges and schools. Proposals usually begin with groups of teachers within a school or subject area, but can be prompted by a number of sources, including the International Office (IO), that are able to assess the demand for new programmes internationally, as well as the demands by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other external factors.
- 3.1.6 All new programme proposals must be approved, initially at school-level by the school Board of Studies, and then at college-level by the relevant college UG or PG committee. The flow of responsibility is slightly different in CMVM: there is a single Board of Studies, three UG studies committees (one for Medicine, one for Veterinary Medicine, and one for Biomedical Sciences), and one PG studies committee. The CMVM UG studies committees and its PG studies committees both report to the CMVM Board of Studies. Senate delegated powers of approval to colleges except in particular cases, for example where the norms of the curriculum framework<sup>75</sup> are not followed and where the proposed programme is not contained within a single college but involves inter-college or university-wide collaboration. In such cases, approval must be sought from the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC).
- 3.1.7 All new degree programme proposals must be accompanied by a programme specification (further information on the use of programme specifications can be found in section 3.3). We have a standard template for programme specifications<sup>76</sup> and most follow this closely; we took the decision that separate programme specifications would not be produced for every combined degree. Degree programmes may be closed by following the same process through the committee cycle as that described for new programme approvals.

### **Course creation and approval**

- 3.1.8 A course is a unit within an overall programme. The procedure for course creation and approval mirrors that for programme creation and approval. Colleges provide

<sup>75</sup>Curriculum Framework: [http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Staff/Curriculum/Curriculum\\_Framework.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Staff/Curriculum/Curriculum_Framework.pdf)

<sup>76</sup>Degree Programme Specification Template: [http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Staff/Curriculum/Degree\\_Programme\\_Specification\\_Template.doc](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Staff/Curriculum/Degree_Programme_Specification_Template.doc)

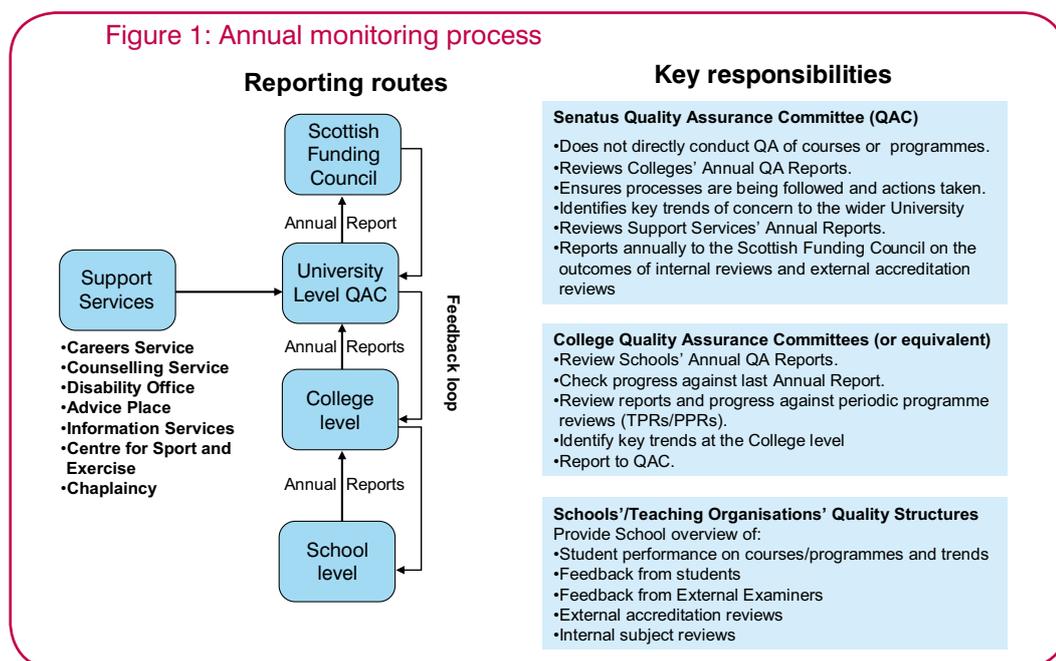
detailed guidance on course creation and approval including deciding on whether changes to an existing course result in the creation of a new course and how to deal with continuing and professional education courses.

- 3.1.9 All new courses are entered into CCAMS, an online system for the creation, approval and maintenance of information on courses. CCAMS provides a standard and efficient means of approving courses and recording the approval route.

## Annual monitoring

- 3.1.10 The annual monitoring process covers all credit-bearing provision. At each level of the University there are clear responsibilities and expectations regarding annual monitoring as shown in figure 1 and outlined on our quality web pages<sup>77</sup>. Our arrangements for annual monitoring have been strengthened since the last ELIR to include more systematic monitoring of postgraduate taught (PGT) courses and programmes as well as postgraduate research (PGR) programmes, although the latter is still bedding down.
- 3.1.11 All schools conduct annual monitoring; course monitoring is a requirement of this process. The course is the key unit of academic provision across most of the University, and annual monitoring at course level ensures regular fine-grained scrutiny. It is the responsibility of the Course Organiser to monitor the course. We do not prescribe how this should be done, but the quality website outlines the University's expectations of what course monitoring should include and also states our basic QA principles in this regard<sup>78</sup>.
- 3.1.12 Colleges are more prescriptive in how course monitoring should be undertaken and have developed their own set of college-wide course monitoring forms<sup>79</sup>, and all schools have developed their own internal processes which are stated in their annual QA Reports. It is our basic philosophy that it is those close to the delivery of courses who are in the best position to design a monitoring system that is effective and which can deliver information that can be useful in strengthening individual courses or sets of courses.

**Figure 1: Annual monitoring process**



<sup>77</sup> Annual Monitoring: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/annual-monitoring-reporting>

<sup>78</sup> Course Monitoring: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/annual-monitoring-reporting/course-monitoring>

<sup>79</sup> CHSS Guidance to Schools on Annual QAE Monitoring arrangements: <http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/AcademicAdmin/QualAssurance/QAEGuidance.htm>

3.1.13 An overview of the issues arising (positive and negative) from the course monitoring process is included as part of the school's annual QA report which is considered by the relevant college committee with responsibility for QA. In the College of Humanities and Social Science (CHSS) this is the Directors of Quality Group. In the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) it is the College Quality Assurance Committee. The structure in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) is slightly different although the principles are the same: reports are considered by the College Quality Assurance Executive from the three teaching organisations and the Centre for Medical Education, rather than schools. The three college committees in turn report to QAC in April of each year. The job of each stage is to review what has been done at the preceding stage. Thus, QAC does not itself conduct QA of courses (or programmes), but rather considers reports from the college committees about how those committees have ensured that the work is done at school or teaching organisation level and about what results there have been and what action has been taken.

3.1.14 Colleges had requested guidance (previously from SQAEC and more recently from QAC) on the role and purpose of the annual college QA Reports. Following discussions with colleges in academic year 2009/10, revised guidance was approved by QAC in 2010<sup>80</sup> for implementation in the 2010/11 annual reports, as best as the information already gathered would allow. The revised format will be fully implemented in 2011/12. The revised guidance confirms the four-fold role and purpose of college reports:

- to provide assurance that monitoring and review is being carried out effectively in the schools or units for which the college is responsible;
- to report on key trends and issues arising from monitoring and review activities in the past year and how the college intends to respond;
- to provide an update on progress in relation to the college Learning and Teaching Strategy and related University strategies;
- to identify and share good practice across the three colleges.

The aim of the guidance is to provide a framework for consideration of key trends arising from annual monitoring and review with a view to identifying at university-level areas for follow up or action. Core common information would be located in school annual reports to colleges which would then feed into college aggregated information.

3.1.15 At its meeting on 14 April 2011, QAC confirmed that colleges had made good use of the revised annual reporting structure and that the structure had worked well in assuring QAC that monitoring and review is being carried out effectively in schools. QAC noted that, in addition to the focus on processes, additional emphasis needed to be given to outcomes to allow key trends to be identified.

*Annual monitoring: PGR students*

3.1.16 The nature of research degrees necessitates a different approach to annual monitoring. The Annual Progress Report is the formal mechanism for monitoring research student performance and is now well embedded. University-wide criteria

<sup>80</sup>College Annual Reports, revised format, QAC 10/11 1 G: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2010-11/20100909AgendaandPapers.pdf>

have been established for first year and subsequent annual reports and are set out in the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students<sup>81</sup>. The exact review procedures employed by schools to support and monitor PGR progress and experience can vary according to discipline, the individual student requirements and supervision arrangements in place. Box 3.1 outlines the approach developed in the School of Divinity.

- 3.1.17 The resulting annual progress reports are considered by the college PG studies committee, or equivalent, and actions taken as appropriate. The committee also considers any issues raised by students' examiners and takes action as appropriate.
- 3.1.18 Previously annual QA reports from schools mainly focused on taught provision, with less systematic attention to PGR which has been conducted through the separate process outlined above. In 2009/10 a QAC task group was established to seek to integrate annual PGR monitoring into the annual school QA reports to the benefit of the PGR student experience<sup>82</sup>. Simultaneously, CSE piloted PGR QA monitoring in its annual school reports and required all schools to submit PGR annual QA reports in February 2010. The inclusion of PGR programmes in the annual QA process highlighted a number of issues that are summarised in the college's annual QA Report 2009/10<sup>83</sup>. For example, the report notes: "QA of the examination process concentrates on the maintenance of academic standards for individual theses, monitored by the college office, and highlights the need for QA conclusions and their feedback to schools from this process; all schools have an operational model for student progression and good student support; there appears to be little formal reporting or monitoring of the actual supervision process." This early insight informed the recommendations agreed by QAC for implementation in academic year 2010/11<sup>84</sup>.
- 3.1.19 Research degree provision is also considered in depth during Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPRs) (outlined in sections 3.1.30 – 3.1.31).

*Annual monitoring: student support services*

- 3.1.20 Since 2004, the University, through QAC (formerly SQAEC), has also considered the annual reports of the various student services in relation to how they support the student learning experience. Although some of this is not a QA function in its primary meaning, giving this function to QAC (and previously SQAEC) has proved successful, in that the reports are discussed by a group of well-informed people throughout the University who are able not only to comment effectively, but also to recommend action and to promote good practice. Experience in refining QA and enhancement processes in regard to academic matters is helpful in identifying how these student services might also review their provision and improve their service.
- 3.1.21 QAC established a task group in 2009/10 to review its method of monitoring and reviewing student support services<sup>85</sup>. The task group made a number of recommendations<sup>87</sup> including: enhanced annual reporting using a report template to allow for better comparison and trend analysis across support services; inclusion of a wider range of support services (for example Academic Registry and Accommodation Services); introduction of periodic reviews for certain support

<sup>81</sup> Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Codes/CoPSupervisorsResearchStudents.pdf>

<sup>82</sup> QAC Task group: QA Monitoring and Reporting of PGR, QAC 09/10, 3 B2: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2009-10/20100126AgendaandPapers.pdf>

<sup>83</sup> Report of Quality Assurance Monitoring and Reporting of Postgraduate Research, QAC 09/10 4 C: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2009-10/20100420AgendaandPapers.pdf>

<sup>84</sup> Report on Recommendations of QA Monitoring and Reporting of PGR Task Group, QAC 09/10 5 I: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2009-10/20100525AgendaandPapers.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> QAC Task Group Remit: Review of Student Support Service reviews. Paper B1: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2009-10/20100126AgendaandPapers.pdf>

<sup>87</sup> Report of Student Support Services Task Group, QAC 09/10 5 H: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2009-10/20100525AgendaandPapers.pdf>

### Box 3.1: First-year PhD review board: School of Divinity

The School of Divinity has a large number of PhD students relative to its size and has developed a robust first-year Review Board process.

In the initial 9-12 months PhD students are assessed formally by a Review Board usually composed of at least three academic staff, including at least one who has not been involved significantly in the student's work either academically or administratively. This involves both a written submission and an interview with the student by the Review Board.

The Review Board decides whether the student is progressing properly, and has a viable and suitably thought-out thesis proposal. If the Board is satisfied, the student is confirmed for registration for the research degree sought (PhD, MPhil, MTh or MSc by Research). If the Board is not fully satisfied with the proposal, or with the student's competence for the proposed thesis, it may request a revised submission, registration for the MPhil, an extension to the probationary period, registration for a PGT degree, or discontinuation.

The Board's recommendation (reached in consultation with the School Postgraduate Director) will be based on the following criteria: satisfactory competence in the relevant knowledge and abilities (such as appropriate languages and/or other matters); a satisfactory thesis proposal; a satisfactory chapter/chapter-portion draft; and cooperation with the supervision process and general promise of success in the research proposed. The Review Board must issue a written report which must be signed by all members and the student. The guidance and review forms are contained within Divinity's PG Handbook, which is available online<sup>85</sup>.

services; introduction of a thematic element to reviews to allow closer alignment with key strategic learning and teaching priorities. All support services will continue to produce annual monitoring reports, but these will change to a template format in 2011/12 to provide greater consistency in reporting. In addition, a small number of support services will also undergo periodic review on a cycle of no more than 6 years, the first of these will take the form of a thematic review of the international student experience in 2012/13. The guidance for periodic review will be developed throughout 2011/12.

- 3.1.22 In developing the periodic review element we have taken account of the impact of the support service on the student learning experience and the extent of external accreditation already carried out; the aim is to keep the review proportional to the impact of the support service. Four monitoring and review combinations are possible: No QA review (because the service is reviewed by other means); an Annual QA Report only; an Accreditation Review (linked to the external accreditation cycle); or Periodic Enhanced Review (with full review panel on a cycle of no more than 6 years). QAC approved this new method at its meeting on 14 April 2011<sup>88</sup>.

<sup>85</sup>Postgraduate Handbook (Divinity): <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/divinity/current-students-staff/postgraduate/handbooks-pg>

<sup>88</sup>Student Support Services Quality Assurance Framework, QAC 10/11 5 L: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2010-11/20110414AgendaandPapers.pdf>

3.1.23 A sub-group of QAC, convened by the Assistant-Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, and including the University Secretary, representatives of the support services, teaching staff and a student, will be established to review the annual reports of all support services at an annual event. This will allow for better sharing of good practice and identification of key trends and issues for onward reporting to the April meeting of QAC where the outcomes of the school and college annual monitoring process are also discussed.

### *Periodic review*

3.1.24 At present we have two systems for periodic internal review: Teaching Programme Reviews (TPR) of UG teaching provision and Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPR) of PGT and PGR provision. Both are conducted on a cycle of no more than six years according to Scottish Funding Council (SFC) expectations. At present, reviews are conducted of programmes, or clusters of programmes, rather than schools or disciplines, although the clusters may be grouped at discipline or school-level depending on size. PPRs typically are conducted for a graduate school as a whole. In response to both growing PGT provision and requests from schools, we are looking at different ways of organising internal reviews in order that they continue to serve the needs of the University. In some subject areas (e.g. in CSE) PGT provision is more closely aligned with UG, whereas in Medicine it is more closely aligned with PGR. In time, we envisage the possibility of a range of configurations to allow for UG only, UG/PGT combined, PGT/PGR combined or PGR only reviews in order to achieve greater value and synergy in review. This will not happen quickly due to TPRs and PPRs operating at different points in the cycle. We have managed to combine four pre-existing TPRs in the School of Engineering into one combined review for 2012/13 by holding one review earlier in the cycle and one a year later (with SFC approval).

3.1.25 We do not have a separate system for time-limited, re-approval of degree programmes; we consider that this is done implicitly within TPR and PPR reviews.

### *The TPR process*

3.1.26 Our TPR process was established in 1999 and has evolved over time. We have detailed guidance notes outlining the TPR process<sup>89</sup> which are provided to all areas undergoing review and to the members of the review team. From the outset we published all TPR reports and the response to these reports<sup>90</sup> on our website on a voluntary basis.

3.1.27 We consider that our system of TPR has many strengths. Its fundamental principle is that it is a cooperative and collegial procedure in which review of the students' learning experience in a given subject area is carried out by people whom the teachers trust and to an agenda with which they agree. It has therefore been widely accepted by schools and disciplines, which have generally found it valuable.

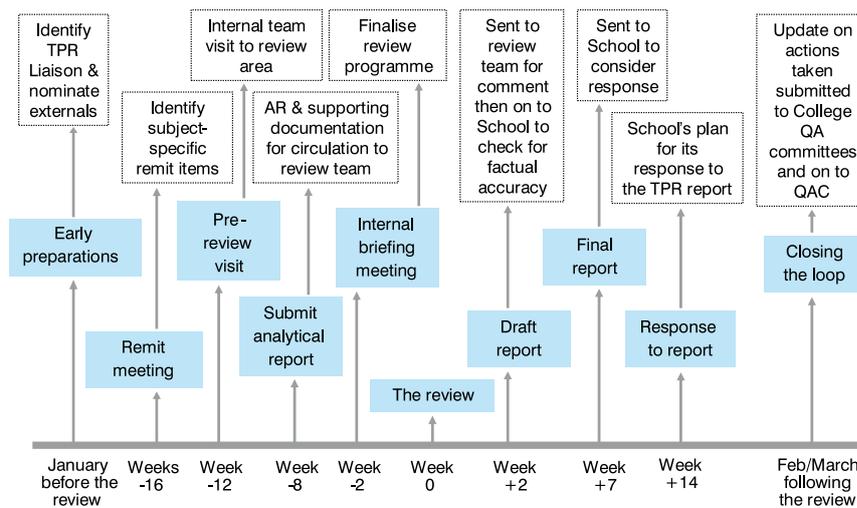
<sup>89</sup>Teaching Programme Review Guidance: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/internal-review/teaching-programme-review/guidance>

<sup>90</sup>Teaching Programme Review Reports: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/internal-review/teaching-programme-review/reports>

3.1.28 There are a number of common elements to the TPR process as depicted in Figure 3.1:

- a panel of at least six individuals, led by a senior member of the academic staff and overseen by the Assistant-Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, undertakes the review. The panel composition includes: two external subject specialists; two internal members of staff both of whom are external to the subject area under review; one senior administrator and one student member;
- a self-evaluation document (Analytical Report) is produced by the review area;
- a review visit, typically lasting two days in which the panel visits the review area, interviews staff and students and reviews relevant documentation. This, together with the Analytical Report, provides the main evidence on which the panel makes its commendations and recommendations;
- a standard remit outlines the key areas that the review should cover and gives guidance to the review area on what to include within the Analytical Report;
- in addition to the standard remit the review area is invited to contribute subject-specific remit items. This ensures that areas of particular interest to the subject area can be focused on during the review ensuring that the review adds value;
- in addition to the presence of two external subject specialists, input is invited from external agencies relevant to the subject under review. This includes relevant PSRBs, institutes and employers who may have an interest in the programmes of study and whose opinions it would be worthwhile including;
- following the review, the panel produces a report and makes recommendations for change that may be directed to the review area, the college or any other part of the University. The report also notes commendations that form the basis of highlighting good practice for wider dissemination and sharing across the University (see section 3.7);
- the review area formally responds to the recommendations approximately 3-4 months following receipt of the report. At this stage not all recommendations will have been dealt with, so the response tends to incorporate how the recommendations will be responded to. We are considering changing this to a year-on-year report in order that progress against recommendations can be reviewed. Monitoring of progress against the ongoing implementation is carried out via college QA arrangements and should be reported through the annual monitoring process, although this is not done consistently in all cases and we are currently developing an action plan template (based on good practice identified in the GMC reviews and from discussions with colleagues at the University of Leeds) to improve the consistency of onward reporting.

Figure 3.1: Teaching programme review (TPR) process



3.1.29 In 2009/10 QAC established a task group to review the TPR and PPR processes<sup>91</sup>.

The task group report concluded that internal review at the University generally meets the standards set out in sector best practice documents and that it has had a sustained impact on teaching quality. However, the task group did consider that there was further scope to use the process more efficiently and effectively in the context of the quality enhancement (QE) agenda which now frames best practice, and consequently made a number of recommendations<sup>92</sup>. In response, a number of developments were made to the process in 2010/11 including:

- revised standard remit making certain key elements more explicit (such as the strategic management of enhancement and key links with University and college strategic learning and teaching priorities, which had been implicit to the process previously);
- enhanced briefing for review areas and review panels, including more targeted briefing for student panel members and Administrators and a separate session on analytical report writing to ensure reports are critical and evaluative and cover the new areas outlined;
- summary reports aimed at students in addition to the full reports;
- Closer alignment between internal/external review processes where possible (for example in 2011 the Medicine TPR was based around the GMC review and the Social Work TPR included an external member from the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to create closer alignment between the SSSC and TPR processes);
- increased emphasis on enhancement and sharing good practice effected via the production and dissemination of a Good Practice in Teaching Programme Review document<sup>93</sup> and a workshop session at EUSA's annual Inspiring Teaching Conference on 19th January 2011 where four examples of good practice highlighted from internal review were showcased;
- increased focus on process enhancement through gathering feedback from all participants in the process.

<sup>91</sup>Review of Internal Subject Reviews, QAC 09/10 2 B: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2009-10/20091103AgendaAndPapers.pdf>

<sup>92</sup>Report of Internal Subject Review Task Group, QAC 09/10 4 B: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2009-10/20100420Agendaandpapers.pdf>

<sup>93</sup>Good Practice in Teaching Programme Review 2009/10: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Quality/QE/TPRGoodPractice200910.pdf>

### *The PPR process*

- 3.1.30 Prior to 2002 the University had a system of Quinquennial Review (QQR) for its PGT programmes. From October 2002 the University introduced a system of QQR for departmental PGR degree provision and these two QQR systems were merged during 2003/04 to create a system of QQR of graduate school PG degree provision. This system was formally introduced with effect from 2004/05 and remains in place today as Postgraduate Programme Review (PPR).
- 3.1.31 PPR is directly comparable, and thus similar, to TPR and as such shares many of its strengths. The main difference is that prior to the new Senate committee structure introduced in 2009/10, PPRs came under the remit of the Senatus Postgraduate Studies Committee (now no longer in existence) and were devolved to colleges. Since the formation of QAC in 2009/10, all matters relating to teaching quality fall under its remit. Consequently, we are in the process of aligning the PPR process with the TPR process, including the introduction of standard remits and shared briefing events in 2010/11, with full alignment planned to take effect throughout 2012/13. Current guidance on PPRs is being re-written to reflect these changes<sup>94</sup>. As with TPRs, from the outset we published all PPR reports and the responses<sup>95</sup> to these reports on our website.

### **Comment**

- 3.1.32 Our last ELIR confirmed broad confidence in the soundness of the University's procedures for the present and likely future management of the quality of its programmes and academic standards of awards. Since the last ELIR we have continued to review, improve and expand our internal monitoring and review mechanisms. We believe they are well embedded and robust, meet sector-wide expectations, and assure the standards and quality of programmes. Planned developments outlined, including the alignment of TPR and PPR processes and revised monitoring and review of student support services will further enhance these processes and contribute to a continuous cycle of enhancement.

## **3.2 The extent to which our monitoring and review arrangements include consideration of all students**

- 3.2.1 Students are involved at all stages of the formal QA and enhancement processes. Our recently redeveloped Quality website details how students can get involved in QA processes<sup>96</sup>.
- 3.2.2 Since our last ELIR in 2006 the main development has been the systematic involvement of students as full review panel members on all internal reviews (TPRs and PPRs). We have also ensured that equality and diversity (E&D) issues are considered throughout learning and teaching and have made these explicit areas to be addressed in process documentation in relation to new course/programme approval and TPR/PPR reviews. The following sections provide details of such developments as well as discussion of areas where we could further enhance our consideration and involvement of students in monitoring and review.

<sup>94</sup>Postgraduate Programme Review Guidance: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/internal-review/postgraduate-programme-review/guidance>

<sup>95</sup>Postgraduate Programme Review Reports: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/internal-review/postgraduate-programme-review/reports>

<sup>96</sup>Student Involvement in QA: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/about-us/students-involved>

## Programme and course design and approval

- 3.2.3 All new programmes and courses must take account of the target student population for which the programme/course is being designed. In addition, all new programmes/courses must be developed with due consideration given to E&D to ensure an accessible curriculum. This latter point will be given further attention as our involvement in the HEA Programme Developing an Inclusive Culture in Higher Education progresses throughout 2011.
- 3.2.4 Students are involved in the process by their membership on staff-student liaison committees and other key learning and teaching committees and Boards of Studies at school and college level. There are several examples across the University where students have not merely been considered in the process but have actually led the process of programme design. For example, students in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies were instrumental in bringing about a change to the period of study abroad from half a year to a full year.

## Annual monitoring and periodic reviews

- 3.2.5 All students have an opportunity to provide feedback on the courses/programmes that they participate in. Student feedback is a key part of programme monitoring, which feeds into the Annual QA Reports from schools. A summary of student feedback is obtained from course evaluations, staff-student liaison committee meetings and other sources, including the use of focus groups on some programmes. Evaluation in the MBChB programme is carried out electronically via the Edinburgh Electronic Medical Curriculum (EEMeC). Students are asked for feedback four times a year, across the areas of self-assessment, peer assessment, and facilitator assessment. An automated reminder system within EEMeC encourages a very high response rate.
- 3.2.6 The Annual QA Reports submitted by schools and colleges are also required to take account of issues arising from the key external surveys that the University participates in (NSS, PRES, PTES and ISB) as relevant to their courses and programmes.
- 3.2.7 Annual monitoring of Student Support Services takes account of students through the evaluation surveys conducted by the support services and reported on in their Annual Reports. We will ensure that students are included in the revised review method for student support services to include participation of a student member on the review panel and at the review meeting where annual reports are discussed. Not all students make use of the full range of support offered to them, hence it is important that both users and non-users' views are taken account of.
- 3.2.8 All TPR/PPR review teams include a student member; students first joined the TPR panels in 2008/09, and have been on all panels (including PPR) from 2009/10. Experience has shown that having a student as a full member of the review team is very valuable. This was highlighted in the report from the task group on Internal Subject Reviews<sup>92</sup> which noted that student panel members bring a fresh perspective to the process, often making innovative suggestions to enhance the process and outcomes, and their presence can make the students being interviewed feel more comfortable. Student panel members are recruited by

- EUSA each year and EUSA recommends successful candidates to the University. Students are allocated to reviews outside their own school/subject area.
- 3.2.9 Following the recommendations of the task group, the standard TPR/PPR remit<sup>97</sup> was revised to include explicit consideration of all students, particularly consideration of the student profile of the programmes under review (section 1.3 of the standard remit) and E&D (section 1.7 of the standard remit). These were implicit in the previous review remit. Consideration of all students in the context of E&D is also the subject of the Teachability Task Group in 2010/11<sup>98</sup> discussed earlier in section 2.5.
- 3.2.10 In 2010/11 the University introduced summary reports outlining the outcomes of TPRs/PPRs aimed primarily at students. The aim of the reports is to ensure that students are kept informed of the outcomes of internal reviews. It is too early to evaluate the effectiveness or impact of the summary reports, however the University's intention to increase the awareness among students of the outcomes and recommendations of internal reviews is welcomed by EUSA.
- 3.2.11 The student contribution to TPRs is outlined in the TPR Guidance<sup>99</sup>. We believe that we have robust internal review processes that include consideration of all students during and, as a result of recent developments, after the review. Further enhancements could be made to ensure similar involvement and consideration of students prior to the review process, in particular improving the contribution of students to the development of the Analytical Report (the review area's self-evaluation document) and in setting the agenda for the review. The TPR Guidance states that where possible students in the review area should be given the opportunity to contribute to, and comment on, the subject specific remit and the analytical report before they are submitted. We are working on improving the consistency of this, by building on the good practice demonstrated in the recent Veterinary Medicine TPR where the school notified students of the process via posters visibly displayed around the building inviting students to get involved.
- 3.2.12 We acknowledge that our current monitoring and review arrangements work well in the context of campus-based learning and teaching. As we move towards increased use of distance education we need to ensure that our arrangements continue to include consideration of all students, particularly those at a distance. We do not anticipate any particular difficulties in meeting this challenge as we already operate a number of online distance learning programmes in CMVM (see Case Study C) and the School of Education and our QA arrangements currently provide for sufficient flexibility and localised adaptation. Key considerations will be how to involve students in staff-student liaison committee meetings and in periodic reviews when they cannot be physically present. A QAC task group will consider these and other issues associated with our QA arrangements in 2011/12.

### Comment

- 3.2.13 Our monitoring and review arrangements are inclusive of students and do provide opportunities for students to participate or contribute. A key challenge is finding sufficient students, particularly PGT students, to participate in the context of competing priorities and pressures on students' time. Students who have taken

<sup>97</sup>Standard Remit for Teaching Programme Reviews and Postgraduate Programme Reviews: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Quality/QA/Int%20reviews/StandardRemitTPRandPPR2011-12.pdf>

<sup>98</sup>Teachability Task Group Remit, QAC 10/11 1 D: (<http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2010-11/20100909AgendaandPapers.pdf>)

<sup>99</sup>Teaching Programme Review: Guidance for Review Areas and Review Teams (<http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Quality/QA/Int%20reviews/GuidanceNotesforSubjectAreasandReviewTeams201112.pdf>)

part in TPRs/PPRs have found it a valuable experience and have felt that they have been able to make an impact on both the process and outcomes. We hope that by demonstrating the impact that students can make, we will encourage further participation as students see the value in participation for themselves and their peers. A key consideration throughout 2011/12 will be to ensure that our monitoring and review arrangements continue to include consideration of all students as we move towards increased use of distance education. We will continue to work with EUSA in this respect.

### **3.3 The effectiveness of our approach to self-evaluation, including the use made of external reference points**

- 3.3.1 Self-evaluation and the use of external reference points are embedded in all stages of our monitoring and review processes. Some external reference points are more relevant for certain processes than others. It is the responsibility of colleges to ensure that subject benchmark statements, codes of practice and qualifications frameworks have been taken into account when their courses are designed and approved.
- 3.3.2 Recent revisions to the guidance on college Annual QA Reports and TPR/PPR remits have made more explicit the importance of self-reflection (including explicit reference to key external reference points). The increasing use of task groups has also provided an opportunity for us to reflect on and review current practice and to revise, where appropriate, ensuring external reference points are taken account of. Details of significant developments are outlined in the sections below.

#### **External input (including external examiners)**

- 3.3.3 Externality is a key feature of our monitoring and review processes and takes account of external examiners, external subject specialists on internal reviews, PSRBs (see 3.3.10) and other external bodies including employers.
- 3.3.4 External Examiners are a key reference point specifically in terms of maintaining academic standards (discussed in detail in section 3.5.15 – 3.5.19) but also in relation to enhancement. External examiners provide a crucial source of external advice and an opportunity for us to learn from and benchmark our practice against that of other institutions.
- 3.3.5 Reflection on external examiner reports is carried out at all levels of the University. At the subject-level colleagues are required to reflect on the specific recommendations made by external examiners. Any subsequent action arising from response to external examiners' comments is evident in the course-monitoring forms (for example those used in CHSS) completed by course organisers.
- 3.3.6 Heads of School are obliged to respond in writing to substantive points made by external examiners. College offices are responsible for ensuring that this is done. 'Respond to' does not necessarily mean 'agree with': it is essential to consider, and, if appropriate, address these points but not necessarily to act on all of them provided a sound rationale for disagreement exists. Schools are required to reflect on the general comments from external examiners in their Annual QA reports and provide an overview of key issues/trends arising.

- 3.3.7 A broader reflection on and reporting of key trends/issues arising from external examiners is conducted at the college level and is contained within college Annual QA reports which are discussed annually at QAC. Reflection on such issues at QAC is usually fairly broad and key learning points are not of subject-specific issues but usually relate to processes and procedures. Recent reflections on external examiner reports at this level have led to a re-examination of the Code of Practice for External Examiners, the introduction of electronic submission of external examiner forms, and has also informed training for Boards of Examiners.
- 3.3.8 At the time of writing, the recommendations of the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) review of external examining arrangements<sup>100</sup>, conducted by UUK/GuildHE, have become available. Our current external examining arrangements (including our Code of Practice on External Examining) are broadly in line with the recommendations, although some areas will need to be revised throughout 2011/12 to meet the recommendations (such as induction).
- 3.3.9 External subject specialists are crucial to our TPRs and PPRs and provide a further means by which we can learn from other practices and benchmark, in addition to maintaining standards of provision. Additionally, as part of the review process we also seek the views of other external bodies/organisations relevant to the programmes/subject under review and their input provides a useful reference point. For example, in this year's TPRs we received written input from the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management in relation to the Ecology TPR and our discussions with the General Medical Council (GMC) have helped us to reflect on what we do in our own TPR process and how this relates to a professional accreditation review.

### **Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies**

- 3.3.10 Altogether 38 Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) accredit more than 140 of our degree programmes, providing another important mechanism for assuring the external comparability of the quality and standards of our degree programmes. Not only do these professional bodies scrutinise our programmes of study, but a substantial number of our academic staff belong to PSRBs and many act as reviewers on behalf of these organisations too. Our links with PSRBs help ensure that these programmes remain current and relevant and help promote the employability of our students graduating from them.
- 3.3.11 Subject areas are required to reflect on reports and act on recommendations made by PSRBs, which are reported in the relevant school's Annual QA Report. At University level we reflect annually on the outcomes of PSRB accreditations and approval visits during the year, and a summary report on this is included in the annual institutional statement to the SFC. A number of our degree programmes also have international or overseas accreditation (for example the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery is accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Business School has full EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) recognition).
- 3.3.12 Throughout 2010/11 we have been developing a web-based PSRB database to record the data from PSRB accreditations more systematically which previously

<sup>100</sup>Review of External Examining Arrangements in the UK, UUK/GuildHE: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Quality/UUKExternalExaminersDiscussionPaper2010.pdf>

have been held only by colleges. Initially the database will focus on providing a central record of all accreditations and outcomes. In future it is envisaged that a similar design of database can be used for enhancement purposes to identify key trends arising from recommendations and commendations in TPRs/PPRs.

## **QAA Academic infrastructure**

### *QAA Code of practice*

- 3.3.13 The ELIR Report (2006, paras 62 & 163) asked us to "...make more explicit reference to the elements of the Academic Infrastructure in the process documentation. This would allow staff to be confident of the alignment of their endeavours with those being pursued across the sector." Our regulations, guidance and codes of practice take account of and reflect the precepts contained within the QAA Code of Practice. We periodically review these to ensure their fitness for purpose and continuing consistency. In the last year we have reviewed all our regulations and guidance as part of the eca merger process, including ongoing major review and revision of our assessment regulations (see section 3.5.24 – 3.5.27).
- 3.3.14 Following good practice by Dundee University, we have begun to map our process documentation explicitly onto the QAA precepts. Two of the Senate task groups this year (Collaborative Provision<sup>101</sup> and Teachability<sup>98</sup>) had this outcome included as part of their remit. The Report of the task group on Internal Subject Review, which reported in May 2010, confirmed that our review method was generally consistent with external expectations (including the QAA Code of Practice)<sup>92</sup>. Further mapping onto the QAA Code of Practice will continue following the final outcome of the QAA Academic Infrastructure consultation process.

### *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework*

- 3.3.15 All programmes in the University are assigned Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) credit points and levels, and this assignment is monitored through the usual approval and review processes. Similarly the requirements for degrees, as laid down in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, are compatible with the Framework. A review by CSPC in 2010/11<sup>102</sup> confirmed that there was compatibility with the exception of a small number of cases where SCQF does not set expectations (such as Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and research degrees). Further details on SCQF, in relation to academic standards, can be found in sections 3.5.4. – 3.5.14.

### *Subject benchmark statements*

- 3.3.16 Subject benchmark statements are a useful reference point and are taken into account in relation to programme design and approval, where they are most effective, and in internal subject review. The use of subject benchmark statements is often reinforced by PSRBs. We welcome the development of masters' degrees benchmark statements and have found these useful in the context of our expanding PGT provision.

<sup>101</sup>Collaborative Provision Remit and membership, QAC 10/11 1 E: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2010-11/20100909AgendaandPapers.pdf>  
<sup>102</sup>SCQF: Mapping Levels and Credits for our Curriculum Framework Models, CSPC 10/11 1 B1 and B2: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/CSCP/2010-11/20101007Agenda.pdf>

### *Programme specifications*

- 3.3.17 The University has a standard template for Programme Specifications<sup>76</sup>. Most programme specifications follow the template closely. In cases that do not, the expectation is that the programme specification describes at a minimum the aims and learning outcomes, methods of assessments, accreditation and structure of the degree programme. Much of the same information will also be contained in other sources such as programme handbooks and the Degree Programme Tables (DPTs) which, together with programme handbooks, tend to be used by students as the main source of programme information.
- 3.3.18 We took the decision that separate programme specifications would not be produced for every combined degree; for example, for 'with' and 'and' degrees, and for programmes that have small numbers of graduating students, it was agreed sufficient to rely on programme specifications for the constituent subjects.
- 3.3.19 Presently, colleges are responsible for ensuring that up-to-date programme specifications are provided and available on the web. Within the next 12 months, Registry Academic Services will establish a central repository for programme specifications.
- 3.3.20 We are promoting the continued use of programme specifications and have recently updated our template to take account of the University's graduate attributes to ensure that an appropriate abstraction of the degree programme specification is available for use on the HEAR. The new templates, and guidance on their implementation, can be tracked through CSPC during 2010/11.

### **Comment**

- 3.3.21 Our policies and practices are informed and take account of a wide range of external reference points, in particular the key elements of the Academic Infrastructure. Our approach to self-evaluation has matured since the last ELIR and we demonstrate in this section where we are attempting to improve our practices and processes. Throughout the last two years we have demonstrated an increasing approach to self-reflection and have sought to enhance our policies and practices by reviewing their ongoing consistency with external reference points and sector best practice.

## **3.4 The effectiveness of our approach to the management of information to inform the operation and evaluation of monitoring and review**

- 3.4.1 A major development since the last ELIR has been the implementation of the Edinburgh University Complete Lifecycle Development (EUCLID) project. Among a number of benefits and features, EUCLID provides an integrated admissions, student, course and programme record system, which reduces duplication of data entry and provides a secure and accurate in-house student record system which supports the majority of our monitoring and review data requirements.
- 3.4.2 Data captured has not changed significantly since the last ELIR in 2006, except for a small number of areas to meet external reporting requirements. For example, we have captured more data to meet the needs of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and thence the SFC, following a significant HESA Student Data

redevelopment implemented in 2007/08. We also captured PGR supervisor data more accurately in order to contribute to RAE 2008 (where all student-related statistics were calculated through a data mart comprising student, finance, and HR (and VRS) data).

### **Edinburgh University Complete Lifecycle Development (EUCLID) Project**

- 3.4.3 At the time of the last ELIR the Edinburgh University Complete Lifecycle Development (EUCLID) Project was in the early stages of planning: a vision to move all student administrative systems onto a single platform, establish consistent, simplified, and quicker processes across the University, provide a substantially improved student experience and provide far better management information. The project formally completed on 31 December 2010<sup>103</sup>.
- 3.4.4 EUCLID currently enables applicants to submit applications online (integrated with the University's online prospectus); enables applicants and staff to manage admissions processes via the web; provides more extensive functions for staff; supports student curricula validation; delivers enhanced strategic and operational management information; has increased interoperability with other University systems; and enabled us to meet changed external requirements (UCAS revised systems; UKBA Managed Migration; revised HESA and SFC requirements).
- 3.4.5 Whilst not all initial aspirations were able to be delivered on formal completion of the Project, EUCLID provides the foundation for phased delivery of further projects. These include online matriculation and other student self-service functions; enhanced Registry and college administrative functions; electronic submission of course assessment results; integration with the Academic Timetabling Project and other ongoing University initiatives; and a more extensive range of staff functions. As a package delivered via a third party, the University will be more able to keep pace with changes in the external environment, particularly statutory and other compliance elements from organisations such as UCAS, HESA, SFC, UKBA, SLC, and SAAS.
- 3.4.6 As highlighted at the time of our last ELIR, the Curriculum Project was implemented in 2004/05. It resulted in rewritten regulations and revised curricula, presented through the online 'Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study' (DRPS)<sup>104</sup> available to staff, students and applicants. Whilst courses were sourced from the student record, and therefore from a single 'golden copy', the Degree Programme Tables (DPTs) were stored as static web pages; inevitable inconsistencies resulted from this lack of integration. From 2010/11, DPTs were created within EUCLID thus providing full integration between programmes and courses from within a single 'golden copy' database and introducing more rigour. However, the limitations of the programmatic approach demanded by a database, and the restrictions of publishing from it, have arguably made the DRPS less usable, and placed an increased burden on staff who have to edit the DPTs through the software.

### **Management of information to inform the operation of monitoring and review**

- 3.4.7 Annual QA reports from schools and colleges are required to contain reflection on grade profiles of courses and programmes and student performance at the appropriate level of granularity. The data required for this is held centrally in EUCLID and is accessed via BOXI.

<sup>103</sup>EUCLID Project Closure Report, SQAG 1-Dec-10 B: [http://www.euclid.ed.ac.uk/ed/Governance/documents/SQAG\\_1Dec10.pdf](http://www.euclid.ed.ac.uk/ed/Governance/documents/SQAG_1Dec10.pdf)

<sup>104</sup>Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS): <http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/>

- 3.4.8 With regards to TPRs, the Governance and Strategic Planning section (GaSP) has designed standard statistical reports covering the core statistical data required for TPRs, such as figures on student progression, cohort analysis etc. For large TPRs the statistical reports will be produced at programme level with the option for the review area, or the review team, to ask for statistics on individual courses if they are considered either particularly important to the student experience (perhaps taken by every student on the review area's programmes) or if they are of particular interest or concern. For small TPRs statistical reports are usually produced at course level. Having standard reports produced by GaSP leaves the review area free to reflect on the statistical data and trends. We are currently considering a similar approach for PPRs.
- 3.4.9 Data for PPRs tend to be collected by schools and submitted to college. Data relating to PG activity has historically been complex. Going forward this should be simplified following the introduction of EUCLID. Colleges have routinely analysed data on applications for some years, which is cascaded to schools to inform monitoring and review. In addition to the improvements EUCLID has delivered in the management of admissions data, it has also facilitated the ability to interrogate 'on programme' data since the start of 2010/11, enabling us to dig down deeper into the data in a way we never could before EUCLID. In addition, the new Postgraduate Progressions Management Database (PPMD) (which is linked to EUCLID) will enable us, for the first time, to proactively search out records where we are expecting something to happen (such as thesis submission - and thus prompt supervisors). We have been aware of the need to become more proactive in many areas of PG management, which we will now be able to do so much better with the help of EUCLID and PPMD. We anticipate having access to much more information (for example, from checking that all PGR students have two supervisors, highlighting supervisor workload across college, to monitoring students who are out of time) that will help to improve the overall management of PG data.
- 3.4.10 Schools are required to gather feedback from students on their experience of their courses and programmes. The method used for course and programme evaluation is devolved to schools and the management of information is their responsibility. The main method used is end of course/programme survey, although increasing use is being made of focus groups and other forms of qualitative data. The format and design of surveys varies, although some schools have developed a standard approach to allow them to benchmark student feedback within their school. At a local level this allows schools the flexibility to design an approach that best suits their requirements. While this has its advantages, it does make more general comparisons of the outcomes of processes challenging. Hence, we will be reviewing our approach to student surveying in 2011/12, in parallel with the Student Voice project that GaSP is undertaking for external surveys (see section 3.4.15).
- 3.4.11 The outcomes of student feedback are reported in course monitoring and summaries of the key issues arising from student feedback are reported in school annual quality reports.

- 3.4.12 As outlined in section 2.2, we take part in four external benchmarking surveys: NSS, PTES, PRES and ISB. GaSP is responsible for the analysis and reporting of NSS data and makes key statistical data and trend analysis widely available across the University to all schools, colleges and key committees. Schools and colleges are required to reflect on the data as part of the annual monitoring process. In addition, given the importance of NSS to the student experience, and the targets set against NSS in the University's Strategic Plan, all Heads of School have been asked to submit annual plans on their response to NSS, in particular the actions the school will take to address the 'feedback and assessment' results (see sections 2.2.30 to 2.2.35 and Appendix 8). NSS results, including the open comments, are also made available to review teams as part of the TPR process. For some reviews, however, it is not possible to isolate the results and comments relating to particular programmes and subjects due to the subject groupings used by NSS. We hope to resolve this issue into the future by adding programme of study as an additional question to the survey.
- 3.4.13 The data relating to PTES and PRES are managed currently by Registry Academic Services. Summary reports of the results and key trends are provided to schools and colleges and to relevant support services. Our response rates are approximately 30 per cent for PRES and 15 per cent for PTES, which are in the upper quartile of response rates overall for the sector, but lower than the 50 per cent threshold response rate for NSS and the 67 per cent response rate we achieved in the 2010/11 NSS. When broken down by subject this can result in very small sample sizes and unreliable data for management purposes. We have the opportunity in both PRES and PTES to include our own institutional questions. For example, in PRES in 2009, we asked questions about PGR study and social space, and plans to build a PG accommodation block have been informed by responses to these questions.
- 3.4.14 Data relating to the ISB are managed currently by the International Office which provides interested parties with access to the data tables to enable them to undertake their own analysis, but has not had the resources available to conduct a systematic analysis of the data. Our response rate is typically between 15 per cent and 20 per cent, which again makes it difficult to extract meaningful and reliable data at the subject level. Given the importance of international students to our student population we need to make better use of the findings of the ISB to inform a range of activities across the University, not just those performed by the International Office. The Student Voice project, outlined below, is designed to address this.
- 3.4.15 The ELIR Report (2006, paras 119 & 168) asked us to "...reflect on how to develop a clearer view of the undergraduate student experience and, from this, form a systematic data set which could be used to enhance the learning opportunities provided." This is the aim of the Student Voice project<sup>105</sup> that seeks to take a central datamart BI approach to pull together all of our results using QlikView which will be overseen by GaSP. Currently the degree of dissemination, analysis and benchmarking of the four external surveys' data varies and we wish to develop a more coherent approach to our analysis of student survey data in order to achieve a holistic overview of the entire student population. The aim is to facilitate

<sup>105</sup>Student Voice Project Update, QAC 10/11 5 C: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2010-11/20110414AgendaandPapers.pdf>.

interactive graphical presentation, benchmarking, and, where possible, modelling, to predict how changes in survey outcomes will impact on performance against our own Strategic Plan targets. The NSS survey allows us to access benchmark data for all participating institutions, and we can access benchmark data from a 'Russell Group Club' for PTES and PRES. For the ISB we can benchmark against all participating institutions, or UK or Russell Group anonymised data.

### **Management of information to inform evaluation of monitoring and review activity**

- 3.4.16 Two QAC task groups have been significant in evaluating our monitoring and review activity: in 2009/10 the Internal Subject Review Task Group and in 2010/11 the Student Support Services Review Task Group. Further details on both task groups are provided in section 3.1. Both task groups used a wide range of external and internal information to evaluate our current practice, which resulted in recommendations leading to the enhancement of monitoring and review process.
- 3.4.17 With regards to periodic review, we systematically gather feedback from those involved in TPRs to inform process enhancement. Based on this feedback we have provided enhanced briefing to administrators and student panel members throughout 2009/10 and introduced a briefing session for review teams in 2010/11 to assist them in developing a self-reflective approach to writing the Analytical Report. For 2012/13 we plan to develop more support for the Liaison person (in the area under review) and support more effective involvement of students prior to the review.
- 3.4.18 Following discussions with colleges in 2009/10, revised guidance for college Annual QA Reports was approved by QAC in 2010 for implementation in 2010/11. Further details are provided in sections 3.1.14 – 3.1.15.

### **Comment**

- 3.4.19 We have an effective approach to the management of information to inform the operation of monitoring and review that has been strengthened by the recent development and implementation of EUCLID and will be enhanced further by proposals to develop a more coordinated approach to the analysis of major external survey data. We have also demonstrated our effectiveness in managing information to inform the evaluation of our monitoring and review activity. Through several task groups in the last year, as well as routine feedback from those involved in monitoring and review, we have been successful in developing our monitoring and review activity in ways that respond to the needs of those involved as well as ensuring their ongoing fitness for purpose in addressing the University's key strategic priorities.

## **3.5 The effectiveness of our approach to setting and maintaining academic standards, including the management of assessment**

- 3.5.1 The key activities that focus on setting and maintaining academic standards are course and programme design and approval, external examining, development and approval of academic regulations for assessment and the award of degrees. The university has clear processes for each of these which are applied to all

of its credit bearing provision. Processes are also in place for the University's collaborative arrangements (see section 3.8).

- 3.5.2 Our internal monitoring and review processes contribute to maintaining standards involving scrutiny of activities and feedback from external members on the review panel.
- 3.5.3 Senate is ultimately responsible for the academic quality and standards of awards and this responsibility is devolved to college committees, within the context of an academic regulatory framework which is the responsibility of CSPC and a QA framework which is the responsibility of QAC. New patterns of degree programme, for example in emerging areas such as professional practice doctorates<sup>106, 107</sup>, are approved directly by CSPC. This often involves producing reports that facilitate comparison between our proposals and external best practice or QAA guidelines.

### Course and programme design and approval

- 3.5.4 The key features of course and programme design and approval were outlined in sections 3.1.5 – 3.1.9. This section focuses only on how we set and maintain standards as part of this process. Use is made of the key external reference points, such as SCQF and QAA Subject Benchmark Statements to ensure that the University's awards are structured appropriately in terms of their level and credit volume and are designed with reference to national benchmarks. PSRBs are also important reference points.
- 3.5.5 New degrees based on agreed models within the Curriculum Framework and new courses (units within a degree) are approved at college level. Degrees that follow innovative patterns outside the Framework, or those that have implications for other colleges are approved by CSPC. CSPC's membership includes those taking a lead in college approval processes. In 2011/12, colleges and CSPC plan to develop further patterns of Curriculum Framework approved degree programmes for our PGT portfolio, to reflect developments in learning and teaching.

### SCQF

- 3.5.6 The ELIR Report (2006, paras 64 & 165) urged the University to "...set expectations of progressions at all levels through the use of level descriptors that are consistent with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework..." in order to provide "... further security in relation to the management of academic standards."
- 3.5.7 Since then, we have worked with SCQF to better understand the underlying tenets of their framework and our ability to map onto it. Following the launch of the revised SCQF Handbook in 2009 we held a workshop with invited speakers from SCQF, University of Glasgow and Edinburgh Napier University to reflect on our approach to SCQF and learn from the practice of other institutions. The workshop was valuable in confirming our overall approach to mapping of SCQF levels.
- 3.5.8 In the main, courses are designated as follows: level seven for access/open learning courses, level eight for most first and second year courses, level nine for some junior honours courses, level 10 for some junior honours and all senior honours courses, level 11 for taught masters courses and level 12 for doctoral study.

<sup>106</sup>Professional and Practice Based Doctorates. CSPC 10/11 2 F. <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/CSCP/2010-11/20101202Agenda.pdf>

<sup>107</sup>Taught Professional Doctorates: An Overview of Structure, Content and their Role within the Professional Community: [www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Staff/Curriculum/What\\_is\\_a\\_professional\\_doctorate.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Staff/Curriculum/What_is_a_professional_doctorate.pdf)

- 3.5.9 While some of our first and third year UG courses are taught at levels seven and nine respectively, the majority of first- and second-year courses are taught at level eight, and the majority of honours courses at level 10. We have scrutinised this practice since the last ELIR, especially with regard to our pre-honours courses, through discussions within CSPC and through a case study in the School of Geosciences, and remain comfortable with this approach. In particular, we feel that the key features of level eight teaching (subject scope and definition, an enquiry based approach and the exercise of a high level of autonomy) are characteristics of most of our pre-honours courses.
- 3.5.10 Progression at the University is generally indicated by rising SCQF level and also by the designation of prerequisite courses whose successful completion must precede registration for a subsequent course. A key progression hurdle in our UG degrees is between pre-honours and honours, but progression also occurs between years one and two and years three and four. Where we teach in years one and two at level eight, the distinguishing feature between a year one- and year two-level eight course, is mainly according to the breadth and/or depth of subject-specific knowledge. As a general rule of thumb, level eight first year courses operate over broad fields of study, whereas level eight second year courses operate generally within narrower specialisms that build on the relevant first year pre-requisite, albeit at the same SCQF level. This ensures progression in terms of subject-specific knowledge within a programme of study.
- 3.5.11 A similar approach is taken at honours level in cases where years three and four are both taught at SCQF level 10. At level 10 we expect that students engage critically with their subject to apply previously gained knowledge and skills in research projects. In some subjects, especially in the sciences, it is necessary to provide some advanced training at level nine to bridge the academic step between levels eight and 10. An example of this distinction is Chemical Geology, taught at level nine, which presents students with the basis to understand chemical equilibrium in naturally occurring mineral assemblages (for example at a high level in terms of subject-specific knowledge, but with no significant research element), and the Cyprus Fieldtrip, taught at level 10, where students apply the latest published work on the chemical evolution of the Cyprus ophiolite to interpret field observations.
- 3.5.12 Our general use of SCQF levels eight for pre-honours (years one and two) and 10 for honours (years three and four) maps onto the European Qualifications Framework levels five and six respectively, agreed under the Bologna process. We feel that this represents a fair position between an aspiration to map onto external standards, especially for the purposes of credit transfer, and the Bologna process, and the need to fit to our own, valued processes of learning and teaching.
- 3.5.13 We strive to ensure that, while applying the appropriate SCQF levels to our courses, our programmes also retain breadth and flexibility. In particular, we strive to preserve the freedom of students to take a variety of courses in the same year, sometimes drawn from different levels, especially, for example, from either of the pre-honours or honours years. This allows a number of level 8 first year courses to be taken as outside courses by students of other programmes in either the first or second year as a stand-alone outside subject of the appropriate level.

3.5.14 Flexibility will become increasingly important as students begin to enter the University with a wider spectrum of qualifications than in the past, and sometimes wishing to take at least part of their programme part time. We consider these personal learning paths to represent emerging best practice in curriculum design within the sector. Support for the development of these personal learning paths is provided during Freshers' Week, via our Academic Fair and through individual meetings of all students with their Director of Studies (DoS) or Student Support Officer (SSO) during which registrations for students on the elective elements of study is undertaken.

### **External examiner system**

- 3.5.15 External examiners play a crucial role in monitoring and maintaining standards of all our awards at both UG and PG levels. The role of the external examiner is embedded in our regulations and outlined in the Code of Practice for External Examiners. This has been revised since our last ELIR.
- 3.5.16 All taught courses and degree programmes (UG and PG) are subject to the scrutiny of an external examiner, though the nature of the attention given depends in part on the level and in part on student numbers. Examiners in the final year are also encouraged to comment on the whole programme as well as the individual courses, and to be involved in course development. The procedures relating to appointment, to the receipt and consideration of reports, and to documentation of action on reports are given in the Code of Practice for External Examiners and are discussed in detail in sections 3.3.3. – 3.3.8.
- 3.5.17 Every external examiner is asked to address the question of standards (as well as to comment on the programmes in general and any changes that are planned) and to relate his or her view of our students' performance to that in institutions with which he or she is familiar. For this reason, at the subject-level we tend to select our external examiners from similar research-intensive departments. The responsibilities of external examiners are set out clearly in documentation sent to them by the Head of College at the time of their appointment. The external examiner's visit and interaction with the Board of Examiners, course organisers or teaching organisation form the major contribution that he or she makes to maintenance of standards and spread of good practice, but often little of this is demonstrable through documentation. External examiner report forms are designed to try to ensure that the reports are appropriately systematic and searching and meet the QAA precepts. Similar, but separate, forms are used for PG programmes.
- 3.5.18 There have not been any cases where External Examiners have raised serious concerns about the standards of degrees, although issues brought to our attention are addressed (the mechanism for this is outlined in sections 3.1.10 – 3.1.15 and the effectiveness of our reflection on this in 3.3.4 – 3.3.8).
- 3.5.19 The ELIR Report (2006, paras 63 & 164) confirmed that the University had appropriate arrangements in place for managing its external examiner system in relation to the academic standards of awards, but urged that "...further security of standards should be sought by the University continuing its work on the

management of assessment and progressing systematically the actions arising from its work designed to bring greater consistency to the operation of its boards of examiners." Since the last ELIR we have formulated a set of Guiding Principles for Boards of Examiners and guidance for those involved in the examination process. This has been reassessed by CSPC during 2009/10 and is being communicated to staff through college training events<sup>108</sup>.

- 3.5.20 The key features of these Guiding Principles are that Boards of Examiners (BoE) should: assess sufficient students to provide a level of comparison between small programmes; that each BoE should finalise course marks in one event, and use these agreed marks to identify class outcomes for degrees in a second event; that each BoE should have a member of the Board with responsibility for the correct application of regulations, and another with responsibility for special circumstances; that anonymity should be the general case; and that the membership should be such that appropriate scrutiny of all marks is possible.

#### *Postgraduate research*

- 3.5.21 Recent changes have also been made to the reporting mechanisms for PGR external examiners. In November 2010 CSPC approved the first of two sets of changes. It was considered that the list of recommendations on the existing External Examiner PhD form lacked clarity, with particular ambiguity around the terminology used (such as 'corrections' versus 'amendments'). The existing form also lacked space for comments by examiners, and space for comments by the non-examining chair, if used. The first set of changes, approved by CPSC, addresses this directly and provides room for more examiner comments, if needed, and comments by the non-examining chair. The second set of changes rationalises the way the outcome of the examination is reported, refining the language to avoid ambiguity, and reducing the number of possible outcomes from eight to seven.

#### **Academic regulations (including assessment regulations)**

- 3.5.22 Our academic regulations comprise a set of rules and guidance governing the University's conduct of its academic business. The main elements of this are found in the DRPS, assessment regulations (taught and research degrees), guidance for Boards of Examiners and the Curriculum Framework documents<sup>109</sup>.
- 3.5.23 Our academic regulations are maintained by Academic Services and colleges, in tandem with CSPC and are published online<sup>110</sup>. As with most sets of regulations, they require constant monitoring as our understanding of appropriate behaviours and modes of learning and teaching evolve. From 2009/10 we have undertaken to ensure consistent date changes to the regulations, in order to maintain clarity. The aim of our regulations is to be simple, clear and facilitate good practice. The work carried out throughout 2010/11 on our taught assessment regulations is a good example of this intention.

#### *Assessment regulations*

- 3.5.24 The Assessment Regulations Task Group and CSPC have simplified and clarified this set of regulations and combined our UG and PGT assessment regulations into a single set for taught courses and programmes. Our assessment practice is underpinned by a set of key principles which we intend to revise following the

<sup>108</sup>Boards of Examiners Guidance: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners)

<sup>109</sup>Policies and Regulations: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations>

<sup>110</sup>Assessment Regulations: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment>

outcomes of the CSPC Assessment Regulations and LTC Assessment Futures Task Groups<sup>111</sup>.

- 3.5.25 In 2010/11 our assessment regulations were integrated with those of Edinburgh College of Art (eca), a process that has offered us a practical comparison of our regulations with those of a comparable, autonomous, Scottish higher education institution (HEI). It is interesting to note that only minor changes (to facilitate studio-based pedagogies) were required to encompass the needs of eca within our regulations.
- 3.5.26 Over the next academic year, we will revise our regulations on research degrees<sup>112</sup>, our DRPS and our guidance and regulatory framework for special circumstances<sup>113</sup>.
- 3.5.27 In 2009/10 a CSPC task group was responsible for revising Boards of Examiners guidance. The same task group is continuing Phase II of this work, taking into account PGT boards of examiners. In the same year, a QAC task group was responsible for reviewing and updating the Code of Practice for External Examiners, to be revisited in 2011/12 following the recent publication of the UUK/ GuildHE recommendations of the review of external examining.

*Academic misconduct (including plagiarism)*

- 3.5.28 The University takes seriously its responsibility for ensuring that academic standards are protected from abuse through acts of academic misconduct, whether intentional or unintentional. Academic Misconduct of any nature is regarded as a disciplinary offence under the University's General Statement on Student Discipline<sup>114</sup> and is punishable under the University's Code of Discipline<sup>115</sup>.
- 3.5.29 Within the University, suspected incidents of academic misconduct are dealt with via a devolved network of School and College Academic Misconduct Officers (SAMOS/CAMOS). There is provision within the Code of Discipline for very serious cases to be referred by the relevant CAMO to the University Student Discipline Committee<sup>116</sup>, although this has not proved to be necessary in recent years.
- 3.5.30 During 2009/10 a working group comprised of CAMOS, college academic administrators, Registry Academic Services, EUSA and chaired by the Assistant-Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance agreed revised procedures<sup>117</sup> for the handling of suspected academic misconduct offences. Initial feedback from CAMOS has been positive and indicates that the revised procedures are proving to be a useful reference tool and are helpful in ensuring that cases are dealt with in a consistent way across all three colleges. During 2010/11 central University staff and student guidance on plagiarism<sup>118</sup> was revised and updated to ensure coherence with the revised handling procedures.
- 3.5.31 The number of students reported for suspected misconduct represents a very small minority of the total student population. During the 2009/10, around 0.7 per cent of the total student population (201 students) was investigated for suspected academic misconduct and less than 0.5 per cent of the total student population (139 students) was found to have committed an offence. Plagiarism comprises the vast majority of reported cases of suspected academic misconduct, accounting

<sup>111</sup>Principles of Assessment: [http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/Principles\\_of\\_Assessment.PDF](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/Principles_of_Assessment.PDF)

<sup>112</sup>Guidelines for the Examination of Research Degrees: [http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Guidance/Research\\_Degrees\\_Examination\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Guidance/Research_Degrees_Examination_Guidelines.pdf)

<sup>113</sup>Special Circumstances Guidance: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/guidance>

<sup>114</sup>General Statement on Student Discipline: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Discipline/GeneralStatementDiscipline.pdf>

<sup>115</sup>Code of Discipline: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Discipline/CodeofDiscipline.pdf>

<sup>116</sup>Discipline Committee: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/discipline-committee>

<sup>117</sup>Academic Misconduct Procedures: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Discipline/AcademicMisconductProcedures.pdf>

<sup>118</sup>Plagiarism: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/plagiarism>

for just over 88 per cent of all cases in 2009/10. Information on plagiarism, and guidance on how to avoid it, is distributed widely to students through course handbooks and on the University and EUSA websites. These also include information on 'Turnitin' plagiarism detection software which is now in widespread use across the University.

### Postgraduate research

- 3.5.32 Standards in PGR are maintained via the functioning of relevant college committees. In accordance with the University's ethos of QA, whereby monitoring and review take place as close as possible to delivery, each school has a model for assuring itself of the quality of PGR provision. Particularly crucial in the research context, this allows monitoring and review to take place in a collegial and supportive environment. The assurance of that monitoring and review is then undertaken by the relevant college quality committee, which has formal responsibility for quality assurance within the University's devolved structure. Through the inclusion of PGR provision in the annual reporting from college committees, QAC ensures that both the monitoring activity itself and its outcomes meet the needs of the University and the requirements of outside bodies.
- 3.5.33 There have been major changes since the last ELIR. First, some of the colleges have significantly changed their PG committee structures and, as a consequence, have changed the way they examine research degrees. Second, the Senate committees have also restructured, with the role of the Senate Researcher Experience Committee (REC) differing in significant ways from its predecessor body (SPGSC). REC is not directly responsible for PG standards, this being the role of colleges under the overview of QAC, with CPSC responsible for PGR regulatory matters.

### Monitoring degree performance

- 3.5.34 CSPC also has a role in monitoring the outputs from degrees. CSPC and GaSP are currently reviewing the nature of the reports CSPC receives on awards. The aim is that analysis will help focus attention on trends, deviations and areas which are statistically significant and need further investigation. Annual analysis of degree classification outcomes is also undertaken by school and colleges and reported to QAC and we want to ensure that duplication of effort is avoided.

### Comment

- 3.5.35 We have effective mechanisms in place for setting and maintaining standards, including the management of assessment. CSPC has strategic goals in regulatory development and is ably supported by expert administrative staff who liaise with colleges to ensure that our framework is appropriately nuanced for our wide range of taught courses. We are adapting our academic regulations to ensure that we meet the challenges of working in our merged institution and, over the next five years, of increased numbers of students learning part time and at distance. Going forward, we will engage with the regulatory issues arising from the current Scottish Government Green Paper on funding options for Scottish Higher Education.

### 3.6 The effectiveness of our approach to managing public information about quality and academic standards, including our monitoring and review arrangements

- 3.6.1 The University in general has taken the approach to make information openly available and has made central academic committee agendas, minutes and papers available on its website for a number of years. In line with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act we have a comprehensive publication scheme<sup>119</sup> setting out the information that the University makes available on a proactive basis. The publication scheme includes sections on governance (of which committees is a subset), teaching quality, student administration and support, and support for disabled people.
- 3.6.2 The ELIR Report (2006, paras 69 & 166) noted: “The range of material the University publishes both electronically and in hard copy is extensive, accessible and useful to a range of current and potential stakeholders. The University delegates considerable authority for ensuring the accuracy of information to the person producing it, and is strongly encouraged to establish systematic mechanisms for ensuring that all information it publishes about the quality of its provision is complete, accurate and fair.”
- 3.6.3 Two major developments since the last ELIR have strengthened our provision of public information: the University Website Development Project, which has improved the clarity, consistency and reliability of published information on the web by ensuring one ‘golden copy’ owned by the relevant stakeholder department is included in client websites across the University, and the EUCLID Project, ensuring one ‘golden copy’ of a wide range of student and student-related information. Both of these developments are aimed specifically at improving the consistency and accuracy of published information.

#### Communications and Marketing

- 3.6.4 Responsibility for the University’s public face is given to Communications and Marketing (CAM), which edits and publishes the relevant documents. CAM also oversees the production of UG and PG prospectuses with help, guidance, and significant input from Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA), the International Office (IO) and the college offices. Information supplied by colleges and schools is edited, and sent back to them for checking before publication.
- 3.6.5 CAM maintains the University’s corporate website and provides guidance for writing for the web and producing effective content<sup>120</sup>. The guidelines highlight why online information should be structured differently to printed materials, and provides hints on how we can make the University’s website easier to read. They are intentionally non-technical, are targeted at all who publish online and are supported by training.

#### Web Development Project

- 3.6.6 The University was an early adopter of web technology and our early web presence evolved organically. At the time of our last ELIR clear chains of editorial responsibility were maintained within the University’s central corporate website,

<sup>119</sup> The University of Edinburgh Publication Scheme: [http://www.pubs.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=viewscheme&addsubgrp=152&url\\_grp=0,1&url\\_subgrp=0,1](http://www.pubs.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=viewscheme&addsubgrp=152&url_grp=0,1&url_subgrp=0,1)  
<sup>120</sup> Writing for the Web: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.16490/fileManager/writing\\_for\\_the\\_web.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.16490/fileManager/writing_for_the_web.pdf)

however, publishing practices, editorial controls, corporate branding and navigational structures did vary. The Web Development Project<sup>121</sup> was established to address this, with the aim of unifying the University's existing web publishing into a single cohesive entity, designed from the outset with the needs of its end users in mind. The project team was established in Spring 2006, with the first phase of development of the corporate web pages in Spring 2008.

- 3.6.7 Using Polopoly as the content management system, the project is ensuring single sources of information and QA of content. Systematic editorial control mechanisms have been put in place to ensure responsibility is taken for the quality and accuracy of the information about the University's provision, including a system of cascading authority of content within clearly defined author, editor and publisher roles. The majority of the University's schools and other key units are now live in Polopoly.
- 3.6.8 Resource has been assured for recurrent funding to ensure the continuing development and maintenance of the University's online presence. Further investment has also been agreed to deliver updated design and technology across the site, where appropriate. Consultation will continue in more detail with the internal and external user communities to articulate requirements for further enhancements to functionality and/or system delivery. In this way, the University will ensure that its online presence is managed in a manner that is fit for purpose in today's global marketplace.

### Information on academic regulations

- 3.6.9 Registry Academic Services is responsible centrally for the University's regulations, policies and guidance related to learning and teaching, research and QA. Updating of the regulations, policies and guidance is managed through the relevant Senate committee.

### Information on courses and programmes of study

- 3.6.10 Information on courses and programmes of study is published in the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS) which has now been incorporated into EUCLID since the last ELIR.
- 3.6.11 Other information for current students, such as more detailed course and programme information, is mostly provided in handbooks, many of which are produced in electronic form, within individual schools or disciplines, for whose accuracy they have responsibility. In light of QAA's recent review of Key Information Sets, QAC will reflect during 2011/12 on the current guidance to staff on information provided to students with a view to producing revised guidance for schools on enhanced information provision.

### Information published by the University's planning section

- 3.6.12 We have a large repository of information on our Governance and Strategic Planning website<sup>122</sup>. The primary function of this website is to provide University staff engaged in planning-based activities with a range of relevant materials and links. But, as a by-product of this internal activity, many pages have been made publicly available given that the facts, figures, analyses and links they contain are of general interest and can assist with speedy responses to requests for information from the public.

<sup>121</sup>University Website Project: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/about/projects/website-project/>

<sup>122</sup>Governance and Strategic Planning Website: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning>

3.6.13 Some of the pages most frequently used by those external to the University are the University Factsheet<sup>123</sup> (which provides overview summary figures relating to key aspects of University business including information on the student and staff populations, exit awards, graduate destinations and lifelong learning), League Tables<sup>124</sup> (which present the University's position in the main UK and World rankings since 2005), HESA Performance Indicators<sup>125</sup> and results and analysis of the Research Assessment Exercise<sup>126</sup>, which, in due course, will be replaced by the REF.

### Teaching quality information

3.6.14 The University has published all reports from internal reviews (TPRs and PPRs) on its website since the reviews began in 1999. In addition, the annual QA Reports from colleges are published as part of the QAC committee papers, ensuring that students and staff have access to the outcomes of internal monitoring and review. In view of the fact that such reports are produced mostly for the benefit of the areas under review (and not for external audiences) we introduced a 1-2 page summary report of the recommendations and commendations (in addition to the full report) for TPRs in 2010/11. These reports are primarily aimed at the student audience and it is intended that they will be used in staff-student liaison committee meetings to keep students informed of progress.

3.6.15 Production of the central PSRB database will also make information on PSRB accreditations more readily available to internal and external audiences.

### Comment

3.6.16 We have effective approaches to managing public information about quality and academic standards and significant development has taken place since the last ELIR to enhance the management and provision of public information through the Web Development and EUCLID projects. The University continues to meet SFC requirements for public information. We have an open approach to the publication of information and make a wide range of information available on our public website that exceeds statutory requirements. At the time of writing, there is no conclusion on the Key Information Set for Scotland, but we are keeping a watching brief to identify any areas of good practice that we can benefit from.

## 3.7 The effectiveness of our approach to linking monitoring and review processes to enhancement arrangements

3.7.1 The ELIR Report (2006, paras 147 & 176) noted: "Considerable evidence exists of the identification of good practice in the annual college quality assurance and enhancement reports to SQAEC and of the dissemination of good practice in learning and teaching within colleges and schools, often in an informal fashion." It encouraged the University to "...make more systematic use of the outcomes of the whole range of its quality assurance procedures and processes."

3.7.2 We have effective processes in place for the sharing of good practice, arising specifically from monitoring and review, within the three colleges and these have not changed substantially since the last ELIR. In view of the comments made in the ELIR Report (2006) we have made more explicit links between our monitoring

<sup>123</sup>University Factsheet: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/facts-and-figures/university-factsheet>

<sup>124</sup>League Tables: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/facts-and-figures/league-tables>

<sup>125</sup>HESA Performance Indicators: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/facts-and-figures/hesa-performance-indicator>

<sup>126</sup>Research Assessment Exercise: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/research>

and review processes and our enhancement arrangements and, at the same time, attempted to share good practice and enhancement activities across the University. A number of these developments have been outlined already in section 3.1 and include:

- closer alignment between the key enhancement priorities identified in the Strategic Plan, the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy and annual monitoring and review processes;
- revised guidance on the format and content of college annual QA Reports;
- revised TPR/PPR standard remit;
- proposals for revised monitoring and review processes for student support services;
- increased emphasis on enhancement and sharing good practice via the production and dissemination of an annual 'Good Practice in Teaching Programme Review' document<sup>93</sup> that is published on the quality website, discussed at QAC and disseminated to all teaching areas undergoing review, and plans to develop a database of good practice from internal review;
- provision of greater support to review areas undergoing internal reviews in the production of their Analytical Report to ensure greater reflection, evaluation and emphasis on enhancement;
- participation at EUSA's Inspiring Teaching Conference 2011 where good practice case examples identified from internal review were showcased;
- discussions at Convenors' Forum, enabling issues identified from monitoring and review to be discussed and good practice to be shared across the four Senate committees. This good practice is being replicated in the newly revised committee structures in CHSS;
- reporting of key themes and issues arising from annual monitoring and review from QAC to the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC);
- introduction of new policy on PGR annual monitoring;
- plans to strengthen the link between report outcomes and the role of the IAD in supporting review areas to address recommendations.

### **Comment**

- 3.7.3 We have robust processes in place that link our monitoring and review processes with enhancement activities at the school and college level. The measures we have put into place and the planned developments will strengthen these and enable us to derive pan-University benefits from monitoring and review.

## 3.8 The effectiveness of our approach to monitoring and reviewing collaborative provision

### Key features

- 3.8.1 The key features of the University's monitoring and review arrangements for collaborative activity include: procedures for the initial approval of a partner institution, procedures for the approval of the programme and mechanisms for the monitoring and review of the programmes.
- 3.8.2 Throughout 2010/11 a QAC Collaborative Provision Task Group<sup>101</sup> has been reviewing our guidance relating to collaborative provision. This has resulted in: revised and enhanced guidance on all aspects of collaborative provision leading to an award or credit towards an award in the University's name; and, at the time of writing, plans to develop a single location on the website that pulls together all the documentation for easy access, the early development of which should be evident by the time of the review.
- 3.8.3 Before the University enters into an agreement with an institution several criteria must be satisfied in order that the institution can be approved as a partner institution. The criteria are set out in the guidance<sup>127</sup>. All collaborative provision leading to an award, either jointly or wholly, in the University's name must be covered by an agreement. There are two types of agreement: a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). A MOU is a statement of intent. A MOA is a contract and sets out specific responsibilities of the parties involved. The University has signed MOUs with a number of Universities to signal an intention to develop collaborative PhD programmes. Each new collaborative PhD programme requires a student-specific MOA and must be approved through the normal approval routes at school and college committees before sign-off by the University. The University has established template MOUs and MOAs<sup>128</sup>. One institution will be designated the 'lead institution' and their quality procedures will normally apply. Where Edinburgh is not the lead, we will agree with the other partner(s) suitable QA arrangements that are equivalent to those at Edinburgh. The Central Management Group will also have a role to play in approving the overall package where financial arrangements are included.
- 3.8.4 Following the initial approval of a partner institution, the academic content of a collaborative degree programme has to be approved through the normal University mechanisms outlined in sections 3.1.5 – 3.1.7. Thus a programme would have to be approved via the normal Board of Studies/school committee, relevant college committees and Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee route and be confirmed by Senate. As far as possible, programmes are monitored and reviewed as part of the routine annual monitoring and review activity conducted at the University.
- 3.8.5 With regards to accreditation agreements (such as the current agreement with Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) and the agreement with eca prior to merger), separate accreditation committees operate to consider the content, delivery and performance of all programmes leading to awards of the University delivered wholly or jointly by accredited institutions. The University devolves maximum

<sup>127</sup>Collaborative Provision Guidance: paper copy available.

<sup>128</sup>Template Memoranda of Understanding and Agreement: Paper copies available

authority to accredited institutions to operate their own QA mechanisms which are overseen and evaluated as part of the annual QA report from the accredited institution to the University. SAC moved to an accreditation agreement (from a validation agreement) in 2010/11; the first Accreditation Board met in March 2011.

### Reference points

- 3.8.6 In general, the same key external reference points outlined in section 3.3 are used for collaborative programmes as far as they exist. All UK partner institutions will take account of the same reference points, including the Academic Infrastructure, national qualifications frameworks and the use of external subject specialists appointed as external examiners. Both SAC and eca are reviewed under ELIR: eca had its latest ELIR in February and April 2009. The ELIR confirmed 'confidence' in eca's current, and likely future management of the academic standards. SAC had its latest ELIR in March and April 2010. The ELIR confirmed 'confidence' in SAC's current and likely future management of the academic standards of the awards it offers and the quality of the student learning experience. ELIR reports for these institutions are important reference points for the University. For European collaborations, the European frameworks are relevant. For other international collaborations key reference points are derived from our membership of key international groups, international PSRBs and institutes, many of which are discussed in section 4.3.

### Management of information

- 3.8.7 With the exception of accreditation agreements (where students are registered at the accredited institution) all students on collaborative programmes are registered at the University during their time with us and entered into the student record system, EUCLID, which provides the basis from which course and programme performance can be monitored.
- 3.8.8 Information on the performance of students at accredited institutions is provided by institutions as part of their annual monitoring and periodic review processes. The key issues arising from the reports are discussed at the relevant Accreditation Committee meeting and are contained within the relevant college's Annual Quality Report to QAC.
- 3.8.9 Data and information on joint degrees is discussed at the relevant examination board/committee at school-level. Any issues arising from such joint programmes will be reported in the school's Annual Quality Report to the college, and onward through the college Annual Quality Report to QAC.
- 3.8.10 With regards to student exchanges, the Year Abroad Progression Committee (convened by the Assistant-Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance and comprising representatives from the three colleges, the International Office and an external examiner) has proved a useful forum for monitoring students' experiences and performance on a Study Abroad year. This year, a number of issues were reported to CSPC for action<sup>129</sup>.

<sup>129</sup>Report from the Committee for Progression of Study Abroad Students, CSCP 10/11 1 G: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/CSCP/2010-11/20101007Agenda.pdf>

### Academic standards and assessment

- 3.8.11 Academic standards are set and maintained through a combination of careful partner selection according to clear criteria and ensuring equivalent processes exist for the validation of programmes and their examination. As far as possible, the processes used will be University of Edinburgh processes, such as Boards of Studies and Boards of Examiners.
- 3.8.12 In the case of jointly awarded PhDs, the Principal Supervisor and any other Supervisors will be jointly involved in the continuing assessment of the candidate's work in progress. The degree regulations including assessment and progression will normally be those of the lead institution. In establishing the joint arrangement, the University satisfies itself that the processes for maintaining academic standards and management of assessment are comparable to those used at the University.
- 3.8.13 The International Office oversees voluntary study abroad arrangements. The transcripts for all students undertaking an agreed study abroad period are submitted by the host institution to the International Office. Any transcripts for students undertaking a compulsory study abroad period are progressed through the relevant school's normal University Examination Board process. For example, the Department for European Languages and Cultures (DELIC) in LLC takes responsibility for the compulsory language year abroad assessment arrangements as does the Business School for the MBA exchanges. All voluntary year abroad transcripts are considered by the Year Abroad Progression Committee.

### Public information about quality and standards

- 3.8.14 As with all wholly Edinburgh degrees, information relating to collaborative programmes that is contained within the normal annual and review processes is made publicly available on the University's website.
- 3.8.15 GaSP maintains the collaborative provision repository on the University Website, a public record of all the University's collaborative arrangements leading to an award either wholly or jointly in the University's name.

### Linking monitoring and review to enhancement

- 3.8.16 As mentioned at the start of section three, monitoring and review should add value, should not be routine or 'tick-box' and should lead to enhancement of the student experience. This general principle applies to our collaborative arrangements as much as it does to our wholly Edinburgh-delivered programmes. In conducting monitoring and review of our collaborative arrangements we aim to ensure that this leads to enhancement activity. Some of these links are evident in the feedback provided to accredited institutions following the report from the accreditation committee and the report to CSPC from the Year Abroad Progression Committee.

### Comment

- 3.8.17 We are satisfied that we have arrangements in place to ensure that the collaborations the University enters into are appropriate and of the appropriate standard, that partners are committed to maintaining academic standards, QA and QE, and that the student experience is at least equivalent to that at the University.

## 4 Strategic approach to quality enhancement

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*The section begins with an overview of our approach to enhancement. It discusses how we have sought to develop and embed a strategic approach to enhancement which is consonant with our ethos and devolved structure. There follows a discussion of how our approach to enhancement is informed and enriched by key reference points, taking account of the best examples of practices internally, sector-wide and globally. A discussion on our approach to identifying and promulgating good practice is then presented. The section concludes with an overview of our approach to enhancing collaborative provision.*

### 4.1 Key features of our strategic approach to enhancement

- 4.1.1 In common with the rest of the sector, we have been striving to develop an approach to improving quality which both meets our strategic goals as an institution and embodies the sector's commitment to enhancement. The ELIR Report (2006, para 175) noted that "...there would be considerable benefit in the University clarifying the locus of responsibility for quality enhancement and the oversight of enhancement activity, particularly at institutional level". Our response has been to rethink how to put enhancement at the heart of our processes, while reconfiguring the structures and mechanisms through which enhancement can take firm root. Four key dimensions of our current approach to enhancement can be highlighted: organisational, strategic, facilitative, and the articulation of guiding assumptions. These are outlined below.
- 4.1.2 Organisationally, the major changes in 2009 in senior positions (section 1.3.8) and in the structure of Senate committees (sections 1.3.9 – 1.3.19) have not only sustained robust oversight of quality assurance (QA) but also injected significant additional resource into the leadership and management of enhancement. Oversight of enhancement is now focused in the work of the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), while at the same time there are close working relationships between the Senate committee convenors and academic policy managers to ensure that the four committees work in synergy, that responsibility for taking forward strategic and policy priorities is clearly assigned, and that agendas do not become overloaded.
- 4.1.3 Strategically, there has been a much sharper intensity of focus on pinpointing institutional priorities for strengthening and updating learning-teaching practices as well as the wider student experience. This is being achieved in various ways: greater emphasis on identifying strategic priorities within and across the committees; pursuing these with the aid of task groups; reviewing progress and updating priorities in joint away-days, prior to endorsement by Senate; and developing University and College enhancement strategies (see section 4.1.12).
- 4.1.4 There has also been substantial attention to the facilitation of enhancement. This too has taken several forms, including pump-priming innovation, trialling new ways of promulgating good practices, and establishing a new Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to coordinate and underpin staff and student development (see section 2.6). Further details of these efforts are given in the sections which follow.

4.1.5 It has been crucial to articulate a set of guiding assumptions around which the evolving approach to enhancement pivots; 'evolving' since the approach was not firmly set in stone at the outset, but has been progressively developed through experience, dialogue and interaction. The following three guiding principles are that:

- every member of staff involved in learning and teaching has a role to play in enhancing as well as assuring (see introduction to section 3) teaching quality;
- enhancement can and should occur at every level within the University community (individual, programme, school, college, institution-wide), and is valued whether it is modest in scope or large-scale;
- the stimuli to enhancement can be bottom-up as well as top-down, internal or external, practice-focused or policy-led; and that both staff and students have a worthwhile role to play in initiating and implementing enhancements.

### **Enhancement, the colleges and the University**

4.1.6 Our approach to enhancement also reflects and embodies our devolved structure. Enhancement roles and responsibilities do not solely reside centrally, nor are they wholly devolved to colleges, but are by design shared.

4.1.7 This means that the onus is on the University to:

- set the framework within which developments in learning and teaching take place (primarily through the current Strategic Plan and other emerging policy developments and initiatives);
- take policy and strategy initiatives that have an impact on learning and teaching across the University, and monitor the progress of the colleges in implementing these initiatives;
- provide forums in which developments in learning and teaching that raise issues for the University as a whole can be consulted upon and discussed;
- encourage and support developments at the college level, while at the same time leaving scope wherever feasible in University-wide initiatives for tailoring to college and school processes and practices.

4.1.8 For their part, each college is responsible for:

- implementing University policy and strategic initiatives, utilising the scope these afford it to tailor procedures and practices to local needs and circumstances;
- identifying and pursuing complementary enhancement initiatives that meet the specific needs of its schools and subject areas;
- monitoring the implementation by schools of university-wide and college-specific initiatives;
- providing forums for college-wide consideration of relevant developments in learning and teaching;
- alerting the University to college developments that have wider implications.

- 4.1.9 The most recent evaluation of the Quality Enhancement Framework in Scotland concludes that a devolved approach fosters a widely shared sense of ownership and commitment<sup>130</sup>.

### **Key University-wide enhancements, 2006-2011**

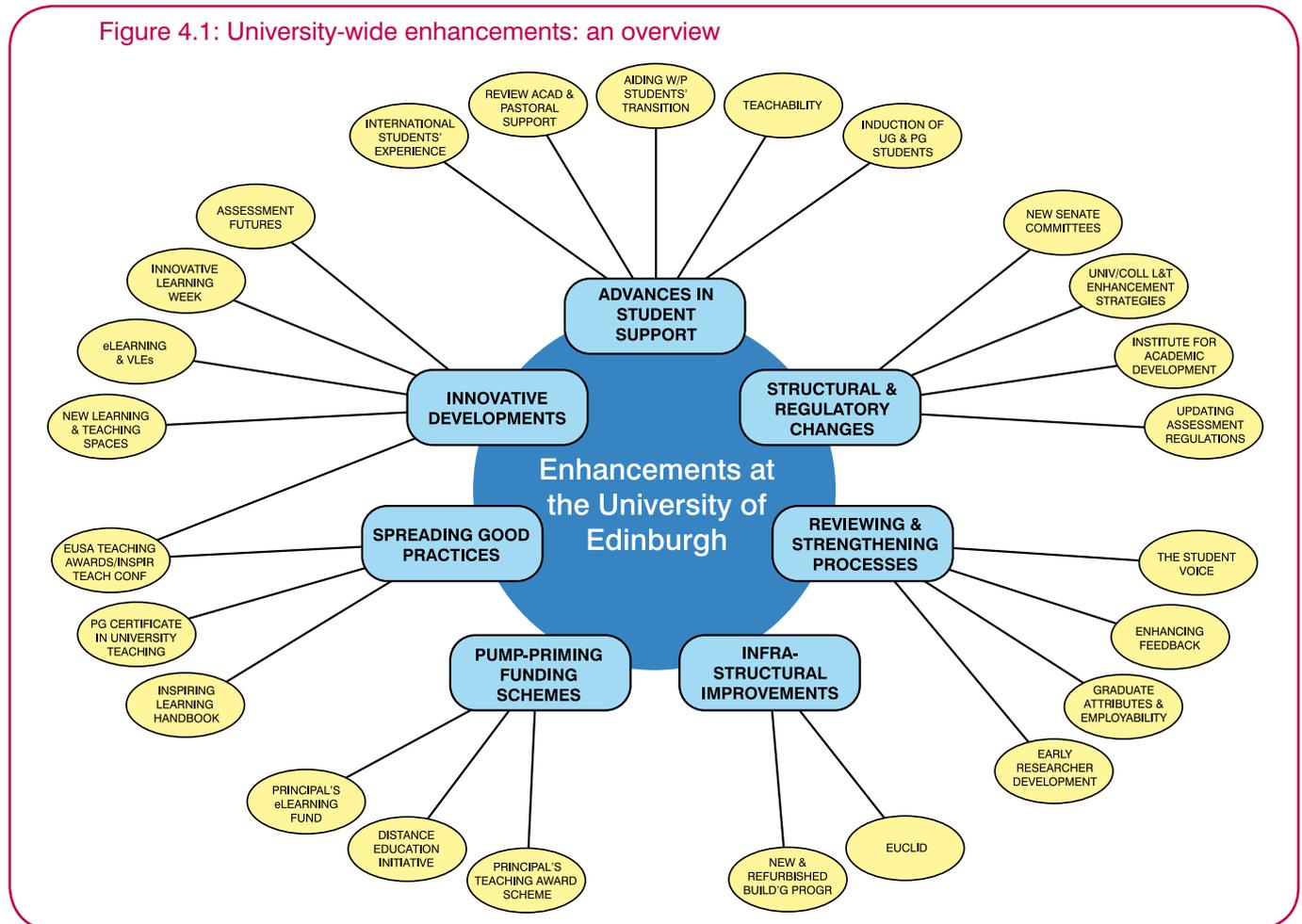
- 4.1.10 A large number of enhancements have taken place across the University since the last ELIR in 2006. Figure 4.1 provides an overview of the principal instances of these, each of which has been documented elsewhere in the RA.
- 4.1.11 For reasons of space, the figure does not include enhancements that have chiefly been college or school-focused. However, the latter would also need to be considered in constructing a more complete picture of enhancement at the University, since our approach, as already noted, prizes bottom-up as well as top-down enhancements.

### **The Strategic Plan and enhancement**

- 4.1.12 Change is a constant and pervasive fact of institutional life at the University, and our strategic approach to enhancement has become well embedded over the last five years as we strive to ensure that we engage with change proactively rather than reactively.
- 4.1.13 Our proactive engagement with change and enhancement is chiefly guided by our Strategic Plan. In the Plan, two principal strategic goals are directly relevant to quality enhancement: 'Excellence in learning and teaching', and 'Enhancing our student experience'. Linked to the goal of excellence in learning and teaching are seven specific objectives to:
- recognise and promote excellence in teaching;
  - enhance the student learning experience, prioritising improvements in assessment and feedback;
  - continue to enhance the quality of, and breadth and diversity in, our teaching provision;
  - use our strengths in research to underpin how and what we teach;
  - contribute to the development of a high-skill economy in support of key national priorities;
  - support our students in being proactive, independent and reflective learners;
  - lead the development of e-learning to pioneer innovation in teaching and assessment methods.

<sup>130</sup> Saunders, M. et al. (2010). Second Annual Report of the Evaluation of the Quality Enhancement Framework: Thematic Summary. Lancaster: Lancaster University, CSET, section 3.1, 'Importance of ownership and control', p. 7.

Figure 4.1: University-wide enhancements: an overview



4.1.14 A further six objectives are associated with the goal of enhancing the student experience:

- provide accessible, user-friendly and well-publicised academic and personal support and guidance;
- improve administrative processes for student services so that they continue to respond to student needs;
- provide more inclusive and extensive social, recreational and sports facilities;
- equip students with the skills, experience and attitudes to be able to thrive, contribute and achieve their potential within the global community;
- promote student health, wellbeing and safety;
- foster a sense of community within the student body and with staff.

4.1.15 The Strategic Plan guides our planning and resource allocation at all levels: within the colleges and their constituent schools, and across the three support groups. The annual and longer-term plans of the colleges and support groups translate the content of the current Strategic Plan into more immediate strategies and targets. In this way, each part of the University makes its contribution to the achievement of the medium-term objectives and targets set out in the Strategic Plan. It also underpins the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategies (LTES) of the University and its colleges.

## Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategies

- 4.1.16 The current LTESs<sup>131</sup> have been redeveloped over the course of academic year 2010/11, in consultations led by the Vice Principal Academic Enhancement and involving the Senate committee convenors and college, school and EUSA representatives. The LTESs were formally endorsed by LTC on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011.
- 4.1.17 The goal has been to generate University and college LTESs which are contiguous and in synergy. In due course, it is anticipated that these will be followed by LTESs in all schools. Some schools (see for example the School of History, Classics and Archaeology) have already developed a school enhancement strategy.
- 4.1.18 The University LTES is shown in box 4.1. The four priorities identified for the period 2010-2012 do not together encompass all of the University's wide-ranging enhancement initiatives, but rather bring to the fore those which directly relate to the work of the Senate committees and are of high strategic importance to the institution as a whole. They complement the thematic priorities of each of the colleges, which are set out in their respective LTESs.

## College Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategies

- 4.1.19 At the time of the last ELIR visit, the colleges were at early stages in the development of their Learning and Teaching Strategies, but the ELIR Report (2006) nonetheless observed that "...the varying pace of development and formal and informal contact between those involved in developing and implementing the strategies has resulted in the dissemination of good practice in strategic planning between the colleges." The new college LTESs build on the achievements of the earlier strategies.

### *College of Humanities and Social Science*

- 4.1.20 The CHSS Learning and Teaching Strategy was initially launched in 2007 and has been reviewed annually. The recent priorities linked to the 2007 Learning and Teaching Strategy have been:
- research-teaching linkages, in particular in relation to first- and second-year undergraduate (UG) students;
  - Personal Development Planning (PDP) and e-portfolios, at both UG and postgraduate taught (PGT) level;
  - peer support for learning for first-year UG students;
  - assessment – improving feedback on assessment and promoting innovative approaches to assessment for both UG and PGT students;
  - e-learning at both UG and PGT level.
- 4.1.21 Towards the end of 2010 a three-year review of the 2007 CHSS Learning and Teaching Strategy was undertaken. Following extensive consultation, a more focused and streamlined strategy was developed to meet the changing needs and priorities required to enable students to receive the highest quality learning experience<sup>132</sup>. The revised strategy includes eight strategic priorities to focus and support schools to further improve the student learning experience. The previous

<sup>131</sup>University and College Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategies: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/learning-teaching>

<sup>132</sup>HSS Learning and Teaching Strategy: <http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/AcademicAdmin/LearnTeachStrategy/index.htm>

priorities described above are now incorporated in the new strategy. Additionally, the strategy's 'wider context' section makes explicit the links between this strategy and a number of University strategies and the wider world beyond.

- 4.1.22 The Strategy provides a framework within which schools have flexibility to decide how to implement the priorities according to the nature of their particular disciplines. To guide schools' decisions about how to implement the strategy, examples of practical actions relevant to each strategic priority are provided in an appendix to the Strategy, but these examples are intended to be neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

#### *College of Science and Engineering*

- 4.1.23 The CSE Learning and Teaching Strategy was originally launched in 2005 with the aim of initiating a cultural shift in students' approaches and attitudes to learning, such that they become increasingly willing and able to take on greater responsibility for their own learning. The original LTS is embodied in a set of principles<sup>133</sup>.
- 4.1.24 Consultations with Heads of Schools in 2010, with the aim of refreshing the strategy, revealed a consistent view that the original principles were still sound but some revisiting would be useful. The revised strategy was also deliberately given a fixed duration of three years and some more explicit targets were included in order to focus the schools' implementation planning.
- 4.1.25 The new strategy document sets out the overarching aims of the college and the strategic principles by which the college strives to achieve these aims. It also sets challenging targets in a number of areas including: staff development; recognition and reward for excellence in teaching; significant review of assessment practices; development of collaborative and distance learning programmes; and further improvement of the estate to support innovative teaching methodologies and changing ways of learning.
- 4.1.26 In addition to the formal strategy document, a version has been created for dissemination to, and discussion with, students. This version is written in more student- and staff-friendly language, and it is intended that schools will be able to utilise it in a variety of different settings with students, as part of their QA and enhancement processes.

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

- 4.1.27 CMVM has a well-established Learning and Teaching Strategy which was updated in March 2011. The strategy is founded in the recognition that the college's students embark on their degree programmes with a commitment to careers in medicine, veterinary medicine and medical science, together with a rich variety of skills and attributes. The broad aim is therefore "to develop these abilities through challenging curricula, with an ethos of respect and support for our students, and to ensure that our graduates are caring, competent, confident and reflective, equipped for high personal and professional achievement."

<sup>133</sup>CSE Learning and Teaching Strategy Principles: <http://www.scieng.ed.ac.uk/LTStrategy/resources/vanguardprinciples.pdf>

### **Box 4.1: University learning-teaching enhancement strategy**

The University Learning-Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES) comprises three facets: aims, underpinning principles, and strategic priorities for the period 2010-2012. These three facets are of equal importance and closely interrelated.

Responsibility for the University LTES lies with the Senate LTC. Each college also has its own LTES, for which it is responsible. University and college LTESs seek to be contiguous and to work in synergy, as part of an institutional approach to enhancement which is intentionally devolved.

#### **Chief aims**

1. to strengthen and enhance the quality of students' experiences of university study wherever necessary, appropriate and practicable;
2. to sustain an environment in which excellence in learning and teaching can thrive and where refinements and innovations in practices are prized and promulgated;
3. to encourage everyone involved in teaching and supporting learning to play their part in enhancing as well as ensuring quality.

#### **Underpinning principles**

The University's Learning-Teaching Enhancement Strategy is underpinned by the following principles:

- a. it is well-aligned to the University's strategic goals, mission and ethos;
- b. it complements the teaching-learning enhancement strategies of the three colleges;
- c. it is forward-looking, engaging with evolving needs and circumstances and addressing prospective challenges and opportunities;
- d. it is inclusive, encompassing the full range of levels of study (UG, PGT, PGR) and patterns of provision at Edinburgh;
- e. it continues to value initiatives by individuals, course teams and subject groups to enhance local practices.

#### **Institutional Strategic Priorities 2010-2012**

##### **1. Employability**

Focusing, coordinating and strengthening efforts to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st-century graduate workplace and optimise their employability.

##### **2. Assessment and feedback**

- a. Improving the quality and consistency of feedback to students.
- b. Encouraging and supporting the continuing evolution of assessment practices and policies to address 21st-century needs, challenges and opportunities.

##### **3. Student guidance and support**

Strengthening the framework of academic and pastoral guidance and support to students.

##### **4. Enhancement Infrastructure**

Developing structures and processes that support, facilitate and sustain the strategic enhancement of learning and teaching.

4.1.28 The college's Learning and Teaching Strategy is focused around six core principles:

- an educational experience of the highest quality;
- student-aligned curricula and teaching-learning environments;
- learning through enquiry in a research rich environment;
- use of a blended approach to support a range of learning styles;
- ensuring that students are well-prepared for entry to the professions;
- valuing and sustaining staff expertise in learning and teaching.

### **Comment**

4.1.29 The devolved nature and strategic focus of our approach to quality enhancement is well-aligned to both our structure and ethos, and is serving its purposes well. Over the period since the last ELIR, that approach has evolved and been further refined, as we have progressively developed a firmer grasp of what enhancement means within the sector in Scotland and how we can best enable it to thrive across the University. Our 'nested' approach to articulating learning-teaching enhancement strategies will develop further over the years ahead as the strategic role of schools in enhancement gradually becomes better-established.

## **4.2 Effectiveness of the implementation of our approach to quality enhancement**

### **University perspective**

4.2.1 The preceding section has described in various key respects how we have sought to implement as well as reconfigure our approach to enhancement. Alongside these front-line measures, it has taken other ancillary steps to enable an enhancement-focused culture to take firm root. These include:

- introducing extended Senate discussions (outlined in section 1.3.2.), which provide a key University-wide focus on themes of strategic importance. Recent learning- and teaching-related discussions have focused on improving feedback, graduate attributes and employability, e-learning, and the 21st-century academic;
- launching an Academic Strategy Group chaired by the Principal and including all Heads of College and Heads of School, together with Directors of key services and units. The meeting provides a more informal setting in which emerging opportunities and initiatives (including, but not confined to, those concerned with learning and teaching and the wider student experience) can be highlighted and reflected upon;
- setting up the Student Experience Forum, which aims to enhance the quality of the student experience at the University through deliberation, advice and action involving student and staff representatives. Its agenda is determined by its members, led by the Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), and throughout 2011 it has been convened by the EUSA Vice-President (Academic Affairs);

- seeking to improve communication and dialogue across the University about enhancement-focused strategic priorities and initiatives. This has entailed, for example, regular rounds of face-to-face consultations with schools and EUSA by Vice-Principals and other senior officers, on matters such as the new student records system (EUCLID), feedback to students, academic and pastoral support, the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) and Innovative Learning Week. Accessibility of relevant documentation and supporting resource materials has also been strengthened with designated websites and wikis.

#### *Institute for Academic Development*

- 4.2.2 The work of the recently established IAD (see section 2.6) will also be integral to embedding the institution's strategic approach to quality enhancement. IAD priorities and activities are being designed to support university and college strategic priorities around the enhancement of learning and teaching, skills development and student support, together with other relevant university-level policy initiatives, including the Internationalisation Strategy and the Distance Education Initiative.
- 4.2.3 The work of IAD is overseen by the IAD Advisory Board, chaired by the Vice-Principal Academic Enhancement and with a membership that includes senior college representatives, Senate committee Convenors, heads of support services and representatives from EUSA. The IAD Director is a member of the Senate Committees Convenors' Forum to ensure that there is a close operational as well as strategic connection between the activities of the IAD and the development and implementation of University Strategy (including annual reporting against key University Strategic Plan targets). IAD staff and secondees are also well represented on Senate and college committees and task and working groups.
- 4.2.4 Embedding of enhancement is fostered by the commitment to collaboration which lies at the heart of the IAD ethos. Collaboration spans work with schools and support services, both on specific priority areas (e.g. working with the Careers Service and other members of the Employability Strategy Group to support employability and graduate attributes) and specific programmes and projects (such as the HEA funded ScotPID PDP project). EUSA is another key partner, on collaborative projects such as the Inspiring Teaching Conference and the Postgraduate Festival.

#### *University indices of effective implementation*

- 4.2.5 The effectiveness of our strategies for enhancement is assessed via a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators. To take the most prominent example, there is annual monitoring of progress against the 33 quantitative targets in the Strategic Plan, with the resulting report being sent to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) following approval by Court. As of October 2010 (last Annual Report) the University was 'on track' to achieve 26 of the 33 targets in the Strategic Plan. The only remaining target which directly relates to enhancement is that of raising student satisfaction in the assessment and feedback section of the National Student Survey (NSS) to a level equivalent to the upper quartile of institutions surveyed, and that is dealt with more fully in sections 2.2.30 – 2.2.35.

- 4.2.6 A Balanced Scorecard was introduced in 2002/03 as an additional performance measurement tool. We are now in the process of integrating the Scorecard and the Strategic Plan, which will entail reducing the number of indicators to twelve.
- 4.2.7 Work has also very recently begun on developing a more integrated approach to reviewing and acting upon survey data relevant to the student experience. Under the broad theme of The Student Voice, the initiative will aim both to boost and coordinate scrutiny of the four major external surveys (see sections 3.4.12 - 3.4.15), and to explore how external survey data can be more productively interwoven with internally derived data, including course evaluation questionnaires.
- 4.2.8 A further source of evidence on effectiveness is initiative-driven. It is standard practice at the University to monitor the implementation of a significant new policy or other strategic measure, and so (to take one enhancement example) the Standards and Guiding Principles on Academic and Pastoral Support which were introduced in autumn 2010 will be formally reviewed by LTC in autumn 2011.

## College perspectives

### *College of Humanities and Social Science*

- 4.2.9 A number of recent changes have been made to support the college's effective implementation of its strategic approach to enhancement. A new committee structure is being implemented throughout 2010/11 which maps more closely onto the Senate committee structure. The new structure gives clear roles to the UG and PG Learning and Teaching Committees for enhancement and the new Directors of Quality Assurance Group for quality monitoring, replacing the College Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. The Head of College now convenes a high-level strategic Learning and Teaching Enhancement Convenors' Forum composed of UG and PG Deans, Associate-Dean Quality Assurance and the Directors of Academic and Student Administration.
- 4.2.10 The revised Learning and Teaching Strategy provides examples of practical actions that schools may decide to undertake in implementing it. Many of the examples are drawn from good-practice initiatives that are already underway in some schools in CHSS. The examples are intended to be neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, but rather to serve as a guide for schools in planning how to implement the strategy in ways appropriate to their academic discipline and to their current strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, the CHSS website provides Resources for Staff<sup>134</sup> aimed at sharing good practice and to assist in the development of initiatives to support the strategic priorities within the Learning and Teaching Strategy.
- 4.2.11 In further support of the implementation, schools will be responsible for:
- reviewing progress to date on all the priorities;
  - developing realistic targets for maintaining and improving the learning experience;
  - setting deadlines for the achievement of their agreed priorities;
  - reporting on progress to the college on an annual basis via the annual QA reporting process.

<sup>134</sup>CHSS Learning and Teaching Strategy, Resources for Staff: <http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/AcademicAdmin/LearnTeachStrategy/resourcesforstaff.htm>

- 4.2.12 The role of the college will be to provide a supportive infrastructure, fostering and sharing awareness of good practice, monitoring progress against agreed targets and reporting to relevant committees on actions.

*College of Science and Engineering*

- 4.2.13 A number of key measures were put into place to support the effective implementation of the initial version of the strategy. Some of the key measures in support of the strategy included a number of fixed-term appointments, including: College Learning Technologists on fixed term contracts and a Study Skills Advisor (from the former Centre for Teaching Learning and Assessment (TLA)) to work with course teams and evaluate the student perception of the courses.
- 4.2.14 In tandem with pedagogical developments and innovations within courses, extensive developments in the estate were undertaken. This was initially via the refurbishment of the Appleton Tower but more recently at King's Buildings in the JCMB Learning and Teaching Cluster (see Case Study A). Delivery of the new library at King's Buildings in 2012/13 will further increase the capacity for flexible learning on the site.
- 4.2.15 Activities are in progress as the revised version of the Strategy becomes embedded chiefly via the development of implementation priorities discussed in collaboration with schools. A website to capture innovations within College learning and teaching practices in the form of short media-rich 'micro' case studies is under development.

*College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine*

- 4.2.16 Implementation of the CMVM Learning and Teaching Strategy is overseen by the college's Undergraduate and Postgraduate Learning and Teaching Committees.
- 4.2.17 Initiatives relating to the core UG programme in Medicine (MBChB) are under the direction of the Centre for Medical Education (CME). Members of CME act as a think-tank and suggest new goals in developments based on in-house evaluations and research projects, external audits such as the General Medical Council (GMC) Quality Assurance of Basic Medical Education, the Enhanced Annual Return, the Teaching Programme Review (TPR) reports, new statutory requirements from the GMC and QAA, political imperatives, the changing needs of healthcare delivery, and developments in medical education literature.
- 4.2.18 Developments in the core veterinary medicine programme (BVM&S) are led by the Veterinary Teaching Organisation and the school's Learning and Teaching Committee, and these arrangements are echoed for Biomedical Sciences, with a Biomedical Teaching Organisation and a School of Biomedical Sciences Teaching Executive.
- 4.2.19 Progress in implementing the college's Learning and Teaching Strategy is regularly monitored and reported. The most recent of these reports was made to LTC in March 2011, and outlined a wide range of ongoing and completed initiatives being pursued across Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, each of which was linked to one or more of the six fundamental principles in the CMVM Learning and Teaching Strategy.

### *Implementation across the colleges*

- 4.2.20 Progress across the three colleges on the implementation of the college learning and teaching strategies is monitored by the LTC and reported through the annual reporting process to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC).

### **Comment**

- 4.2.21 Given the far-reaching changes which have been instituted over the last two years in the University's strategic engagement with enhancement, it is too early to be able to judge with confidence the effectiveness of their impact –and especially so bearing in mind that they seek not just to remould structures and fine-tune processes but also to bring about a transformation in attitudes, values and strength of engagement. Although the initial signs are overwhelmingly positive it will be crucial to remain alert to what emerges from the range of indices of impact currently in place, while also trying to develop new and more fine-grained sources of evidence.

## **4.3 Effectiveness of our use of external reference points for quality enhancement**

- 4.3.1 Making good use of external reference points, benchmarks and frameworks to guide effective practice plays an indispensable part in pursuing and refining our approach to sustaining and enhancing excellence. It entails being ready to actively seek out what can be learned from experiences and insights elsewhere rather than simply being alert to wider developments and, reflecting our high international standing, putting a premium on global as well as national reference points and advances in practice. Here we focus particularly on interpersonal contacts and networking, but section 4.4 is also relevant with respect to the use made of published work and internet sources.

### **International**

- 4.3.2 The International Student Barometer (ISB) is one means by which we can benchmark our services and facilities against other UK institutions as well as international universities. As a direct result of our active participation in the ISB, we have changed a number of our practices such as the information materials we provide to international students prior to arrival and the support arrangements on arrival. The University has adopted the ISB as an instrument to assess its performance against one of the targets in the Strategic Plan, to 'increase the overall level of satisfaction expressed in the support services section of the ISB and enter the upper quartile of institutions surveyed'.
- 4.3.3 Another valuable route to global benchmarking is via the University's membership of international networks, which helps it to keep abreast of challenges and advances in practice that resonate across national systems of higher education. In the Universitas 21 (U21) Group, for instance, the Student Mobility Network examines areas of best practice across the network such as credit transfer problems and guidance materials for study abroad students, while the U21 Teaching and Learning Network has focused on timely global issues such as e-learning and graduate employability. Another grouping, an international research

project led by Oxford University, the Network for Enhancing Teaching and Learning in Research-Intensive Environments, brings Vice-Principals/Pro-Vice-Chancellors for Teaching and Learning and Heads of Academic Development together annually to reflect on shared strategic challenges and opportunities. And, in the European context, the COIMBRA group, HEURO (Association of UK Higher Education European Officers) and the League of European Universities (LERU), with its Vice-Rectors for Teaching and Learning, provide a similar function. Together these various avenues for interchange provide us with practical and creative ways of improving our provision and enhancing our own students' experiences.

- 4.3.4 What should also not be overlooked is the extent to which our own quality-related practices and processes are seen as benchmarks of good practice by universities in other countries. One index of this is in the regular flow of invitations to the University's senior officers to contribute to conferences and symposia overseas as well as within the UK on matters related to learning and teaching in higher education, including, among others, keynotes by the Vice-Principal Academic Enhancement at higher education conferences in Sydney and Stockholm; an invited seminar on student feedback by the Assistant-Principal at the University of Bergen; and keynotes by the Director of the IAD at symposia at the Universities of Osaka and Tokyo and the Norwegian Association for Higher Education Conference. Another is in the international interest in programmes at the leading-edge of scholarship and practice like the MSc in Online Learning. Yet a third is world-wide as well as local interest in the University's efforts to enhance feedback, as evidenced by the number of visits to the University's Enhancing Feedback Website (see sections 4.4.8 – 4.3.9). Fourthly, we regularly host visits by groups of senior university colleagues from other countries keen to find out about our perspectives and approaches. All such interactions help us to keep abreast of developments elsewhere from which we can learn.

### National

- 4.3.5 The University is committed to making use of an extensive range of national reference-points, most prominently through the lenses afforded by the work of the QAA Enhancement Themes, sparqs, Vitae, the Higher Education Academy (HEA), and initiatives on student-led Teaching Awards and innovative assessment.

#### *Use of Scottish Enhancement Themes and ELIR resources*

- 4.3.6 The Enhancement theme of Integrative Assessment was led from Edinburgh, and resulted in a workshop programme and a series of booklets<sup>135</sup> that have since been highlighted in SFC-commissioned evaluations of the Enhancement Themes programme as exemplary dissemination materials. Within the University, those outputs (which have included extensive case vignettes from across the UK, the Far East and Australasia) have fed into University-wide, college and school seminars, committee discussions of changing practices, and orientation programmes for new teaching staff, complementing outputs from two other cognate projects (see section 4.3.13) and feeding into initial efforts (see section 4.4.6) to enhance feedback. They therefore served as baselines against which to calibrate existing assessment practices and identify potential innovative directions.

<sup>135</sup>Integrative Assessment Outcomes: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/IntegrativeAssessment/outcomes.asp>

- 4.3.7 The University has also drawn extensively on the work of the Research-Teaching Linkages theme. As discussed more fully in Case Study B, the research carried out by the CHSS Associate-Dean for Quality Assurance indicated clearly that students do benefit from studying at a research-led institution and appreciate the exposure to research carried out by staff. That work has also made us more aware of ways in which we could include students in research activity at an earlier stage, an awareness now reflected in the CHSS and CSE learning and teaching strategies.
- 4.3.8 At the time of writing, the current theme is Graduates for the 21st Century, and we have been actively involved in this theme too, particularly in interrelationship with the preceding theme of Employability, but also through the Vice-Principal Academic Enhancement's role as QAA Scotland consultant on the work of the institutions. Our participation in this theme has ensured that the development and implementation of the University's graduate attributes framework have been enriched through familiarisation with cognate frameworks in many other universities within and beyond the UK, and has led to cross-institutional collaborative inputs to enhancement conferences in 2010. It has also alerted us to promising inter-connections with our implementation of HEAR and with our externally funded Learning to Work 1 and 2 projects, leading to the more integrated approach focused around the recently established Employability Strategy Group (see section 2.3).
- 4.3.9 Lastly, our website shows how a key ELIR resource, the Indicators of Enhancement, is being deployed within our QE framework<sup>136</sup>. Another valuable resource, the international benchmarking report, Supporting Students' Success, fed into the Review of Academic and Pastoral Support (see sections 2.2.12 – 2.2.15).

#### *Collaboration with sparqs*

- 4.3.10 As outlined in sections 2.2.36 – 2.2.52, EUSA and the University have continued to work with sparqs throughout 2009-2011 to strengthen the student representation system.

#### *Vitae*

- 4.3.11 The Vitae Scotland and Northern Ireland Hub is hosted within the IAD, providing a route to engaging effectively with national and international policy and practice in supporting researchers. The Hub acts as a focal point for collaboration in Scotland, with the University in the role of catalyst or participant, depending on the project. Hosting the Hub allows Edinburgh to both lead advancements in researcher development, making use of the Hub network to engage with partner HEIs, and to be involved in collaborative projects initiated by the Hub or other HEIs<sup>137</sup>.

#### *Higher Education Academy*

- 4.3.12 There are several examples across the University where learning and teaching has been enhanced through individual and institutional involvement with the HEA. At the institutional level, we are taking part in the ScotPID programme and the Developing an Inclusive Culture in Higher Education programme, to further our own internal work on Teachability and accessibility of the curriculum. The Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching is accredited by the HEA and we are one of ten pilot institutions taking part in the HEA Accreditation of CPD project during 2011.

<sup>136</sup>Indicators of Enhancement: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-enhancement/indicators>

<sup>137</sup>Vitae, Scotland and Northern Ireland Hub: <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/1750/Scotland-and-Northern-Ireland-Hub.html>

- 4.3.13 The University also successfully bid for and led (in partnership with colleagues from Edinburgh Napier and Glasgow Caledonian Universities) an HEA-funded literature review and database, *Innovative Assessment Across the Disciplines (2006-2007)*<sup>138</sup>. The database fed into reviews of assessment practice at Edinburgh, and part of it also helped to provide some of the subject-specific examples in the *Enhancing Feedback* website. It also provides an evidence-informed underpinning for the work of the Assessment Futures Task Group.
- 4.3.14 At the discipline level, one example of the way in which involvement with HEA has enhanced provision and dissemination of good practice is the 'Science Education Placement'. This arose from the involvement of staff from the School of Chemistry with the HEA UG ambassador scheme. Papers establishing the placement, which allowed final year BSc students to complete a credit-bearing placement in secondary schools in lieu of laboratory-based research work, communicated the goals of the course to the wider college leading to the establishment of similar placements in the School of Physics and proposals for further development in the School of Engineering. The placements have obvious links into graduate attributes, employability, public understanding of science and widening participation (WP) agendas.

*Leadership foundation for higher education*

- 4.3.15 As part of a larger set of commissioned Leadership Foundation in Higher Education papers the Vice-Principal Academic Enhancement and Assistant Principal Taught Postgraduate Programmes have been contracted to prepare a paper and symposium keynote for senior UK university managers on the topic of *Leading and Managing Assessment: Strategic Challenges*. From a benchmarking perspective, this will furnish the University with an up-to-date picture of evolving strategic issues across the sector as well as enrich its Assessment Futures initiative.

*Sector-wide initiative on teaching awards*

- 4.3.16 Over the last two academic years, Universities Scotland in partnership with NUS Scotland and the HEA have sponsored a sector-wide initiative to spread more widely the establishment of student-led Teaching Award schemes. The initiative builds on the groundbreaking schemes launched at Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt Universities, and both institutions have enthusiastically committed themselves to supporting the initiative, which has already expanded from some six universities in its first year (2009/10) to double that number in 2010/11.

**Comment**

- 4.3.17 Our track record in benchmarking our enhancement work against national and international examples is a good one. Our shared-ownership approach to enhancement gives us scope to further develop the showcasing of school-led initiatives to promulgate enhancements institution-wide.

<sup>138</sup>*Innovative Assessment Across the Disciplines*: [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/detail/litreview/lr\\_2007\\_hounsell](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/detail/litreview/lr_2007_hounsell)

## 4.4 The effectiveness of our approach to identifying, disseminating and implementing good practice

4.4.1 In recent years, we have been progressively devoting greater efforts to identifying, celebrating and sharing examples of good practices, whether internally or externally generated, and whether they represent tried-and-tested approaches or are more explicitly innovative in nature. These efforts abound both at college level and University-wide, where the main methods of dissemination are: promulgation through committee structures; monitoring processes; enhancement initiatives and support for projects; EUSA Teaching awards and Inspiring Teaching Conference; IAD activities and resource materials; and a handbook and database.

### Promulgation through committee structures

4.4.2 The extended Senate discussions are a productive means of collating and sharing evolving good practices on a designated theme; recent themes have included employability, e-learning, PGT programmes and feedback. The somewhat less formal meetings of the Academic Strategy Group, introduced in 2009/10, perform a similar function for school-led initiatives. Each of the four Senate committees is also a valuable medium for such interchange on a range of topics, in tandem with the Senate committees' annual away-day, which typically focuses on a single strategic enhancement theme.

### Monitoring processes

4.4.3 As an integral part of the ongoing schedule of Teaching and Postgraduate Programme Reviews (see sections 3.1.24 to 3.1.31), schools are asked to identify instances of good practice which can then be documented in subsequent reports and highlighted in committee discussions. School and college annual monitoring reports perform a similarly important function through QAC, where good practices can be highlighted and commended for wider emulation.

### Enhancement initiatives

4.4.4 A valuable means of spreading good practices has been via major enhancement initiatives, where there can be both designated resources to identify relevant local and wider innovative practices and a timely focus around which to take stock of current and changing practices. One current example is the Assessment Futures initiative on extended-prose exam answers, where information is being collated on what strategies schools are contemplating or have already been trialling, in tandem with a wiki that makes available documented examples of initiatives internally and elsewhere<sup>139</sup>.

4.4.5 A second example is Innovative Learning Week. From autumn 2011 onwards, the academic year will be asymmetrical with eleven teaching weeks in semester 1 and twelve in semester 2. Following widespread consultations with schools and discussions at Senate, it has been agreed that (with the exception of a small number of opt-outs), week six of semester 2 will be used as an Innovative Learning Week where students can engage in a variety of novel learning experiences that would not be feasible within the conventional weekly timetable. Each school has therefore been invited to draw up plans that best meet the needs of its particular

<sup>139</sup>Assessment Futures Task Group: <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/insacdev/Assessment+Futures+Task+Group>

student constituencies, and as plans take firmer shape, these will be more widely promulgated through face-to-face discussions and a wiki, led by a working group under the remit of LTC.

- 4.4.6 A third recent example is the Enhancing Feedback work, where identifying and promulgating good practices form a key component of the strategic approach being pursued. One part of the focus has been on internally generated innovative practices, which have been supported and disseminated through a wide variety of forms:
- university, college and school workshops and seminars;
  - presentations at the EUSA Inspiring Teaching Awards and the eLearning, Professionals and Practitioners (eLPP) eLearning@Edinburgh Conferences;
  - cross-college panel sessions as part of the Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching to highlight exemplary feedback practices;
  - feature articles in University publications such as Bulletin, staff magazine, Staffnews, web newsletter, Edit, alumni magazine, the Annual Review and TLA's Interchange newsletter;
  - regular showcasing of good practices at Senate<sup>140</sup> and many other bodies;
  - a dedicated feedback award in the annual EUSA Teaching Awards;
  - giving priority within the Principals' Teaching Awards Scheme (see section 2.6) to pump-priming projects concerned with improving feedback;
  - systematically documenting examples of innovative practices on the theme 'Feedback That Makes a Difference', for inclusion in the Inspiring Learning handbook and database.
- 4.4.7 An equally significant focus has been a groundbreaking initiative, under the aegis of the IAD, to capture instances of innovative feedback strategies worldwide and make these available on a website that can assist individuals and groups to reappraise the provision of feedback within a course unit, programme of study or subject area and explore a range of possibilities for improving it.
- 4.4.8 The Enhancing Feedback Website<sup>141</sup> and Feedback Wheel (see figure 4.2) was launched in September 2010. It brings together over thirty evidence-based strategies for improving feedback and links these to a rich body of some two hundred school-specific and subject-specific examples drawn from across the globe. Google Analytics data shows that by mid-March 2011, the total number of Edinburgh visitors to the Enhancing Feedback website was 917, with an average viewing of 4.2 pages per visit.
- 4.4.9 There is also welcome evidence that both the website and our wider approach to improving feedback are valued elsewhere. Over and above Edinburgh visitors there have been some three thousand other visits from 82 countries, as well as invited keynote presentations and workshops for Swedish, Australian, Norwegian and Dutch colleagues, for the HEA (in Scotland and England), and five UK universities.

<sup>140</sup>Senatus 22 October 2008, 14 October 2009, 6 October 2010, and 9 Feb 2011: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/senate/archived-papers>

<sup>141</sup>Enhancing Feedback Website: <http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/Feedback/>



with EUSA to identify a pool of good teachers to enable the collection and sharing of good practice. In addition, EUSA and the Institute for Academic Development jointly organise an Inspiring Teaching Conference for staff and students of the University. This annual conference includes presentations and workshops from teaching award winners and nominees as well as an exhibition where schools and support services share examples of learning and teaching practice that they are particularly proud of. The links between this event and student perspectives on learning and teaching, all organised under EUSA's banner, provide an excellent forum for sharing practice with a focus on enhancing student engagement and experience.

- 4.4.13 The EUSA Teaching Awards is the largest student-led Teaching Award scheme in the UK, and in 2009/10, in response to its success, the HEA and the National Union of Students launched a Student Led Teaching Awards Project, seeking to extend such schemes to seven other Scottish higher education institutions and share best practice<sup>143</sup>. The University's Vice-Principal Academic Enhancement and EUSA's Vice-President (Academic Affairs) both represent Edinburgh as a leading exemplar in this project, which has been continued into 2010/11, with the number of institutions participating almost doubling.

### **IAD activities and resource materials**

- 4.4.14 The establishment of the Institute for Academic Development provides a timely opportunity to boost the dissemination and wider sharing of good practice. Secondments to the IAD (begun during 2010/11) are already proving to be a valuable way of stimulating and supporting the exchange and implementation of practice. One secondee is playing an active role in University PDP and graduate attributes projects (linked to the ScotPID project) whilst another is supporting the roll out of on-line peer feedback mechanisms. Our aim is for the new central physical home of the IAD to become an important location for exchange and discussion across the University.
- 4.4.15 The introduction of secondments is also helping to increase the involvement of colleagues from a range of disciplinary backgrounds and roles; typically a vital element of IAD workshops and events aimed at academic and teaching staff (for example modules from the Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching). The IAD is also home to an extensive range of resource materials, part externally sourced, part developed in-house and tailored to Edinburgh practices, and these will progressively be updated as it evolves<sup>144</sup>.
- 4.4.16 In the IAD's work on PG skills training, the extension and sharing of practice has been supported through the provision of devolved funding to schools. This funding is monitored annually against a set of institutional guidelines with schools asked to provide a short report on the approaches to skills training they have developed. These reports are shared through a single website with schools encouraged to collaborate with one another and with other support units like the Careers Service as well as the IAD.

<sup>143</sup>Student Led Teaching Awards: <http://www.studentledteachingawards.org.uk/>

<sup>144</sup>Institute for Academic Development: <http://www.iad.ed.ac.uk/>

## Handbook and database

- 4.4.17 Inspiring Learning is a novel University-wide initiative, led by the Vice Principal Academic Enhancement and the IAD, which is wholly geared to the more effective promulgation of innovative learning-teaching practices. Its aims are:
- to celebrate advances in all aspects of learning and teaching at Edinburgh that enhance the quality of students' experiences of university study;
  - to showcase these advances more widely across the schools, colleges and support services, so that all can learn from them, whether by example, emulation or adaptation;
  - to contribute to public understanding of how learning and teaching in universities are evolving to engage with new opportunities and challenges.
- 4.4.18 The first step in the initiative will be the production in autumn 2011 of an IAD Inspiring Learning Handbook, laying the foundations for a longer-term database that can be regularly updated and enlarged. The Handbook will focus around a cluster of themes which align to strategic goals, including new spaces for learning and teaching; enhancing feedback to students; interconnections between learning and research and scholarship; collaborative learning; engaging with student diversity; and bridging the academy and the graduate workplace. The Handbook also draws upon the groundbreaking EUSA Teaching Awards. Entries are being compiled from edited face-to-face interviews, yielding accounts of initiatives which can serve as exemplars for the subsequent database, where entries will be self-reported.

## Comment

- 4.4.19 In a University the size and scale of Edinburgh, strengthening mechanisms through which to surface and share good practices is challenging, but we have recently been making great strides forward, even though evidence of impact thus far is inevitably limited. The next step in addressing the challenge will be to facilitate more proactive, school-led documentation of advances in practice and here we see the role of the pending handbook and database as pivotal.

## 4.5 The effectiveness of our approach to enhancing collaborative provision

- 4.5.1 The University collaborates with a number of Scottish HEIs who, in their own right, are subject to the provisions of the SFC and QAA. In line with the national Quality Enhancement Framework, they develop and maintain their own strategies for the enhancement of their provision, the effectiveness of which is evaluated by means of their own ELIR. The enhancement activity is reported as part of the annual and periodic review processes in place.
- 4.5.2 Responsibility for the management, monitoring and enhancement of other collaborative arrangements rests with the relevant school or subject area to which the collaborative programme belongs. Where the University is the lead institution, there may be a management board that oversees the programme, including enhancement. In other cases, the programme will be included in the Annual Report submitted by the school to the relevant college.

- 4.5.3 The enhancement arising from collaborations is designed to benefit the schools and colleges that have local involvement with them. Issues arising from collaborative provision are monitored and reviewed at a local level within schools and colleges. This very much fits the devolved structure of the University. We recognise, though, that this has not given us the opportunity to look across our range of collaborations.
- 4.5.4 The role of the Collaborative Provision Task Group has proved useful in enhancing our management of collaborative links by providing clearer guidance to schools and colleges on their expectations in teaching collaborations.
- 4.5.5 As part of our effort towards enhancing our management of collaborative links, subject to availability, and depending on the nature of the collaborative agreement, staff involved in the collaborative programmes may be provided with access, on the same basis as University staff, to the library and staff development courses/events relevant to learning and teaching provided by the University. We also support exchange of teaching staff/PhD supervisors in support of staff development.
- 4.5.6 Collaborating with other institutions provides a useful way by which we can reflect on our own practice and enhance our own activities. For example, eca has been a key reference point for us as we have reviewed our policies and regulations in preparation for merger, and in developing our Student Support Services Review method.

### **Comment**

- 4.5.7 We consider that in general we have appropriate structures and approaches in place to promote the enhancement of the student learning experience across collaborative links. Due to the importance of safeguarding academic standards, the primary focus of our monitoring and review in relation to collaborative provision has tended to be on assurance of standards and quality. We recognise the scope to address more enhancement-related matters and to make greater use of our collaborative involvements as a key reference point for enhancement and not just assurance, and plan to do further work in this area.

## 5 Conclusion

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### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This Reflective Analysis (RA) provides an overview and discussion of the key developments since our last ELIR. Set against this context, the RA provides an indication of our future direction, including our merger with Edinburgh College of Art (eca), our plans to increase the proportion of postgraduate (PG) and international students, and to further the development of distance education.
- 5.1.2 Since our last ELIR in 2006 there has been a progressive transformation of structures and mechanisms and, we believe, ethos and cultures, with respect to learning and teaching and the wider student experience. Setting up the new Senate committees, for example, has allowed us to reflect on how we operate in a large research-intensive University committed to working effectively within a devolved structure.
- 5.1.3 We recognise the need to audit the effectiveness of our new structures and have already put in place an annual operational review of the Senate committees. In addition, we will conduct a strategic review of the four Senate committees at the end of academic year 2011/12, after three years of committee operation. The review will be led from within the Convenors' Forum and will involve all Senate committee members as part of the annual away-day in May 2012.
- 5.1.4 The Advisory Board of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) currently serves to monitor the operational effectiveness and future plans of the IAD. In addition, we will also conduct a strategic review of the IAD in early 2013 to include an emphasis on its strong formative and developmental function. The review will also have some element of externality.
- 5.1.5 The merger with eca provides us with another welcome reference point to reflect on what we do and why we do it. At the time of writing, the merger has been approved but will not take effect until 1 August 2011. In the run up to the merger, various working groups have been established to manage the merger implementation process. We will need to monitor the ongoing effectiveness of the merger, in particular the impact on a range of areas including the student experience.
- 5.1.6 Our ELIR comes at a time of significant change in higher education. While we are better placed than many to cope with the challenging and uncertain financial environment ahead of us, we must acknowledge that the strategies and plans reported in this RA may be subject to change as the funding situation becomes clearer. This uncertainty needs to be kept in mind with regards to the subsequent sections.

### 5.2 Management of the student learning experience

- 5.2.1 *Supporting and engaging students in their learning:* Working in effective partnership with the Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), we have made a number of significant enhancements in how we support and engage students in their learning that are appropriate to the current demography of our student body and our learning and teaching approaches. As the demography of our

student population evolves, to include a greater proportion of PG, international and distance learners, we will continue to monitor and develop our approach to supporting and engaging students, acknowledging that there is no static solution. Developments we would highlight are:

- *Feedback*: In 2011/12 we will be monitoring the effectiveness of the Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles, through enhanced quality assurance (QA) processes and through the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), to ensure they are having the intended impact on the student experience. Across the University we have put considerable effort into addressing the feedback agenda which has generated disappointing results in the National Student Survey (NSS). We anticipate a time lag between action and impact on the NSS results;
  - *Pastoral and academic support*: Significant developments have taken place with regards to pastoral and academic support, with support structures being developed and tailored to local contexts. Our intention is not to provide a single University-wide approach, but to ensure equality of opportunity across the institution for all students in accessing support within a set of Standards and Guiding Principles. Over 2011/12 we will be reviewing how effective these processes are in ensuring a high quality of support for all students in close consultation with EUSA;
  - *Student representation*: The student representation system provides a good platform for students to have a voice in the University. Working in partnership with EUSA and sparqs we have sought to strengthen this further. We need to ensure that students take up the opportunity to engage with the student representation system regardless of the nature of their study. Individual Schools will work with EUSA to try to overcome the general reluctance for engagement at School-level and actively explore ways to increase participation. We hope that by highlighting the value of the student representative role in the HEAR we will improve further the form and level of engagement.
- 5.2.2 *Employability/Graduate Attributes*: We have made good progress in respect of developments with employability and graduate attributes, including a growing understanding of the attributes of taught and research postgraduate students. This work will be strengthened by our involvement in the LTW2 Project. In the next year we will introduce an Edinburgh Award that will enable students to reflect on, and develop, their graduate attributes and will complement our use of PebblePad. We have committed to providing a Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) for all students graduating in 2013 and will focus in the short-term on ensuring that the mechanism by which this can be achieved is fit for purpose.
- 5.2.3 *Learning environment*: We have made substantial investment in the learning and teaching environment since the last ELIR which will stand us in good stead as we move towards more stringent financial times. The condition of some teaching spaces still requires investment which inevitably will be a challenge given the economic climate we find ourselves in. A key priority going forward will be to ensure that the digital learning environment keeps pace with the developments planned in distance education as well as meeting on-campus demands.

- 5.2.4 *Equality and diversity (E&D)*: Our RA clearly demonstrates our commitment to E&D and our achievements in access and widening participation (WP) to date. We acknowledge the ongoing importance of this work but have concerns about the impact of future funding and fee structures on our capacity to engage with the WP agenda going forward.
- 5.2.5 *Staff development*: The establishment of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) provides a significant opportunity to consolidate and strengthen our range of development and training opportunities for staff to support effective learning for our students. Going forward we will focus on providing training and development to support the ways in which our learning and teaching are likely to change in future with more distance learners, international and PG students.

### 5.3 Institution-led monitoring and review of quality and standards

- 5.3.1 While the underlying principles of our monitoring and review arrangements remain unchanged since the last ELIR, we have made a number of developments and enhancements to our QA framework. The main activities going forward will be focused on monitoring the effectiveness of these developments and continuing the roll-out of work that is currently underway, as detailed below.
- 5.3.2 *Annual Monitoring*: We have well established mechanisms in place for annual monitoring. Recent developments have taken place with regards to revised guidance for college annual QA reports and the planned introduction of student support services annual report templates. With regards to the former, we will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the revised guidance. With regards to the latter, we will progress the roll-out of the new annual template and associated guidance in 2011/12 and monitor its effectiveness at the end of the first year of operation.
- 5.3.3 *Periodic review*: We have well established processes in place for institution-led review at the subject level (Teaching Programme Reviews (TPRs) and Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPRs)), but have initiated a number of developments to the processes over the last two years. We will continue to monitor the changes that have been made and, in particular, continue to work towards harmonising the TPR and PPR processes, ensuring a consistent framework for review across all provision. We will continue to develop the review method for the Student Support Services Reviews with the first thematic review of the international student experience planned for 2012/13. We will review our internal review processes, and other QA processes, throughout 2011/12 to ensure they remain fit for purpose as we begin to develop more distance education.
- 5.3.4 *External reference points*: We will continue to review the ongoing consistency of our policies and practice with external reference points and sector best practice. In particular, we will continue to map explicitly the QAA Code of Practice precepts onto our policies and practice. We will review and, where appropriate, revise our Code of Practice on External Examining in the light of the recent UUK/GuildHE recommendations on external examining. We will keep a watching brief on the development of the Key Information Set (KIS) in England, and Scotland's response, with a view to informing the development of more precise guidance on the information set for course and programme handbooks.

- 5.3.5 *Management information:* We will continue to develop the Student Voice project for the analysis of external survey data. In addition, we will begin to review our internal student surveys throughout 2011/12, to ascertain the extent to which some degree of harmonisation is desirable in order to provide enhanced quality of information for monitoring and review purposes.
- 5.3.6 *Management of assessment:* We will complete and disseminate the revision of our assessment regulations, ensuring they take account of assessment practice at eca. In 2011/12, we will use this sound underpinning to revise our guiding principles on assessment and take forward the outcomes of the Assessment Futures consultation. We have revised the guidance for Boards of Examiners for all Boards planned for 2011/12. The next step will be to revisit the operation of Special Circumstances Committees. We also recognise the need for ongoing reflection on our engagement with and application of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).
- 5.3.7 *Linking monitoring and review to enhancement:* We will focus on strengthening the link between review outcomes and reporting progress through the annual reporting cycle. We will also focus on strengthening the link between review areas and the IAD in progressing recommendations, in particular feeding trends to the IAD to inform training and development opportunities in support of learning and teaching developments.
- 5.3.8 *Collaborative provision:* Our range of collaborative provision is set to increase in the future. We need to ensure that our guidance and monitoring and review arrangements keep pace with the development in collaborative provision. In the short term these will build on the work of the Collaborative Provision Task Group to strengthen our guidance and processes and progress the development of the collaborative provision web pages to provide a single location for guidance on collaborative provision.

## 5.4 Strategic management of enhancement

- 5.4.1 This RA has demonstrated our commitment to pursue and embed enhancement within the context of our distinctive mission, ethos and culture, and our mature devolved structure. Since the last ELIR our institutional understanding of enhancement has deepened and we have established the foundations from which strategic management of enhancement can become embedded. This will continue to evolve as we progress.
- 5.4.2 *Management and implementation of enhancement:* We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the University Learning-Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES) and the college Learning and Teaching Strategies. The next stage of development will be for schools to develop their own Learning and Teaching Strategies. We will continue to develop the role of the IAD in supporting and implementing enhancement within and across the University, in particular building on the success of the existing secondments.
- 5.4.3 *Reference points for enhancement:* Strategically we are embedded in the networks that develop and audit enhancement nationally and internationally. Our comparator groups are global as well as national and local. The next challenge for us will be

to incorporate an increasing number of reference points into the future with the development of value propositions in Russell Group universities.

- 5.4.4 *Identifying and disseminating good practice:* We recognise the need to become better at sharing and disseminating good practice. In the short-term, we will focus on sharing good practice through the development of the Handbook of Good Practice. In the longer term we will focus on developing expertise in managing change in proactive and strategic ways, ensuring that within our philosophy of enhancement we can engender a culture of active participation.
- 5.4.5 *Collaboration:* Our focus so far has been on monitoring and review in order to safeguard academic standards. We recognise the scope for, and need to address, more enhancement-related matters and to make greater use of our collaborative involvements as a key reference point for enhancement and not just assurance. We will continue to undertake developments in this area.

## 5.5 Summary

- 5.5.1 Our RA provides a critical appraisal of our current position as of mid-2011 and our plans for future development. Throughout the RA we have sought to reflect not only on our strengths but on areas where we feel further development may be required. Unless our priorities are forced to change, due to developments in the external environment, we expect that the areas highlighted above will be achieved during the next ELIR cycle.
- 5.5.2 The process of preparing for the ELIR has been beneficial. It has afforded us the opportunity for reflection and increased the effectiveness of our policies, processes and practices. It has prompted us to consider where improvements could be made. An extensive network of colleagues has been involved in this process, including academic and administrative staff, students and EUSA, which has promoted partnership, leading to strengthened links across the University. We look forward to the review visit and the opportunity to benefit further from the expertise of the review panel and QAA in this process.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: List of acronyms

Acronym	Title
ASLG	Academic Services Liaison Group
AV	Audio Visual
BOXI	Business Objects XI
CAM	Communications and Marketing
CAMOS	College Academic Misconduct Officers
CapturEd	A system for automatically capturing event and lecture presentations, including the facility to broadcast events live online.
CCAMS	Course Creation and Maintenance System
CHSS	College of Humanities and Social Science
CME	Centre for Medical Education
CMG	Central Management Group
CMVM	College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
Coimbra	Network of European universities named after the city of Coimbra, Portugal, and its university, one of the oldest in Europe
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPE	Continuing Professional Education
CSE	College of Science and Engineering
CSG	Corporate Services Group
CSPC	Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee
DEI	Distance Education Initiative
DELIC	Division of European Languages and Cultures
DESIG	Disability Committee and the Disability Equality Scheme Implementation Group
DLHE	Destination of Leavers in Higher Education
DLE	Digital Learning Environment
DoS	Director of Studies
DPTs	Degree Programmes and Tables
Degree Programme Specifications (DPS)	A programme specification is a concise description of the learning outcomes of a degree programme and the means by which the outcomes are achieved and demonstrated.
DRPS	Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study
DSA	Disabled Students' Allowance
DTC	Doctoral Training Centre
E&D	Equality and Diversity Strategy
EC	Estates Committee
eca	Edinburgh College of Art prior to the merger with the University of Edinburgh

Acronym	Title
ECA	The post-merger Edinburgh College of Art, which is a School within the University's College of Humanities and Social Science
ECOSSE	The Edinburgh Collection of Open Software for Simulation and Education
Edinburgh local GRADschool	A residential learning course, designed for doctoral researchers in the last 18 months of their PhD, aimed at raising participants' awareness of their personal and professional transferable skills.
EDMARC	Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee
Eduroam	Eduroam (Education Roaming) is a secure international roaming service for users in Higher Education.
EEMeC	Edinburgh Electronic Medical Curriculum
EEVeC	Edinburgh Electronic Veterinary Curriculum
eLPP	eLearning Professionals and Practitioners Forum
EOTAG	Equal Opportunities Technical Advisory Group
EQUIS	European Quality Improvement System
ERASMUS	The European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students
ERC	European Research Council
ESG	Employability Steering Group
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
EU	European Union
EUCLID	Edinburgh University Complete Lifecycle Integrated Development
EUSA	Edinburgh University Students' Association
F&GPC	Finance and General Purposes Committee
FE	Further Education
GESIG	Gender Equality Scheme Implementation Group
GMC	General Medical Council
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEAR	Higher Education Achievement Report
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HEURO	Association of UK Higher Education European Officers
HR	Human Resources
IAD	Institute for Academic Development
INTEGRATE	INTErlinking and Embedding GRaduate Attributes at Edinburgh
IS	Information Services
ISB	International Student Barometer
ISG	Information Services Group
IT	Information Technology
JISC	Joint Information Services Committee
LEAPS	Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools
LERU	League of European Research Universities

Acronym	Title
LTC	Senate Learning and Teaching Committee
LTSAG	Learning & Teaching Spaces Advisory Group
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MyEd	The University of Edinburgh Web Portal
MyEdGE	a set of resources to help students enhance and develop their skills outside their core academic subject that may be recorded using the graduate attributes profile in PebblePad
NSS	National Student Survey
PDP	Personal Development Planning
PeLF	Principal's e-Learning Fund
POP	Peer Observation of Practice
PPDP	Personal and Professional Development Planning
PPMD	Postgraduate Progressions Management Database
PPR	Postgraduate Programme Review
PRES	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
PSG	Principal's Strategy Group
PSRBs	Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
PTAS	Principal's Teaching Award Scheme
PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAC	Senate Quality Assurance Committee
QQR	Quinquennial Review
RA	Reflective Analysis
RAE	Research Assessment Exercise
RCUK	Research Council UK
RDP	Researcher Development Programme
REAG	Race Equality Action Group
REC	Senate Researcher Experience Committee
RTL	Research-Teaching Linkages
SAAS	Students Award Agency for Scotland
SAC	Scottish Agricultural College
SAMOS	School Academic Misconduct Officers
SASG	Student and Academic Services Group
ScotPID	Scottish PDP Institutional Development Programme
SCQF	Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
SIWG	Student Induction Working Group
SLC	Student Loan Company

Acronym	Title
SMART	Student Marks and Records Tool
SPGSC	School Postgraduate Studies Committee
SQAEC	Senatus Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee
SRA	Student Recruitment and Admissions
SSO	Student Support Officer
SUPA	Scottish Universities Physics Alliance
SWAP	Scottish Wider Access Programme
TATA	Taking Advantage of Time Away
TLA	Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment
TPR	Taught Programme Review
Transkills	Postgraduate Transferable Skills Unit
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Services
UCU	University and College Union
UKBA	UK Border Agency
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
VP-AE	Vice Principal – Academic Enhancement
VP-L&T/DQE	Vice Principal – Learning & Teaching & Director of Quality Enhancement
VRS	Visitor Registration System
WebCT	The University of Edinburgh Web Course Tools
WISSET	Women In Science, Engineering and Technology
WP	Widening Participation

## Appendix 2: List of references

1. The University of Edinburgh Estate Strategy 2010-2020  
<http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EstatesBuildings/Strategies/EstateStrategy.pdf>
2. Student and Academic Services Group (SASG), SASG structure chart  
[http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.10262!fileManager/SASGStructure.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.10262!fileManager/SASGStructure.pdf)
3. Further information on each SASG department  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-academic-services/departments>
4. Corporate Services Group (CSG) structure chart  
[http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.5788!fileManager/081111\\_csg\\_structure.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.5788!fileManager/081111_csg_structure.pdf)
5. Further information on each CSG business unit  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/corporate-services/about/units>
6. Information Services Group (ISG)  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/about/organisation>
7. Senatus Academicus  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/senate>
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## Appendix 3: Staff factsheet

Table 1: Staff headcount by staff type and full/part-time status

		Full Time	Part Time	Total
Academic Staff	Non-framework staff	318	31	349
Academic Staff	UE grades 01-05	13	5	18
Academic Staff	UE grades 06-10	2,527	392	2,919
Professional Support Staff	Non-framework staff	162	42	204
Professional Support Staff	UE grades 01-05	1,386	1,035	2,421
Professional Support Staff	UE grades 06-10	1,592	339	1,931
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,998</b>	<b>1,841</b>	<b>7,839</b>

Table 2: Staff headcount by gender

		Female	Male
Academic staff	Non-framework staff	125	224
Academic staff	UE grades 01-05	7	8
Academic staff	UE grades 06-10	1,197	1,722
Professional Support Staff	Non-framework staff	83	121
Professional Support Staff	UE grades 01-05	1,637	782
Professional Support Staff	UE grades 06-10	1,038	893
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,087</b>	<b>3,750</b>

Table 3: Staff headcount by staff type and college/support group

		College of Humanities and Social Science	College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	College of Science and Engineering	Corporate Services Group	Information Services Group	Student and Academic Services Group
Academic staff	Non-framework staff	6	294	49			
Academic staff	UE grades 01-05	5	5	10			
Academic staff	UE grades 06-10	951	771	1,197		5	
Professional Support Staff	Non-framework staff		94		98	5	10
Professional Support Staff	UE grades 01-05	301	435	282	1,096	195	114
Professional Support Staff	UE grades 06-10	208	446	400	292	377	209
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,467</b>	<b>2,044</b>	<b>1,938</b>	<b>1,486</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>333</b>

Table 4: Staff headcount by college, school and full/part-time status

College of Humanities and Social Science	Full Time	Part Time	Total
CHSS College Office	132	48	180
Business School	113	25	138
School of Arts, Culture and Environment	70	11	81
School of Divinity	35	7	42
School of Economics	29	0	29
School of Health in Social Sciences	31	27	58
School of History, Classics and Archaeology	93	7	100
School of Law	84	15	99
School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures	137	32	169
School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences	112	38	150
School of Social and Political Science	161	45	206
The Moray House School of Education	153	60	213
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>1,465</b>
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	Full Time	Part Time	Total
CMVM College Office	181	33	214
Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies	426	83	509
School of Biomedical Sciences	219	43	262
School of Clinical Sciences and Community Health	464	151	615
School of Molecular and Clinical Medicine	366	81	447
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,656</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>2,047</b>
College of Science and Engineering	Full Time	Part Time	Total
CSE College Office	57	7	64
School of Biological Sciences	527	80	607
School of Chemistry	144	10	154
School of Engineering	202	22	224
School of GeoSciences	222	35	257
School of Informatics	255	39	294
School of Mathematics	65	12	77
School of Physics and Astronomy	231	27	258
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,703</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>1,935</b>

Table 5: Staff headcount by college, school and staff type

College of Humanities and Social Science	Academic Staff	Professional Support Staff	Total
CHSS College Office	35	144	179
Business School	78	60	138
School of Arts, Culture and Environment	53	29	82
School of Divinity	33	9	42
School of Economics	20	9	29
School of Health in Social Sciences	43	15	58
School of History, Classics and Archaeology	79	21	100
School of Law	69	30	99
School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures	138	31	169
School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences	111	39	150
School of Social and Political Science	153	53	206
The Moray House School of Education	146	68	214
<b>Total</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>1,466</b>
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	Academic Staff	Professional Support Staff	Total
CMVM College Office	21	193	214
Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies	266	243	509
School of Biomedical Sciences	180	82	262
School of Clinical Sciences and Community Health	386	229	615
School of Molecular and Clinical Medicine	218	229	447
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,071</b>	<b>976</b>	<b>2,047</b>
College of Science and Engineering	Academic Staff	Professional Support Staff	Total
CSE College Office	1	63	64
School of Biological Sciences	372	235	607
School of Chemistry	118	37	155
School of Engineering	165	59	224
School of GeoSciences	183	75	258
School of Informatics	204	91	295
School of Mathematics	62	15	77
School of Physics and Astronomy	151	107	258
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,256</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>1,938</b>

Notes and definitions

The staff figures do not include Hours To Be Notified (HTBN) staff. These figures are not directly comparable with previous factsheet figures.

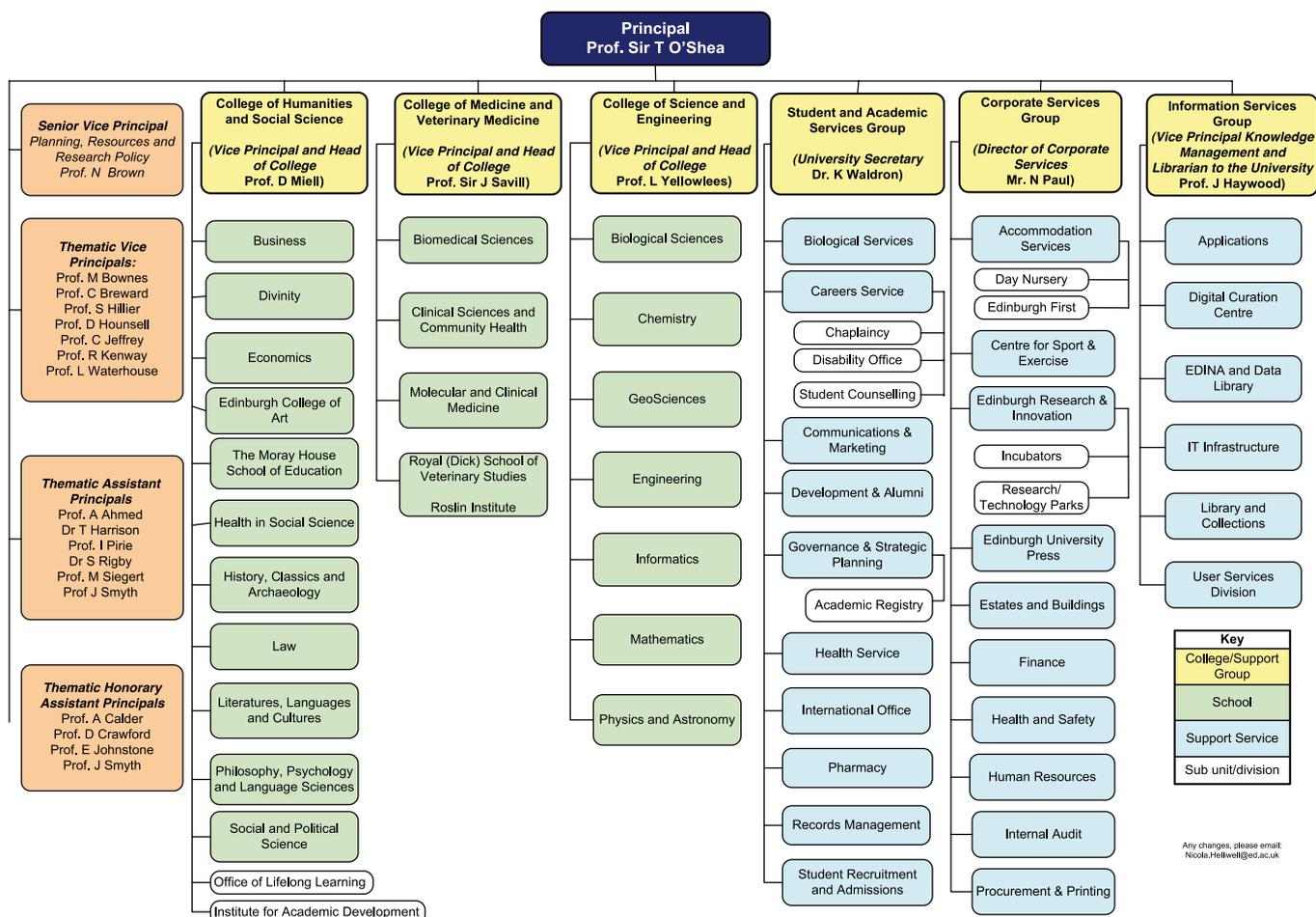
The staff types presented here reflect the changes from Pay Modernisation and the introduction of the single pay spine. The increase in staff since 2006/07 is due to the transfer and inclusion of the Roslin Institute to the University of Edinburgh.

Dates were taken from the HR database (Oracle HR) with an effective snapshot date of 31/01/11. The tables show a count of employee number. Where aggregate staff data is less than 5, the figures have been rounded up due to data protection considerations. **Totals may not match exactly.**

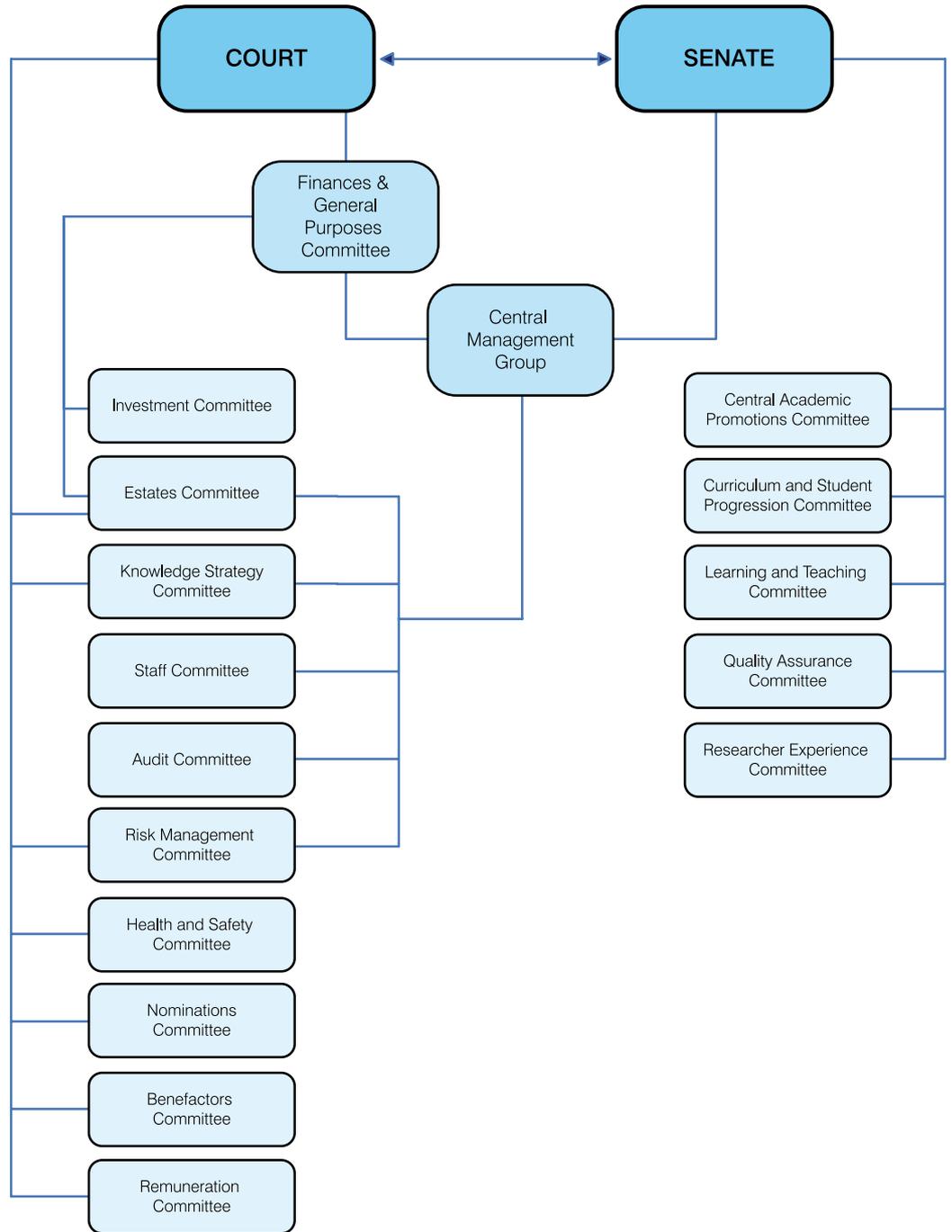
The following exclusions were applied to the data:

- Assignment Status Type Not InList: "Terminate Process Assignment"
- Grade Not InList: "APP, CPP, MPP, NONE, TPP"
- Employment Category Not InList: "non-employ"

Appendix 4: Organisational structure as at May 2011



### Appendix 5: Reporting relations between Senate and Court



**Appendix 6: Summary of actions taken in response to ELIR Report 2006**

Para	ELIR action points	Status
<b>Theme 1: The ability of the institution's internal review systems to monitor and maintain quality and standards</b>		
60 & 161	"consider the effectiveness of the current remits and operation of the Senate and its key academic committees. In particular, the University has identified the need to consider whether a different model, to allow a separate focus on the differing issues arising from taught and research postgraduate provision, would enhance overall institutional consideration of postgraduate matters and of teaching (both undergraduate and postgraduate) more generally. Consideration should also be given to the most effective location for the audit function which is currently shared between the senatus undergraduate and postgraduate studies committees and the Senatus Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee."	Complete: action taken (See RA sections 1.3.5 to 1.3.19)
62 & 163	"...make more explicit reference to the elements of the Academic Infrastructure in the process documentation. This would allow staff to be confident of the alignment of their endeavours with those being pursued across the sector."	Action taken and continuing (see RA section 3.3.13 to 3.3.20)
63 & 164	"...seek further security of standards by continuing work on the management of assessment and progressing systematically the actions arising from [The University's] work designed to bring greater consistency to the operation of its boards of examiners."	Complete: action taken (see RA sections 3.5.19 to 3.5.20)
57, 58, 64 & 165	"...explicitly differentiate the learning outcomes by level, and seek to align these outcomes with the assessments students undertake."  " ...there would be benefit, particularly to students, in the programme specifications identifying differentiated learning outcomes according to level of study, and clarifying the links between the learning outcomes and assessment practice."  " ... the University should take action in two areas: first, it should set expectations of progression at all levels through the use of level descriptors that are consistent with the SCQF; "	Action taken and continuing (see RA sections 3.5.6 to 3.5.14 and 3.3.17 to 3.3.20)
64 & 165	"...secondly, it should progress its current considerations with respect to assessment practice and its work in ensuring greater consistency in the operation of boards of examiners. "	Complete: action taken (see RA sections 3.5.19 to 3.5.20)
<b>Theme 2: The institution's arrangements for ensuring that the information it publishes about the quality of its provision is complete, accurate and fair</b>		
69 & 166	"...establish systematic mechanisms for ensuring that all the information it publishes about the quality of its provision is complete, accurate and fair."	Complete: action taken (see RA section 3.6.1 to 3.6.16)
<b>Theme 3: The effectiveness of the institution's approach to promoting an effective learning experience for students</b>		
118 & 167	"...continue to work with EUSA to develop student engagement in a range of ways including securing the links between School and class representatives, facilitating improved postgraduate representation, particularly at the School and College levels, and involving students as members of Teaching Programme Review (TPR) panels."	Complete: action taken (see RA sections 2.2.36 to 2.2.52)

Para	ELIR action points	Status
119 & 168	"...reflect on how to develop a clearer view of the undergraduate student experience and, from this, form a systematic data set which could be used to enhance the learning opportunities provided."	Action taken and continuing (see RA sections 3.4.12 to 3.4.15)
120 & 169	"...build on the work [The University] is undertaking to improve its management of assessment and, in particular, should seek to improve the arrangements for providing feedback on students' assessed work as an aid to learning."	Complete: action taken (see RA sections 2.2.30 to 2.2.35 and RA Appendix 8)
121 & 170	"...establish a clear understanding of the Director of Studies role which should be communicated to all staff and students. Given the importance of the role, there would be benefit in ensuring that adequate training and ongoing support is provided to all Directors of Studies."	Action taken and continuing (see RA sections 2.2.12 to 2.2.18)
122 & 171	"...consider how the supply of [support] services can be kept in adequate proportion to student demand."	Complete: action taken (See RA sections 2.2.19 to 2.2.22)
124 & 171	"...ensure that all students who fulfil a teaching role undertake the training which is provided and that they receive ongoing support for their teaching activity."	Action taken and continuing (see RA sections 2.6.22 to 2.6.23)
125 & 174	"...make more rapid progress with institution-wide implementation [of PDP] in order that the benefits of its introduction can be realised by all students."	Action taken and continuing (see RA sections 2.3.17 to 2.3.20)
<b>Theme 4: The combined effect of the institution's policies and practices for ensuring improvement in the quality of teaching and learning</b>		
146 & 175	"... clarify the locus of responsibility for quality enhancement and the oversight of enhancement activity, particularly at institutional level."	Complete: action taken (See RA sections 1.3.5 to 1.3.19 and 4.1.1 to 4.1.5)
147 & 176	"...make more systematic use of the outcomes of the whole range of [The University's] quality assurance procedures and processes."	Complete: action taken (see RA sections 3.7.1 to 3.7.3)
148 & 177	"...develop the [Peer Observation of Teaching] system in ways that will demonstrate to staff the advantages of peer review in facilitating reflection on teaching and learning practices across the institution."	Action taken and continuing (see RA section 2.6.28)
149 & 178	"...consider the extent to which the Centre [for Teaching, Learning and Assessment]'s training and staff development activities are sustainable in its current form and location."	Complete: action taken (see RA sections 2.6.1 to 2.6.26)

## Appendix 7: Student factsheet 2010/11

Table 1: Students by level and method of study

	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Undergraduate	17,778	1,200	18,978
Taught Postgraduate	3,320	2,083	5,403
Research Postgraduate	2,330	1,275	3,605
All levels of study	23,428	4,558	27,986

Table 2: Students by level of study and college of programme

	Humanities & Social Science	Medicine & Vet. Medicine	Science & Engineering	Total
Undergraduate	11,025	2,322	5,631	18,978
Taught Postgraduate	3,722	803	878	5,403
Research Postgraduate	1,555	786	1,264	3,605
All levels of study	16,302	3,911	7,773	27,986

Table 3: Students by level of study and gender

	Female	Male	Total
Undergraduate	10,715	8,263	18,978
Taught Postgraduate	3,180	2,223	5,403
Research Postgraduate	1,742	1,863	3,605
All levels of study	15,637	12,349	27,986

Table 4: Students by level of study and age group at start of programme

	17 or under	18 to 20	21 to 24	25 or over	Total
Undergraduate	2,388	14,051	1,592	947	18,978
Taught Postgraduate	0	39	2,318	3,046	5,403
Research Postgraduate	0	6	1,382	2,217	3,605
All levels of study	2,338	14,096	5,292	6,210	27,986

Table 5: Students by level of study and domicile grouping at start of programme

	Scotland	Other UK	EU	Overseas	Channel Islands and Isle of Man	Total
Undergraduate	8,260	5,725	1,711	3,164	118	18,978
Taught Postgraduate	1,862	795	832	1,911	5	5,405
Research Postgraduate	1,351	612	551	1,089	5	3,608
All levels of study	11,473	7,132	3,094	6,164	128	27,991

Table 6: Students by college and school

College of Humanities and Social Science	Undergraduate	Taught Postgraduate	Research Postgraduate	Total
Business School	819	485	91	1,395
Moray House School of Education	1,630	1,006	131	2,767
School of Arts, Culture and Environment	798	301	161	1,260
School of Divinity	285	36	157	478
School of Economics	612	56	24	692
School of Health in Social Sciences	114	382	55	551
School of History, Classics and Archaeology	1,064	138	158	1,360
School of Law	861	511	116	1,488
School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures	1,643	202	203	2,048
School of Philosophy, Psychology and Languages Sciences	1,075	153	171	1,399
School of Social and Political Science	958	429	282	1,669
College of Humanities and Social Science	1,171	23	6	1,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,030</b>	<b>3,722</b>	<b>1,555</b>	<b>16,307</b>
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	Undergraduate	Taught Postgraduate	Research Postgraduate	Total
Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies	709	99	129	937
School of Biomedical Sciences	360	152	176	688
School of Clinical Sciences and Community Health	9	499	210	718
School of Molecular and Clinical Medicine	0	44	131	175
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	1,244	9	140	1,393
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,322</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>3,911</b>
College of Science and Engineering	Undergraduate	Taught Postgraduate	Research Postgraduate	Total
School of Biological Sciences	1,131	62	284	1,477
School of Chemistry	565	10	157	732
School of Engineering	1,357	161	255	1,773
School of GeoSciences	946	236	165	1,347
School of Informatics	493	233	212	938
School of Mathematics	550	135	59	744
School of Physics and Astronomy	469	41	129	639
College of Science and Engineering	120	0	5	125
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,631</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>1,266</b>	<b>7,775</b>
<b>All Colleges</b>	<b>18,983</b>	<b>5,403</b>	<b>3,607</b>	<b>27,993</b>

## Notes

- All figures represent headcounts of students currently matriculated at the snapshot date shown on the report. Sabbatical students currently serving a year as EUSA student representatives are excluded from these figures.
- This report represents all students who have matriculated during the session indicated as of the snapshot date. It includes all students with the exception of those students who withdrew from the University within five weeks of Semester 1 commencing. This filter is used as a means of approximating the student population, as defined by the Scottish Funding Council.
- Domicile on entry groupings refers to the student's area of permanent residence to the University. This information is declared by the student at matriculation on entry to the first year of the programme of study.
- Where aggregate data is less than five, the figures have been rounded up due to data protection considerations. **Totals may not match exactly.**

## Appendix 8: Reviewing and enhancing feedback

1. Over the period since the last ELIR, the University has been making strenuous efforts to review and strengthen the quality of feedback provided to students on their progress and performance. Students' concerns about the consistency of feedback have been highlighted in the results of the annual National Student Surveys, where the University's scores on questions about feedback have not matched the generally high figures evident on other aspects of teaching and learning and the student experience.
2. In addressing this significant challenge, the strategy adopted by the University has had four main components: setting and communicating standards and expectations, monitoring performance and actions, identifying and promulgating effective practices, and promoting the review and development of feedback and assessment practices. The last of these is considered in section 4 of the Reflective Analysis. The first three are more fully examined below than was feasible in section 2.2 of the Reflective Analysis.

### Setting and communicating standards and expectations

3. Across the University, feedback differs considerably from one subject area to another in terms of its purposes, modes, timing and frequency. Whatever the form it takes, however, provision has to be in accordance with the University's Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles, which were endorsed by Senatus in June 2010 for implementation in the academic year 2010/11.
4. The Standards and Guiding Principles were drawn up by a limited-life Enhancing Feedback Task Group, set up under the auspices of the University's Learning and Teaching Committee, and including college and student representatives. A bookmark summary of the standards was circulated to students at the start of the 2010/11 academic year, and schools were encouraged to discuss with students on a course-by-course basis how they were being implemented. The bookmark included a link to the Enhancing Feedback website (see RA Section 4).

There has also been a follow-up round of face-to-face meetings about the Feedback Standards and Guiding Principles with student bodies and with schools, and EUSA has run a linked campaign under the theme 'Are You Getting Enough Feedback?'.

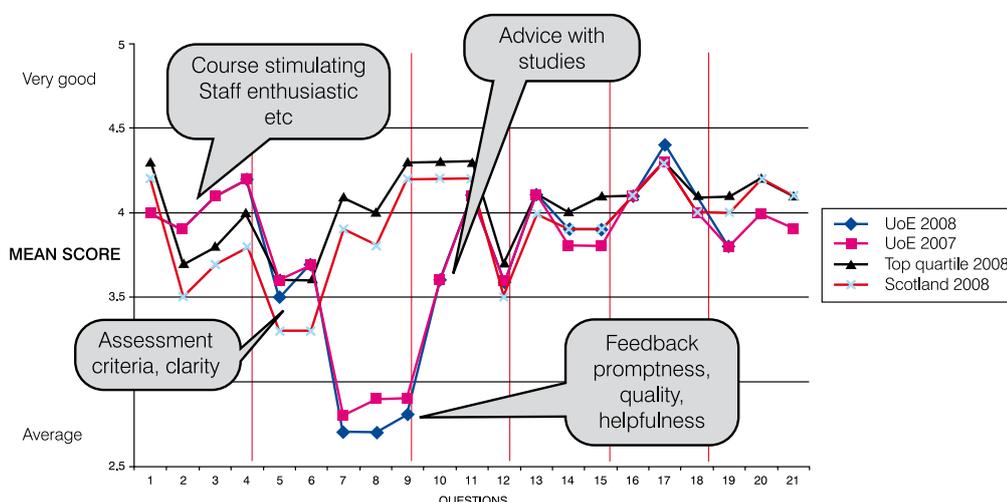
5. These University-wide steps have been accompanied by an array of actions across Colleges and Schools to clarify expectations, including for example, a guidance brochure for staff and students on feedback in the core degree programme in Medicine, the introduction of staff/student concordats in Engineering courses on how, when and where feedback will be provided, and web-based advice to Social and Political Science students on how to make the most of feedback in the subject area.

### **Monitoring performance and actions promoting review and development**

6. Mechanisms have also been developed to ensure that feedback performance and actions are being systematically overseen, while at the same time fostering the review of feedback and linked assessment practices. Feedback performance has chiefly been monitored through the lens of annual NSS results, made available to schools in spreadsheet form which shows results by subject and by school, with supplementary school-level data (from 2010 onwards) providing comparisons with the previous year and over the period since the University had entered the NSS. Schools are also encouraged to review the subject-level NSS data to identify any within-school differences and to compare their scores with the sector subject averages.
7. University-wide analyses of NSS data have also evolved in significant ways. Initially, the focus was on aggregated results, as in figure 1, pinpointing the disparity between the University's aggregated 2007 and 2008 scores on assessment and feedback items and those of other Scottish and UK universities. The broad underlying message at Senatus in September 2008 was therefore that all Schools and Colleges needed to improve feedback substantially, building on the showcasing by schools of ways in which they were seeking to generate 'fast, effective feedback'.
8. Subsequent analyses of the NSS results have become much more differentiated, recognising that the need to improve has varied widely across Schools. For the 2009 results, a 'traffic-lights' coding system was used to place Schools in three performance groups relative to the attainment of the Strategic Plan targets of upper-quartile NSS scores on 'overall satisfaction' and on 'assessment and feedback'. There were also face-to-face discussions involving the VP-Academic Enhancement and each Head of School and senior colleagues, to review the 2009 results and to devise and agree a plan of action to sustain and enhance student levels of satisfaction. All schools were required to report on their action plans at an extended Senatus discussion in October 2009, at which each Head of School also made a short presentation identifying an instance of good feedback practice that could be more widely shared. Complementing these various measures, the Senatus Quality Assurance Committee revised its guidelines to ensure that increased attention was given to NSS scores in annual course monitoring procedures and teaching programme reviews.

9. The 2010 NSS results showed a mixed picture which included some welcome signs of improvement, while underscoring the need to consider the University's overall scores not just on assessment and feedback, but on other key dimensions in the NSS survey. Edinburgh's results put it firmly in the top UK quartile for the scales 'The teaching on my course', 'Organisation and management', 'Learning resources' and 'Overall satisfaction'. And on the 'Assessment & Feedback' scale, the 2010 results for the University as a whole showed significant improvements compared to 2009 on 'clear assessment criteria' (up 6 per cent), 'prompt feedback' (up 5 per cent), and 'detailed comments' (up 8 per cent). Despite raised feedback scores in two out of three of the 21 schools, however, a significant gap remained between Edinburgh's average for 'Assessment and feedback' (51 per cent) and the UK quartile threshold of 67 per cent, and for the third year in succession it had the worst score on this measure of all UK universities.
10. A finer-grained comparative analysis was therefore undertaken of school scores on the three feedback items. This underpinned new measures agreed by PSG at its meeting on 28 September 2010. In consequence, sixteen schools where fewer than 50 per cent of students had agreed that feedback had been prompt were required to monitor feedback turnaround times each semester and to report these early in the following semester to their Honours students, their Head of College and PSG. A subset of eight of these Schools was additionally required to draw up more stringent action plans to address other aspects of feedback where provision had not met the University's expectations. The VP-AE has since held face-to-face discussions with senior staff in all eight Schools.
11. Additionally, a series of NSS briefing seminars was launched in 2010/11 to give Heads of School better access to results by degree programme and to information on how students are categorised in the data by degree programme, subject area and School. The seminars form part of a wider Student Voice project, which is developing a more coordinated approach to external student surveys (see also section 4).

**Figure 1: Analysis of NSS results for University of Edinburgh, 2007 and 2008, relative to Scottish HEIs and the top quartile of UK HEIs**



## Appendix 9: University of Edinburgh collaborative programmes as at 26 April 2011

Table 1: Undergraduate degrees

Programme name	Collaborative partners	UoE school responsible	Students at UoE	Duration
MA(H) Fine Art	Edinburgh College of Art	Arts, Culture & Environment	79	Longstanding; merger going ahead
MA(H) Architecture	Edinburgh College of Art & Heriot-Watt University	Arts, Culture & Environment	229	2009 Some external modules can be taken at HWU
MA(H) Architecture in Creative & Cultural Environments	Edinburgh College of Art & Heriot-Watt University	Arts, Culture & Environment	0	2009

Table 2: Taught postgraduate degrees

Programme name	Collaborative partners	UoE school responsible	Students at UoE	Duration
MArch Master of Architecture	Edinburgh College of Art & Heriot-Watt University	Arts, Culture & Environment	67	2009
Master of Architecture (Studies)	Edinburgh College of Art & Heriot-Watt University	Arts, Culture & Environment	10	2009
MSc/Dip Architectural Project Management (distance learning)	Heriot-Watt University	Arts, Culture & Environment	31	2005
PGCert International Business	ENPC School of International Management (Paris)	Business School	0 This is a closed programme: CPD arrangement.	2008
MSc Arab World Studies	Universities of Durham & Manchester	Literatures, Languages & Cultures	21	2006
MChS Master of Chinese Studies	University of Glasgow	Literatures, Languages & Cultures	17	2005
PGCert Practice in Government & Public Policy	Hansard Society Scotland	Social & Political Studies	0	2008

Programme name	Collaborative partners	UoE school responsible	Students at UoE	Duration
MSc Surgical Sciences	Royal College of Surgeons	Medicine	270	2007
MSc/Cert/Dip Health Information Governance	Royal College of Surgeons	Medicine	11	2008
MSc/Cert/Dip Health Informatics	Royal College of Surgeons	Medicine	45	2008
ChM Master of Surgery	Royal College of Surgeons	Medicine	0	Starting 2011
MSc/Cert/Dip Pain Management (dist learning)	University of Sydney (licence agreement, not joint)	Medicine	26	2005
MSc Transfusion, Transplantation and Tissue Banking	Blood Transfusion Service	Medicine	35	2005
MSc Applied Animal Behaviour and Welfare	Scottish Agricultural College	Veterinary Studies	44	Longstanding arrangement
MSc Biodiversity and Taxonomy of Plants	Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh	Biological Sciences	34	1994
MSc Structural Engineering & Mechanics PGDip	University of Glasgow	Engineering	51	2004
MSc Fire Safety Engineering (Erasmus Mundus)	Ghent and Lund	Engineering	11	2010
MSc Petroleum Geoscience (formerly GeoSEAD)	Heriot-Watt University & Newcastle University	Geosciences	41	2005
MSc Ecological Economics	Scottish Agricultural College	Geosciences	66	Longstanding agreement
MSc Environmental Protection and Management	Scottish Agricultural College	Geosciences	45	Longstanding agreement
MSc Food Security	Scottish Agricultural College	Geosciences	Starting 2011/12	2011
MSc European Masters in Informatics	Trent & Aachen	Informatics	24	2004
MSc Financial Mathematics	Heriot-Watt University	Mathematics	23	1997

Table 3: Research postgraduate degrees

Programme name	Collaborative partners	UoE school responsible	Students at UoE	Duration
PhD Fine Art	Edinburgh College of Art	ACE	0	Longstanding; merger going ahead
PhD Arab World Studies	Durham & Manchester	Literatures, Languages & Cultures	0	2006
PhD Experimental Psychology and Cognitive Neuroscience	Naples and Trieste	PPLS	3	2005
PhD EXACT – PhD in Politics	Cologne	SPS	8	2010
PhD Cell, Animal and Population Biology	Scottish Agricultural College	Biological Sciences	105	Longstanding agreement
EngD System Level Integration	ISLI: Glasgow, Strathclyde & HW	Engineering	21	1999
PhD U21 Universities	U21 partners: global partnership	Cross-University	2	2009
PhD Ecology and Resource Management	Scottish Agricultural College	Geosciences	3	2004
PhD EuroSPIN: European Study Programme in Neuroinformatics (Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctoral Programme)	KTH Royal Institute of Technology; Albert-Ludwig University of Freiburg; National Centre for Biological Sciences, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research	Informatics	2	2010
Macquarie	Macquarie University, Australia	Cross-University	2	2009
Franco Scottish	Provence (Aix-Marseille I) Joseph Fourier (Grenoble I) Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris III) Pierre et Marie Curie (Paris VI) Denis Diderot (Paris VII) François Rabelais (Tours)	Cross-University	Individual student agreements.  1	2003
Joint Doctoral Programme: National University of Singapore	National University of Singapore	CHSS	0	2011
Vrije Universiteit Brussels	Vrije Universiteit Brussels	History, Classics and Archaeology	1	2007



