



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Enhancement-led
Institutional Review:
Reflective Analysis



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Foreword by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor



The University of Edinburgh is committed to excellence in education. We are working to ensure that the University's remarkable achievements in research, reputation and rankings are matched by those in student experience, teaching and learning.

To achieve this, we have made substantial investment in the student experience and the teaching and learning environment since the last Enhancement-led Institutional Review. Significant improvements have been made to the University's estate, providing state-of-the-art teaching, study and library spaces. Considerable investment has also been made in institution-wide projects aimed at enhancing the student experience, in particular pastoral and academic support.

Our commitment to widening participation ensures that we continue to recruit the most promising students. As a result of our contextualised admissions process, sector-leading outreach activities and generous bursary schemes we are attracting and supporting more students from under-represented groups than ever before.

Through investment in distance education and MOOCs we are further increasing access to a high-quality University education. Our innovative use of online and technology-enhanced learning is enriching the experience of learners both on campus and further afield.

The international diversity of our University community is one of our greatest assets and hugely enriches the student experience. We have increased the opportunity for our students to gain an international experience as part of their degree and we are increasing our international partnerships in support of this.

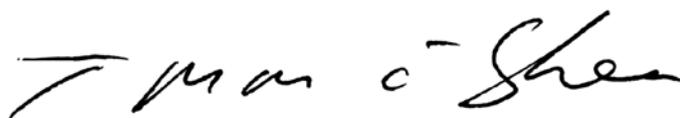
We are proud that our graduates are highly sought after by employers. We are working to equip our students to compete in the global marketplace and to be effective contributors to society. Accordingly, we have placed graduate attributes and employability at the heart of the student experience. We have substantially increased the range of opportunities for our students to gain relevant skills and experience, both through their studies and by contributing to broader society through their extra-curricular activities. We are increasingly recognising those achievements with the Edinburgh Award.

Excellence in education is underpinned by high quality teaching. To support this, we have made substantial advances in professional development

for teaching practice and in recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching. Building on the success of our outstanding Institute for Academic Development, we have put in place a framework for Continuing Professional Development to support staff through various stages of their careers, and we have strengthened the recognition of teaching excellence through the academic promotion process.

Our effective partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association is key to our efforts in delivering an outstanding student experience. The student voice is embedded in all we do. We value our students as co-creators and are increasingly giving students the agency to create their own learning.

Preparing for the Enhancement-led Institutional Review has provided the University community an opportunity to reflect on what we do well and where we can further enhance our practice. We welcome feedback from the review team on the significant enhancements since the last review as we work towards the development of a new vision for learning and teaching.



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Principal and Vice-Chancellor
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1 University context and strategic framework

1.1. Key features of the University's context and mission

Overview

1.1.1. The University of Edinburgh is a large and diverse research-intensive University with a clear commitment to excellence in learning and teaching. The University has invested heavily in learning and teaching and the student experience since ELIR 2011 via a systematic programme of enhancement activity and senior appointments. We have developed an approach to the management of strategic enhancement projects that is characterised by partnership working with Edinburgh University Students Association, colleges and schools, underpinned by robust governance, and supported by our mature Senate Committee structure. This section provides an overview of the University, its structure, governance and strategy in support of learning and teaching; a discussion of major developments since ELIR 2011; and a forward look to the major projects and initiatives currently in planning.

The University

- 1.1.2. The University of Edinburgh is one of Scotland's ancient universities. It is the largest Scottish University with a population of 33,110 students comprising 21,773 undergraduates, 6,530 taught postgraduates and 4,807 research postgraduates. The University has over 12,000 staff of whom around half (6,100) are categorised as academic. Edinburgh is a distinctly Scottish university, but our reach and aspirations are global: over 30 per cent of our total student population come from more than 120 countries outside the UK and our international affiliations include membership of Universitas 21 (U21) and the League of European Research Universities (LERU).
- 1.1.3. We provide an extensive range of courses and programmes at all levels. 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 study in 104 of the 164 principal subjects defined by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 2012/13. Our breadth is one of our great assets and appeals to potential and current students. Our four year undergraduate degree articulates well with national and international qualifications frameworks and affords significant flexibility. We offer an extensive and expanding range of postgraduate masters programmes, both on campus and online, and we provide excellent and extensive opportunities for postgraduate research students including substantial access to research funding and research training.
- 1.1.4. As a research-intensive University, we aim to ensure our students benefit from our research activity. Our position as one of the UK's leading research universities was reflected in the results of the Research Exercise Framework 2014 which placed the University among the top four in the UK and number one in Scotland by volume of designated 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent' (4* and 3*) research. Our

submission was one of the largest and most comprehensive in the UK, and each of the University's three colleges has at least one area ranked top in the UK.

- 1.1.5. In 2013/14 the University had a total income of £780.6m. Of this, tuition fees made up just below 25 per cent at £194m, and research income comprised 27 per cent at £216m. In the same year we received £204m of grant income for teaching, research and other purposes from the Funding Councils, and earned £147m of income from other sources. Endowments and investments generated a further £19m income.¹
- 1.1.6. The University has a large and diverse estate ranging from historic iconic buildings to state-of-the-art laboratories, teaching spaces and library and learning facilities. Our research and teaching spaces span 257 separate buildings within our estate; a total area of 284,367m². Teaching is organised across a number of campuses: the Central and Moray House campuses (primarily housing the schools in the College of Humanities and Social Science), the King's Buildings campus (housing the schools in the College of Science and Engineering), the Little France campus (Medical School) and the Easter Bush campus (the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies).

Structure of the University

- 1.1.7. The University's organisational structure is shown in Appendix 1. The academic structure of the University is based on 3 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). Each college is headed by a Vice-Principal responsible for the delivery of college plans, including learning and teaching. While colleges vary in size by student numbers (approximately 20,300 in CHSS; 7,700 in CSE; 5,000 in CMVM), as 'business units' they are roughly equal in size (mainly because of much greater cost and volume of externally-funded research in science and medicine than in humanities).
- 1.1.8. Colleges are divided into schools (22 in all) as shown in Appendix 1. Schools are the core units for teaching and research. At the time of ELIR 2011, Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) had very recently merged with the University. ECA was integrated with the School of Arts, Cultures and Environment. The enlarged school, named Edinburgh College of Art (ECA), now contains five academic disciplines: Art; Design; Architecture and Landscape Architecture; History of Art; and Music. In formal terms ECA has the authority of a school within the College of Humanities and Social Science, whilst retaining the brand name 'Edinburgh College of Art'.
- 1.1.9. Colleges and schools have devolved powers to develop local best practice, but operate within overarching institutional regulations, policy and structures set down at University level. All colleges and schools work towards the overall University Strategic Plan and work within the University regulations and policies for learning and teaching. 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. Our devolved structure

1 Annual Report and Accounts for the year to 31 July 2014:
www.accounts.finance.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/uoer_reports_fin_statements_13-14.pdf

means we can make local innovations for the particular needs of students and staff in that area. It also reflects the size and scale of the University.

- 1.1.10. The University's support structure is based on three support service groupings: University Secretary's Group; Corporate Services Group; Information Services Group.
- 1.1.11. The University Secretary's Group (USG) is headed by the University Secretary. This provides a wide range of services in support of the University's academic mission. The USG structure chart (Appendix 2) shows the support group's structure and further information on the group's 19 departments is available from the department overview webpage.² Academic Services, providing University level support for academic policy and regulations, sits within the Student Experience Services Group headed by the Deputy Secretary (Student Experience). Since ELIR 2011 there have been two significant transfers of department from the Corporate Services Group to USG: Human Resources has been transferred to strengthen the people focus of the Group, with a responsibility for both staff and students; and Internal Audit has joined the Group, with a focus on enhancing good governance.
- 1.1.12. Corporate Services Group (CSG) is headed by the Director of Corporate Services. This provides the physical, operational and commercial environment and professional expertise to underpin the University's activities. The CSG chart³ explains the support group's structure and further information about the group's ten business units is available from the unit's webpage.⁴
- 1.1.13. Information Services Group (ISG) is headed by the Chief Information Officer and Librarian. ISG has responsibility for, among other things, the information technology infrastructure, user support and the libraries. Since ELIR 2011 in recognition of the need to better align learning and teaching with technology a strategic decision has resulted in the creation of a new division within IS: Learning, Teaching and Web Services. This has brought together technology enhanced learning, e-learning, the University website, web services, graphics, multimedia and classroom technology teams to support learning, teaching and outreach for an enhanced student experience. The ISG structure chart⁵ explains the support group's structure and further information about the group's seven divisions is available from the organisation overview page.⁶

Governance of the University

- 1.1.14. The University's governing body is the University Court which has ultimate responsibility for the deployment of resources and for strategic plans, and a monitoring role regarding the overall performance of the University. Court is chaired by the Rector, who is elected every three years by students and staff and who cannot be a student of the University

2 Further information on each USG department: www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group/departments

3 Corporate Services Group (CSG) Structure Chart: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.92320!/fileManager/CSG%20Organisation%20Chart%202013.pdf

4 Further information on each CSG business unit: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/corporate-services/about/units

5 Information Services Group (ISG) Structure Chart: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.141642!/fileManager/ISOrganisationChartSections_Apr15.pdf

6 Further information on each ISG division: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/about/organisation

or a member of staff. Court receives regular reports from Senate. Appendix 3 shows the reporting relationship between Senate and Court.

- 1.1.15. Principal's Strategy Group (PSG) comprises the University's most senior officers and budget holders. It meets on average monthly, is convened by the Principal and 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. Major strategic projects, especially those requiring funding, will be agreed by PSG (and Central Management Group) prior to development and implementation through the relevant committees of Senate (as was the case for the Student Experience Project and the Enhancing Student Support Project). Current membership of the group and previous reports can be seen on the PSG webpages.⁷
- 1.1.16. Central Management Group (CMG) oversees planning and budgeting at central level. It is formally advisory to the Principal and reports to Court via Policy and Resources Committee. It makes regular reports to Senate and receives reports from a number of other University committees and groups. Membership includes all major budget holders in the University and all Vice Principals. It is responsible for integrating academic, physical and financial aspects of University planning and for monitoring performance.
- 1.1.17. The supreme academic body is Senatus Academicus (Senate). It is chaired by the Principal. Senate meets three times per academic year. Each meeting is preceded by a set period of electronic business ('e-Senate'). The e-Senate deals with the majority of routine formal business, thus freeing up time at meetings for the discussion of high level academic issues. Any formal business not resolved via the e-Senate is referred to the next Senate meeting. The outcome of electronic business is reported at the next Senate meeting. Senate has ultimate responsibility for the academic standards of the University. Senate meetings begin with a presentation and discussion session on an issue of strategic importance open to all members of the University community, followed by consideration of formal business. Discussions in 2013/14 were on the topics of open access, embedding equality, and the University in the community. In 2014/15 the topics were postgraduate research, community engagement as an integral part of the curriculum, and the vision for learning and teaching. The discussion topic is agreed in advance by the Senate Agenda Committee, which is chaired by the Principal and includes the Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) President. Senate retains strategic oversight while devolving the practical operation of its powers to four standing committees with specific remits.
- 1.1.18. The current Senate committee structure has been in place since 2009/10, following a review of academic governance that was reported on in ELIR 2011. The ELIR Report 2011 confirmed that the "restructuring of the Senate committees and related quality

7 Principal's Strategy Group: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/governance/university-committees/othercommitteesandgroups/principals-strategy-group/overview

remits has led to a clearer strategic focus on enhancement” (paragraph 144). The structure has not changed since ELIR 2011 and comprises four committees: Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, convened by Assistant Principal Learning and Development; Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, convened by Vice Principal Learning and Teaching; Senate Researcher Experience Committee, convened by Assistant Principal Researcher Experience; Senate Quality Assurance Committee, convened by Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance.

- 1.1.19. Since ELIR 2011 our academic leadership and management structure has undergone further development to support both our strategic approach to learning, teaching and the student experience and the Senate committees. The role of Vice Principal Academic Enhancement has been reshaped as Vice Principal Learning and Teaching, a role which has strategic oversight of learning and teaching across the University including undergraduate and taught postgraduate responsibilities. The new role of Assistant Principal Researcher Development focuses on the experience of postgraduate research students and early career researchers. Together with the existing roles of Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance, with oversight of the University's quality assurance framework, and Assistant Principal Learning and Development, overseeing curriculum development, regulation and assessment, these roles encompass the range of the student academic experience and provide the strategic leadership for the four standing committees of Senate. Appendix 4 provides an overview of current Vice Principals' and Assistant Principals' roles and reporting structure.
- 1.1.20. The Court has recently approved proposals to rename the post of Vice Principal Learning and Teaching to Vice Principal Student Experience, Learning and Teaching to create a direct reporting line between the Vice Principal Student Experience, Learning and Teaching and the University Principal.
- 1.1.21. The operation of the committees is further strengthened by their membership, which includes key posts of responsibility in colleges (such as the College Deans) along with key roles in schools (such as School Directors of Learning and Teaching). Cross membership provides opportunities for dissemination of good practice and identification of common issues. Detailed remits, membership and overviews of achievements by the committees can be seen on the Academic Services webpages⁸ and in the annual Senate Committees Report to Senate.⁹

University strategy

- 1.1.22. The University's current Strategic Plan,¹⁰ covering the period from 2012-2016, articulates our vision as being: “To recruit and develop the world's most promising students and most outstanding staff and be a truly global university benefiting society as a whole” and has as its mission the “creation, dissemination and curation of knowledge”.

8 Academic Services, Committees Overview: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees

9 Annual Report of the Senate Committees, S 13-14 3 B:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/Senate/2013-14/20140604AgendaAndPapers.pdf

10 Strategic Plan 2012-16:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-plan-2012-16

- 1.1.23. 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;
 - to provide the highest quality learning and teaching environment for the greater wellbeing of our students and deliver an outstanding educational portfolio;
 - to produce graduates fully equipped to achieve the highest personal and professional standards;
 - to make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world, promoting health, economic growth and cultural wellbeing.
- 1.1.24. Excellence in education is one of the University's three strategic goals outlined in the Strategic Plan 2012-2016. Our success in achieving this goal is measured by the proportion of leavers achieving a successful outcome (degree, transfer or other award) and targets to increase student satisfaction with academic and pastoral support and with the opportunities and support for developing graduate attributes and employability. The two case studies presented alongside this Reflective Analysis demonstrate our accomplishments in both these areas.
- 1.1.25. The three strategic goals are supported by a number of strategic themes. Key strategic themes relevant to our goal of excellence in education include: delivering an outstanding student experience; equality and widening participation; and increasing global impact and partnerships.
- 1.1.26. Our success in delivering an outstanding student experience is measured by the proportion of graduates (undergraduate and postgraduate) in graduate-level employment and against key targets to: increase the level of satisfaction expressed in the National Student Survey and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey to at least 88 per cent; increase the number of students achieving an Edinburgh Award to at least 500; and create at least 800 new opportunities for students to gain an international experience as part of their Edinburgh degree.
- 1.1.27. Our success in equality and widening participation is measured by the number of undergraduate entrants from under-represented groups; progress in relation to increasing the proportion of female academic staff appointed and promoted at all levels; and reducing the gender pay gap for University staff.
- 1.1.28. Our success in internationalisation and partnerships is measured by the proportion of international students from beyond our five most represented countries and against targets to: increase the headcount of non-EU students by at least 2,000; increase the number of masters students on programmes established through our Global Academies by at least 500; and increase our number of PhD students on programmes jointly awarded with international partners by at least 50 per cent.

- 1.1.29. Further details on the work we are undertaking towards achieving these targets over the period of the Strategic Plan 2012-2016 are provided throughout the Reflective Analysis, in particular in sections 2 and 6.
- 1.1.30. Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP) is responsible for monitoring and reporting on progress against the aforementioned Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets annually.¹¹ We anticipate that, over time, the aims and objectives for each of the strategic goals will remain essentially the same, with the strategies, KPIs and targets being modified in response to changes in our operating environment. Underpinning the University-level Strategic Plan are the plans of our various business areas. These provide further detail on how the University is implementing the strategies set out in the Strategic Plan.
- 1.1.31. A number of other key University strategies and plans complement and underpin the University's Strategic Plan 2012-2016 including the Estate Strategy 2010-2020,¹² the Internationalisation Strategy¹³ and the Equality and Diversity Strategy,¹⁴ elements of which are outlined in sections 6 and 2 respectively. All complementary strategies are aligned to the University Strategic Plan and are responsible for the delivery of specific targets set out in it. The Internationalisation Strategy and the Equality and Diversity Strategy are reviewed on a cycle consistent with the University's Strategic Plan. The Estate Strategy covers a longer time frame to reflect the timescales required for major building projects, but the aims and goals of both are revisited at regular intervals as the delivery of a number of University Strategic Plan targets is contingent on estate development.
- 1.1.32. Discussion for the next strategic plan is already well underway. The process began in autumn 2013 at a senior management retreat involving senior colleagues with responsibility for key strategic plans. This process resulted in several emerging themes that were then discussed with college and school senior teams. Following further engagement with University Court and Central Management Group, in April 2014 the University published its Strategic Vision 2025.¹⁵ This includes a unique Edinburgh offer for all of our students; all of our undergraduates developed as student/researchers with clear, supported pathways through to Masters and PhD; all our students offered the opportunity to draw from deep expertise outside their core discipline; and a highly satisfied student body with a strong sense of community. In relation to learning and teaching themes, the Vice Principal Learning and Teaching is leading wide-reaching consultations across the University on an emerging vision for learning and teaching, outlined further in 1.2.7 below.

1.2. Strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching

- 1.2.1. Our strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching currently reflects and embodies our devolved structure. The University sets the framework within which enhancement takes place: this is primarily through the University Strategic Plan 2012-

11 Strategic Plan 2012-16: Progress Report 2013:

www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Restricted/EDlan/strategicplanning/ProgressReport1213.pdf

12 Estate Strategy 2010-2020: www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EstatesBuildings/Strategies/EstateStrategy.pdf

13 Internationalisation Strategy: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.9821!/fileManager/internationalisationstrategy.pdf

14 Equality and Diversity Strategy: www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/Strategy.pdf

15 Strategic Vision 2025: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-vision-2025

2016 and other policies and strategic initiatives that have an impact on learning and teaching. Colleges and schools are responsible for implementing University plans, policy and initiatives, tailoring procedures and practices to suit local needs and circumstances.

- 1.2.2. Since ELIR 2011, the University has created a new appointment of Deputy Secretary (Student Experience) with responsibility for the student experience delivered via centrally provided student services. Together with the role of Vice Principal Learning and Teaching, this allows us to take a much more holistic and strategic view of the entire student experience.

Learning and teaching strategies

- 1.2.3. The University Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy,¹⁶ which is owned by Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, informs the development of college and school strategies for learning and teaching. The current aim of the strategy 2012–2016 is “to stimulate in our students a lifelong thirst for knowledge and learning and to encourage a pioneering, innovative and independent attitude and an aspiration to achieve success within and beyond the University.”
- 1.2.4. Successful delivery of the University Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES), requires that a number of areas of the University work in tandem. Each college has its own strategic plan for learning and teaching, which is developed under the University’s LTES and is congruent with the goals of the Strategic Plan. Coordination of the planning and practice of learning and teaching is carried out within our devolved college structure. This is necessary to reflect subject diversity and local best practice; it helps to build in resilience, but it can add complexity. Implementation of the University’s LTES also requires close alignment with the strategies of Human Resources, Recruitment and Admissions and Internationalisation. Each of these areas has local strategies which articulate to learning and teaching, providing synergies between largely independent areas of activity.
- 1.2.5. The ELIR Report 2011 (paragraph 38) noted that the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES) 2010-2012 did not “refer explicitly to research-teaching linkages, although in different ways, all of the college strategies contain strong statements emphasising the centrality of the research environment and research-led enquiry.” Following ELIR 2011, the LTES was revised by Senate Learning and Teaching Committee and a key objective of the current LTES 2012-2016 is that we will “use our globally leading strengths in research to underpin and inform our teaching.” The emerging vision for learning and teaching also emphasises research-teaching linkages in the principle that every student should be a researcher/practitioner (see 1.2.8).
- 1.2.6. The ELIR Report 2011 also suggested that “there would be benefit in the University ensuring that the college and institutional strategies continue to be reviewed in synergy” (paragraph 116). Senate Learning and Teaching Committee has agreed with this in

16 University Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/University_Learning_and_Teaching_Enhancement_Strategy.pdf

principle.¹⁷ The ELIR Report 2011 also suggested that there would be “considerable benefit in the University clarifying the status and function of school-level strategies within the process of managing enhancement” (paragraphs 117 & 143). In practice, the development of school-level strategies has been addressed through guidance produced by Senate Learning and Teaching Committee on the learning and teaching content of school annual plans.¹⁸

- 1.2.7. The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES) runs in parallel with the Strategic Plan 2012-2016. Planning is well advanced for a much more ambitious and forward looking learning and teaching strategy to replace the current strategy. This coincides with the planning already in place for the next Strategic Plan that began at the University’s senior management retreat in October 2013 where the Heads of Colleges identified a number of key strategic themes. During academic year 2013/14 these themes have been developed into a draft vision for learning and teaching, in consultation with EUSA and college deans, and key committees including the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, Knowledge Strategy Committee and the Employability Strategy Group.
- 1.2.8. The emerging vision¹⁹ was designed through three lenses: employability; technology enhanced learning; and curriculum design. It proposes six key themes²⁰ for learning and teaching: a portfolio approach for a complicated and unpredictable future; giving students agency to create their own learning; extending learning beyond the traditional knowledge-centred courses; every student a researcher/practitioner; course design for 21st century learners; and a focus on life-long learning. The vision was presented to Principal’s Strategy Group in January 2014,²¹ and was approved by Senate Learning and Teaching Committee in March 2014.²²
- 1.2.9. Work to discuss and develop the vision is ongoing throughout 2014/15. Vice Principal Learning and Teaching is conducting a series of roadshows and meetings with colleges and schools. Work to discuss and develop the vision with our student population is being conducted under the leadership of EUSA’s Vice Principal Academic Affairs, and will follow a similar timeline. Colleagues and students are being invited to respond formally to the emerging vision to highlight what will work, what won’t work, other priorities and examples of good practice. The responses will feed into a discussion at Senate Learning and Teaching Committee at the end of the academic year and development of a final vision to take forward into academic year 2015/16 with the intention that the vision will replace the current Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy.

17 Minutes of LTC on 21 November 2012 (Item 5.1):
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/2012-13/20121121Minute.pdf

18 Guidance on Learning and Teaching-related Content of School Annual Plans:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/L&TContentofAnnualPlansGuidance.pdf

19 Emerging vision for learning and teaching.
Project website: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/projects/developingalandtvision

20 Emerging vision for learning and teaching. 6 key themes: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Projects/Consultation%20on%20University%20Vision%20for%20Learning%20and%20Teaching%20Aug%202014.pdf

21 Principal’s Strategy Group Meeting, 27th January 2014:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Governance/PSG/2013-2014/20140127Report.pdf

22 Learning and Teaching Committee Minutes, March 2014:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/2013-14/20140319Minute.pdf

- 1.2.10. Many of our academic staff already deliver excellent and innovative learning and teaching consistent with the themes in our emerging vision, as demonstrated by the EUSA Teaching Awards and good practice identified in internal review. However, it will take time to move these achievements so that they are influencing all of our academic community. In order to achieve this, in addition to developing our vision for learning and teaching we will need to address issues of culture in the University. The Deputy Secretary (Student Experience) consulted members of Academic Strategy Group (including all heads of colleges and schools) on these issues in Semester One, 2014/15, and their views shaped a paper which the Deputy Secretary subsequently presented to Principal's Strategy Group (PSG), setting out how the University could make progress through actions on: student expectations; leadership and line management; Human Resources practices; support for heads of schools; space management; and recognition of learning and teaching. Having secured support from PSG, the Deputy Secretary is now working with schools, colleges and support groups to take this agenda forward. Progress with this programme of work is overseen by the Student Enhancement Programme Board.
- 1.2.11. Our vision and strategy for research students and early career researchers is developed and owned by Senate Researcher Experience Committee. The purpose of this committee is to promote an outstanding student experience and vibrant research community across the University, through a proactive agenda supporting an environment that fosters and enables change. Its strategic goals are:
- raising the profile of postgraduate research students and early career researchers within the University community;
 - enhancing the postgraduate research experience and ensuring training for employability and preparation for transitions;
 - enhancing early career researcher experience and ensuring support for career development;
 - identifying challenges and opportunities for appropriate development and innovation in postgraduate research training, assessment and programme delivery.
- 1.2.12. Following several years of growth in postgraduate research student numbers and plans to increase numbers further, the University has scoped out further work to review and enhance the governance and support of postgraduate research students.

Strategic enhancement projects

- 1.2.13. Since ELIR 2011 a key development in our approach to enhancing the student experience has been the use of strategic change management projects governed by a Student Enhancement Programme Board and with regular reporting to Senate and the University Court. The role of the Student Enhancement Programme Board is to provide oversight, accountability and authority for a programme of University-level activity aimed at delivering the strategic goal of an "outstanding student experience". Within this enhancement programme the University has made significant investment in three key

areas: the Student Experience Project, the Enhancing Student Support project, and a package of coordinated work to address persistent issues highlighted in the National Student Survey.

- 1.2.14. The Enhancing Student Support project has been central to and instrumental in changing the way we now approach leading and managing change. It was the first of these strategic enhancement projects to receive significant funding (approximately £4.3 million) to implement a cross-University enhancement initiative in learning and teaching. A key achievement of the project has been the successful implementation of a Personal Tutor system for all students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, as well as a suite of other pastoral and academic support, details of which are provided in Case Study 1.
- 1.2.15. The Student Experience Project²³ is a multi-strand project that has led to the successful piloting and implementation of various work streams in support of the wider student experience. The project received in the region of £3 million of additional funding for four years. Since it began in 2012, the project has grown in size and scope to include 12 separate strands relating to various aspects of the student experience including: applicant experience; induction and pre-arrival support; student councils; online and innovation in student services; emergency response; peer support; Programme and Course Information Management; student community engagement; student communications; student surveys and healthy university. Further details on key achievements and impacts are reported throughout section 2.
- 1.2.16. The initiative for the Student Experience Project (SEP) came from a review of existing student services and an assessment of what would be needed to create a world-class support network for students over the next decade. The unique approach of the project, which sits outside the normal University structures and is characterised by partnership working between SEP appointed staff, EUSA and the wider University, has enabled us to explore in a thematic way key elements associated with the student experience. It has enabled us to take an innovative approach to enhancement by focusing on thematic issues that are not constrained by existing University structures. As such, the project has enabled us to consider new and better ways of delivering existing service provision (such as the Student Surveys Unit), has joined up existing but disparate support (for example induction support), and has offered a space for planning and thinking. By the end of the project we will have generated the foundations for an excellent student experience and developed the tools to be responsive and agile in the future as our student body evolves and develops. Following a mid-term evaluation of the impact of the project,²⁴ the University has considered which strands to embed into existing business and structures as the project comes to an end (detailed from 2.3.9 onwards).
- 1.2.17. The collective experience gained and lessons learned as a direct consequence of the Enhancing Student Support project and the Student Experience Project has enabled

23 Student Experience project webpages: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/initiatives/sep

24 Student Experience Project Interim Report: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.1566591/fileManager/student-experience-project-interim-report.pdf

many staff to move into and lead subsequent change projects (such as the External Examiner system) with the confidence of using and further developing an approach to strategic change that is proven to be successful in our particular context.

- 1.2.18. Following a number of years of unsatisfactory scores for feedback and assessment in the National Student Survey (NSS) and unsuccessful attempts to drive impact in this area, we embarked on a more systematic analysis of the nature of the problem in 2012. This involved taking an academic year to listen to our students through the NSS, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, the development and implementation of our own internal student survey of pre-final year students (Edinburgh Student Experience Survey), through externally commissioned qualitative research with students and staff, and through benchmarking our activity with peers. At the end of the evaluation a paper was presented to Court and to Senate in May/June 2013²⁵ setting out a proposal for a wide range of activities to address the issues we had identified.
- 1.2.19. At February 2015, 6 strands had been in operation for 18 months focusing on: prompt and effective feedback; enhanced student communication; valuing and rewarding teaching through our HR processes; directly supporting schools in enhancing teaching practice, especially around feedback and assessment; ensuring our students feel part of a learning community; and the establishment of Junior Teaching Fellows to provide short-term, limited, additional support for teaching. Progress is being made on all these strands and there are early indications (via the National Student Survey and our own internal Edinburgh Student Experience Survey) of a modest but positive impact. Further details are provided throughout this Reflective Analysis.
- 1.2.20. The University has devoted considerable time and energy to assessing the impact of the project work to date and identifying how best to ensure that the innovations and benefits delivered to date are carried forward into the future. Our thinking in these areas is set out more fully in the following sections.

1.3. Effectiveness of our approach to implementing strategies

- 1.3.1. Effective delivery of our strategic goals depends on three domains of support: academic and practical support from Senate and Court; collaborative working between senior leaders in learning and teaching across the University; and the establishment and development of professional support areas around learning and teaching.

Senate and Court support for learning and teaching

- 1.3.2. The four Senate Committees provide oversight and strategic guidance around learning and teaching. In addition, both regular papers and special discussions at Senate allow a wide academic oversight of plans and activities within the learning and teaching domain.

25 S 12/13 3 H. Analysis of the NSS returns from the University of Edinburgh and strategies for remediation of these returns, with a focus on Senate roles and responsibilities. Closed paper: copy provided in Advance Information Set

- 1.3.3. Increasingly, learning and teaching activity has sought support from the University Court, in order to provide resources and integration with other areas of University activity, such as Human Resources. This has been achieved by regular reports from Vice Principal Learning and Teaching to Court, and via requests for resources approved through the committees of Court and through the planning round. A good example of this approach is the Student Experience Project.
- 1.3.4. A new development that is providing high-level support for learning and teaching strategy is the formation of joint Senate and Court Committees that can provide strategic oversight of initiatives that have academic value but which require financial investment. Knowledge Strategy Committee (KSC) is one particular example of this shared working. Since August 2014 KSC has become a joint Court/Senate Committee to enable the joining up of responsibility for technology enabled learning and teaching enhancements and major Information Technology (IT) investment. It has a proactive strategic remit for IT infrastructure and student-facing or -enhancing IT systems such as the timetable and student record.
- 1.3.5. Since 2010 the Senate Committees have held an annual symposium to plan forward agendas in relation to enhancement activity. This subsequently feeds into the work of the committees according to specific committee remits and the requirements of the University's Strategic Plan. The symposium is also used to reflect on progress and achievements over the past year and effectiveness of operation. As well as committee members, the symposium includes senior college officers, EUSA sabbaticals and officers, and key University services (e.g. Human Resources). A similar symposium was held in 2013/14 in the College of Humanities and Social Science for the first time to plan enhancement activity on a college-wide basis.

Collaborative working

- 1.3.6. Collaborative working between senior leaders within the University, based centrally or within a college structure (for example a Dean of Learning and Teaching), is ensured through regular meetings of the Senate Committees' Conveners' Forum. This is a discussion and informal planning group that meets approximately every 4-6 weeks and includes devolved leadership in learning and teaching (e.g. College Deans of Learning and Teaching), heads of professional units engaged in student-facing work and the conveners of the four senate committees. It is chaired by the Vice Principal Learning and Teaching and ensures that communication and action are coordinated across a large, diverse and autonomous organisation.

Professional support for learning and teaching

- 1.3.7. Since ELIR 2011, we have rebuilt or significantly developed two areas of activity that are key enablers for our effectiveness in meeting our strategic goals. These are Academic Services and the Institute for Academic Development.

- 1.3.8. Academic Services is the professional unit that provides expertise around academic regulations and appeals, management of the University's quality assurance framework, Senate Committee secretariat, and project management of large scale enhancement projects, such as the current Enhancing Student Support project, the External Examiner project and the current Quality Assurance Agency Scotland's enhancement theme. Since the last ELIR, the department has developed its capacity to deliver strategic projects. It developed a 'soft' project methodology where the focus is on bringing about change rather than delivering a physical project. This has enabled the successful implementation of the Personal Tutor system to all taught students and the methodology is being used in other projects (e.g. the Student Experience Project and the Programme and Course Information and Management project).
- 1.3.9. The Institute for Academic Development (IAD)²⁶ was launched at the start of academic year 2011/12 to bring together various elements of existing University level support for learning, teaching and researcher development. This followed a review and restructuring of University academic development support as recommended by ELIR 2006. The ELIR 2011 Report noted "evidence even at this early stage that the IAD has started to make a valuable contribution to quality enhancement, by acting as a focal point for the communication and implementation of strategic priorities, and as an initiator of strategic enhancement activity" (paragraph 21); "it is already clear that the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) is an effective driver for promoting an enhancement culture" (paragraph 145); and "the opportunity for staff to undertake secondments to the Institute is a particularly positive development, promoting the exploration and exchange of good practice" (paragraph 145).
- 1.3.10. Since ELIR 2011, and through a focus on University and college strategic priorities, close collaboration with schools, other support services and EUSA, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) has broadened and deepened its impact. This includes direct support for staff and students at a University level, as well as a range of activities and measures designed to support curriculum development and innovation, and enhance learning, teaching, researcher development and the student experience locally. A taste of the range of IAD activities is provided in the IAD Insights²⁷ magazine and its role is further described in section 2 in relation to supporting and developing staff. The IAD is currently taking a leading role in steps to increase recognition and reward for excellence in teaching, including the development of a comprehensive Higher Education Academy accredited Continuing Professional Development framework for learning and teaching.²⁸

Method used to produce the Reflective Analysis

- 1.3.11. A collaborative approach has been taken to producing this Reflective Analysis, inviting content from colleagues across the University and from EUSA at an early stage and a University-wide consultation with staff and students on the draft Reflective Analysis at later stages via workshops and electronically. The process was overseen by an ELIR Steering

26 Institute for Academic Development: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development

27 IAD Insights Magazine: www.docs.hss.ed.ac.uk/iad/About_us/IAD_Insights.pdf

28 CPD Framework: Learning and Teaching
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/cpd/cpd

Group²⁹ led by Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance and comprising the conveners of the four committees of Senate, the Director of the Institute for Academic Development, Academic Services and EUSA. EUSA was involved at all stages of the process and has made an active contribution to the content and through leading consultations with students.

- 1.3.12. The Reflective Analysis was produced in accordance with the guidance in the ELIR3 handbook and has been informed by various Quality Assurance Agency Scotland publications and events highlighting good practice in the writing of the Reflective Analysis. Four members of the ELIR Steering Group were also able to bring their experience as ELIR Reviewers to bear on the writing process.
- 1.3.13. Two case studies accompany this Reflective Analysis. The decision on the selection of case studies was taken by the Steering Group to demonstrate the management of enhancement of the student experience at an institutional level. Case Study 1 focuses on the development and implementation of the Personal Tutor system as part of the Enhancing Student Support project, and addresses a key recommendation from the ELIR 2011 Report (paragraph 31) in which we were “strongly encouraged to prioritise the implementation of the revised arrangements and to maintain strategic oversight of this area to ensure there are significant improvements for students.” Case Study 2 focuses on the development and implementation of the Edinburgh Award and demonstrates one example of how the University is taking forward the development and embedding of graduate attributes as a key priority of the University Strategic Plan 2012-2016 and the University Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2012-2016.
- 1.3.14. The Reflective Analysis represents the University’s actions and intentions as of April 2015. The Reflective Analysis and Case Studies were approved by Senate Quality Assurance Committee at its meeting on 28th May 2015, by Senate on 3rd June 2015 and by Court on 22nd June 2015.

Response to ELIR 2011

- 1.3.15. In setting out our response to ELIR 2011 we were mindful of the comment in the 2011 ELIR Report that noted: “The University has been slow to fully address a number of the matters contained within the 2006 ELIR report, particularly those relating to the management of the student experience [e.g. pastoral and academic support and feedback]” (paragraph 88) and “The University is asked to ensure that it addresses all of the outcomes from the current ELIR in a timely manner” (paragraph 142).
- 1.3.16. We took a three-year planning approach that resulted in all key actions relating to the student experience, student support and feedback being prioritised as a matter of urgency. Immediate action was taken in the year following ELIR 2011 with a programme of action over the two subsequent years for less urgent recommendations. This ensured that significant action would be taken by the time of ELIR 2015. The pace and scale of

our commitment to addressing the 2011 ELIR Report was clearly evident at our Year-on Response in 2013³⁰ and acknowledged in our Annual Discussion with Quality Assurance Agency Scotland in the same year. Since then, regular updates and reports have been made to Senate Quality Assurance Committee to ensure that all recommendations have been actioned well ahead of ELIR 2015 as demonstrated in the most recent update paper³¹ which is also included in the Advance Information Set for reference.

What we want to get out of ELIR

- 1.3.17. There are two areas where we wish the ELIR to focus on and provide us with feedback:
- Feedback and endorsement from the reviewers that the Personal Tutoring project is developing effectively.
 - Feedback and endorsement from the reviewers on our approaches to enabling and promoting student engagement in the curriculum/co-curriculum and learning with a particular emphasis on links to future strategy for learning and teaching.
- 1.3.18. In relation to Personal Tutoring, the University has invested significant resource into the development and enhancement of academic support to students. This is demonstrated in Case Study 1. We have conducted our own evaluation of the Personal Tutor system, including views from students and staff, and have a good understanding of what is working well and where we could still do better. Given that the Personal Tutor system is still relatively new, especially for postgraduate taught students, and a form of academic support has still to be developed for postgraduate research students, we would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the work that has been achieved to date, and to receive feedback from the ELIR panel as we further develop our efforts in this area.
- 1.3.19. Our approach to enabling and promoting student engagement in the curriculum/co-curriculum is evolving and developing. Hence, we would like to use this opportunity to reflect on what has been achieved to date, but also receive feedback from the ELIR panel that we can use to develop our approach to student engagement in the curriculum/co-curriculum further as this will be central to the emerging vision for learning and teaching as it develops. Specific examples of our work in this area include the Edinburgh Award (Case Study 2) and our developing work around the student-led curriculum (2.3.73 – 2.3.74).

Forward look

- 1.3.20. We are proud of the quality, breadth and depth of the student learning experience at Edinburgh and with ongoing enhancements to the support provided and described in this Reflective Analysis. At the same time, and building on lessons learned through engagement with the National Student Survey, we are seeking to raise the bar of our ambition as an innovator and leader in learning and teaching by developing an emerging

30 ELIR 2011 Year On Report, QAC 12/13 4 C/C1:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2012-13/20130207AgendaandPapers.pdf

31 ELIR implementation paper, QAC 24/14, Paper H:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2014-15/20140904AgendaPapers.pdf

vision for learning and teaching that will guide learning and teaching strategy over the next University Strategic Plan.

- 1.3.21. Staff and students are already embarking on a range of innovative pilots that test and develop various concepts relevant to the draft vision with support from the Principal's Teaching Awards Scheme and other sources, and throughout 2014/15 there will be opportunities to engage in further pilots. During 2014/15 there will be an extensive process of consultation with staff and students regarding the vision.³²
- 1.3.22. The University has devoted considerable time and energy to assessing the impact of the project work to date and identifying how best to ensure that the innovations and benefits delivered to date are carried forward into the future. Our thinking in these areas is set out more fully in the following sections of this Reflective Analysis.

³² Emerging vision for learning and teaching. Project website:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/projects/developingalandtvision

2. Enhancing our students' learning experience

2.1 Composition and key trends in our student population

Overview

2.1.1 The University of Edinburgh is growing in a planned manner towards an increase in the overall number of students as well as an increase in the proportion of international and postgraduate students. The 2011 ELIR Report (paragraphs 36 & 136) noted: "as the student body continues to diversify, there is an increasing need for the University to adopt a more strategic and planned approach to anticipating the associated curricular developments and adjustments to the academic environment". This section sets out our approach to supporting and enhancing the academic environment for our increasingly diverse student body. We focus in particular on our support for international, postgraduate and widening participation students and our current and planned activities to support greater diversity in the range of backgrounds from which our students come, their country of origin, their age and prior experience of study, their period of engagement with the University, the range of entry and exit points within our degrees, and the opportunities for study both on campus and at a distance. Our approach is built on a firm commitment to maintain our quality of intake and extremely high retention and success rates.

Student population trend analysis

2.1.2 In academic year 2013/14 the University had 33,110 students by headcount comprising 66 per cent (21,773) undergraduates and 34 per cent (11,337) postgraduates. Of the total number of postgraduates, 58 per cent (6,530) were postgraduate taught students and 42 per cent (4,807) postgraduate research students. The overall student population has grown by 14 per cent (from 28,974 students) since 2010/11. Our merger with Edinburgh College of Art during this period increased our student numbers by just over 1,600, accounting for roughly one third of the overall growth in student numbers by headcount since ELIR 2011.

2.1.3 Appendix 5 provides a detailed breakdown of the student population. There has been a marked change in the domicile proportions within each level of study since 2010/11. Whilst overseas and EU students account for the main increase in student numbers, the growth is particularly evident among undergraduate and taught postgraduate students where the numbers of overseas students have increased by 56 per cent and 44 per cent respectively compared with a 16 per cent increase in overseas postgraduate research students. Over the same period, the number of Scotland domiciled students has increased slightly by four per cent for undergraduate and three per cent for postgraduate research students, but has fallen by 12 per cent for taught postgraduates. The potential to increase Scotland domiciled undergraduate students is limited by the number of funded places. The proportion of other UK domiciled students has grown by 25 per cent for taught postgraduates and 24 per cent for postgraduate research students, but has fallen by two per cent for undergraduate students.

2.1.4 In 2013/14 the University had 1,716 students registered on online distance masters programmes. The number of students on online distance masters programmes has increased in absolute terms by almost 54 per cent (from 1,117) since 2011/12 and as a proportion of total postgraduate taught students (from 18 per cent of the total taught postgraduate population in 2011/12 to 26 per cent in 2013/14). However, many online students study on a part-time basis, so these numbers represent approximately one third full-time equivalent.

Recruitment and admission

2.1.5 In support of our aims to grow and diversify our student population, we are committed to a fair and transparent admissions policy and admissions practices that recognise the wide range of academic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of students with the potential to thrive at the University.

2.1.6 With effect from the 2015 UCAS cycle, we have revised our approach to contextual data in undergraduate admissions, which aims to ensure that we are able to identify and recognise those traditionally underrepresented in higher education. This builds on a decade of sector-leading work regarding contextualised admissions.³³

2.1.7 We have carried out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) of our student recruitment and admissions policy and process, and responded to the recommendations made. The University's approach to EqIAs in student recruitment and admissions has been commended as a model of good practice by the Equality Challenge Unit and Supporting Professionalism in Admissions.

Planning for growth in international students

2.1.8 As we grow our international student cohort, we have developed a suite of enhanced support structures to enable international students to thrive on campus or on our distance education programmes. These include cultural support from EUSA and English language support from the English Language Teaching Centre, as well as a range of support provided by the International Office.³⁴

2.1.9 Over the past four years EUSA has developed EUSA Global;³⁵ a strategy to enhance the global Edinburgh community through celebrating culture and global citizenship. Many of EUSA Global's activities include events which help build community around culture, such as: the Tandem Language Programme; Edinburgh Buddies; the Edinburgh Award in Global Citizenship; the EUSA Global Fund; and the annual Gather Festival. EUSA also provides a specific forum for international students to discuss and taken action on issues which matter to them. EUSA also has 42 "International and Multicultural" student societies to help enhance and support the international community of students.

33 Student Recruitment and Admissions, Contextual Admissions Briefing: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.1490281/fileManager/201408%20Contextual%20Data%20briefing.pdf

34 International Office webpages: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office

35 EUSA Global: www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/getinvolved/eusaglobal/

- 2.1.10 In 2012, the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC)³⁶ was redesigned from a largely external-facing organisation to one focused on support for University of Edinburgh students. It now provides support for students and staff whose first language is not English, and is developing support for teaching and learning in awareness of these challenges. The ELTC has been accredited for English language teaching by the British Council for many years and in our most recent inspection achieved 8 points of excellence in the areas of management, resources and premises, teaching and student welfare. The ELTC provides preparatory summer and year-round pre-sessional courses. Its staff work in collaboration with schools to identify student needs and design appropriately targeted support. Around 500 students attended the summer pre-sessional courses in 2014 and over 1000 students were supported during their studies throughout academic year 2014/15.
- 2.1.11 Success of the ELTC has been measured by progression rates onto degrees from the pre-sessional courses (over 95 per cent), formal feedback (questionnaires, focus groups) from students and informal feedback from staff in schools. We are working on a number of projects in 2014/15 to track our students during their degrees to gauge the effect of this support and to feed into our review procedures.

Planning for growth in postgraduate students

- 2.1.12 The University has set a target to increase our average number of research postgraduate students to academic staff to at least 2.5:1 by the end of the Strategic Plan period 2016. The average number for each college for academic year 2013/14 was around 1.5:1. Schools that are already exceeding the target include the School of Divinity and School of Chemistry; the School of Engineering and the School of Clinical Sciences and Community Health are close to achieving the target. Our aim is to achieve this ratio consistently. This ambitious target is being supported through the development of University scholarships and bursaries, the creation of novel possibilities for employment on campus during study, and through a concerted effort in bidding for external funding to support doctoral scholarships and cohorts.
- 2.1.13 External funding can come from a wide range of sources. Recent successful funding bids at Edinburgh include (but are not limited to):
- Research Council (e.g. Natural Environment Research Council, NERC) funded Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) that provide cohort PhD training in research areas relevant to Research Council strategic priorities. This is now the primary funding mechanism for the Research Councils in the UK.
 - European Initial Training Networks (ITNs) that are similar to DTPs but smaller in scale and must include a minimum of three European partners.
 - Industrial Doctorates (e.g. Industrial Doctoral Centre in Offshore Renewable Energy, IDCORE) that vary depending on the partnership created, but often include a number

of academic and industrial partners working on industrial projects. The majority of the research is carried out as an industrial placement with co-supervision arrangements involving both academic and industrial partners.

- Private trusts and charities (e.g. Leverhulme) that vary in their funding models and methods.

2.1.14 Cohort funding is becoming more prevalent. With this in mind, we are reviewing our approach to supporting the development of these proposals to ensure that a structured, scalable and innovative approach is taken. A review is underway to consider how we can share best practice across the University, achieve a consistently high level in all applications and how we not only innovate at the discipline level but also in the training, development and career support provided to students on programme. This in turn will lead to an enhanced experience for doctoral students on these programmes. Regardless of how they are funded, all our research students have access to academic and professional development support delivered by the Institute for Academic Development in partnership with schools, the pre-arrival and induction team and, where relevant, external partners.

2.1.15 To achieve our ambition to increase taught postgraduate student numbers, continuing a trend that has been visible in our recruitment and in our planning in recent years, we are developing new masters programmes to meet identified demands in certain areas. These programmes will be delivered on campus and at a distance, depending on the best fit to the target students. Novel developments around employer engagement with our masters programmes and by our masters students is being encouraged through Making the Most of Masters³⁷ and through our engagement with the Highly Skilled Workforce Scholarships. Masters students are currently supported by a new and original suite of support opportunities that follow their student journey closely, which is provided by the Institute for Academic Development in partnership with schools, the Careers Service and other support services.

2.1.16 The University's central Scholarships and Student Funding Services department provided scholarships of approximately £6 million to over 800 students in 2013/14. In 2013/14 the University received £1,193,000 from the Development Trust towards scholarships. This crucial funding helps to fund some of our key scholarship schemes including the Edinburgh Global Masters Scholarships, the Edinburgh Global Research Scholarships, the UK/EU Masters Scholarships and the China Scholarships Council Awards. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 the University established a number of new scholarships aimed at prospective postgraduate students and including awards targeted at students from specific geographic areas. This has contributed to a significant increase in applications for scholarships from 7,585 in 2009/10 to 12,295 in 2013/14.

New postgraduate scholarships established during this period include:

- 1) Principal's Career Development Scholarship, the University's flagship scheme for PhD students studying any subject;
- 2) Edinburgh Global Health Academy Scholarship, awarded to students on specific on-campus and distance learning Master's programmes linked to the Global Health Academy;
- 3) Edinburgh Global Development Academy Scholarship, awarded to students on specific on-campus Master's programmes linked to the Global Development Academy;
- 4) Edinburgh Global Syrian Postgraduate Scholarship, awarded to Syrians studying any Masters or PhD programme;
- 5) Edinburgh Global Latin-American Masters Scholarship, awarded to Latin American students studying any Masters programme;
- 6) Principal's Indian Masters Scholarship, awarded to students from India on any Masters programme.

Support from the Institute for Academic Development

- 2.1.17 The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) doctoral training programme³⁸ includes over 200 skills training and development workshops each year for doctoral students. There is flexibility in provision so that doctoral students can build up a portfolio of skills training tailored to their individual requirements and past experience, and support is provided through a mix of central IAD and local (school level) provision. There is also flexibility in the range of courses delivered via face-to-face workshops and those through self-directed online training.
- 2.1.18 For taught postgraduate students the Institute for Academic Development has developed a range of courses and support built around a transitions model³⁹ that is designed to support students throughout their time at Edinburgh, and to prepare them for their future careers. The programme has been designed on the basis of extensive discussions across the University to determine the support required, and the appropriate time points for the provision. The provision has been particularly well received by students. Whilst predating the current QAA Enhancement Theme of Transitions, there is a strong alignment and it is being integrated with other work linked to the Enhancement Theme across the institution.
- 2.1.19 From academic year 2011/12 to 2013/14 we saw a 21 per cent increase in participation by postgraduate research students in Institute for Academic Development (IAD) workshops booked through the MyEd bookings channel (from 2,692 to 3,261 respectively). Over the same period, we saw a 22 per cent increase in participation by taught postgraduate students in IAD workshops booked through the MyEd bookings channel (from 820 to 1,002 respectively). We expect numbers to increase again for academic year 2014/15, particularly for taught postgraduates. At the end of November 2014, 891 taught postgraduate students already had participated in IAD workshops; more than twice the

38 IAD support for doctoral researchers: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/doctoral

39 IAD support for postgraduate taught students: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/taught

number for the same time in the previous year. The number of visitors to IAD student-facing websites has also shown a significant increase over the same period. This is particularly relevant because the IAD has placed increasing emphasis on the provision of high quality online self-service resources for students, including:

- 'LearnBetter'⁴⁰ (a self-enrol resource available in Learn aimed at helping undergraduate students to develop more effective working and learning strategies. Self-directed courses are available in: time management, note making, reading, assignment writing, revision and exams);
- Succeeding at Masters level⁴¹ (aimed at helping students to cope with the demands of postgraduate study);
- Taught postgraduate and research masters learning resources⁴² (including developing your English, dissertation writing, revision and exams);
- Learning resources for doctoral research students⁴³ (including research skills, personal skills, teaching skills and knowledge exchange and commercialisation);
- 'Talking Eds'⁴⁴ (an electronic resource made by students for students. The resource acts as a welcoming gateway for new undergraduate and postgraduate students and their expectations of studying at Edinburgh).

Distance education

- 2.1.20 Online/distance postgraduate masters development has been stimulated by the Distance Education Initiative (DEI). The DEI was allocated funding of £4.5 million to develop programmes and support services over a five year period, with four annual funding rounds in total.
- 2.1.21 Since ELIR 2011, there has been significant growth in online masters programmes with more than 30 academic projects funded by the Distance Education Initiative (DEI) across 17 of the University's 22 schools, and with the DEI opening conversations with schools previously unsure about online learning. DEI funding has also supported transformations to the University's business processes and support infrastructure to better support Online Distance Learning (ODL) and on-campus students, capacity building through staff scholarships and market scoping initiatives, and directly supports an ever growing staff community interested in online learning (currently over 500 members). The ODL Community⁴⁵ is supported by the Online Learning Advisor who coordinates resources, networking opportunities and events. This support is available to the whole ODL community irrespective of whether they receive DEI funding.

40 Learn Better: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/undergraduate/learning-resource

41 Succeeding at Masters level: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/taught/succeeding

42 Taught postgraduate and research masters learning resources: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/taught/learning-resources

43 Doctoral research students: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/postgraduate/doctoral/resources

44 'Talking Eds': www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/about-us/projects/talking-eds

45 Online Distance Learning Community: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/networks/odl

- 2.1.22 The current Online Distance Learning (ODL) offering exceeds 60 programmes across 18 Schools, with a further 10 DEI-funded programmes due to launch in academic year 2015/16. Almost half the current ODL programmes are provided by the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and are aimed predominantly at practicing professionals and have strict entry criteria. The remaining programmes are split between the Colleges of Science and Engineering and Humanities and Social Science. There are approximately 2,000 students currently registered on fully online programmes at Edinburgh.
- 2.1.23 2014 marked the final year for distribution of Distance Education Initiative (DEI) funding to new project teams. The scheme will come to an end in 2016, after which online masters programmes will continue to grow through the development of sustainable financial models. In 2014 the Senate Learning and Teaching Committee established a task group to support and oversee the mainstreaming of distance education within the University, as the DEI comes to an end.
- 2.1.24 The recognition of our online masters portfolio, for example through the award of a Queen's Anniversary Prize to our Surgical Sciences MSc in 2013, gives us confidence that we are building a world-class set of online qualifications.

Planning for growth in the social diversity of our students

- 2.1.25 Widening access to the University of Edinburgh is of paramount importance. Edinburgh is an elite University, but only in respect of the intellectual demands made on our students. We welcome academically able students from all backgrounds and at all stages of life.
- 2.1.26 The advent of fees for the rest of the UK market has impacted on applicant behaviour and conversion rates of the different applicant pools (Scotland/EU and RUK). The HESA state school performance indicator demonstrates that the proportion of the young entry cohort from state schools has fallen to 67.3 per cent for 2012/13 from 70.3 per cent in the previous cycle, although our absolute number of entrants from state schools and colleges increased.
- 2.1.27 In line with our commitment to widening access, our admissions policy recognises that not all applicants have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their academic potential via their pre-university examination results. Our selection processes therefore take account of the educational and socio-economic context in which examination results have been achieved. Our approach to contextualised admissions was further refined for 2015 entry, to enable us to better identify those who have faced educational and socio-economic disadvantage.^{46, 47}
- 2.1.28 The University has been at the forefront of the initiation, design and implementation of widening participation projects since the 1990s and is a leader and innovator in this area:

46 University of Edinburgh selection process: www.ed.ac.uk/studying/undergraduate/applying/selection/select

47 Student Recruitment and Admissions. 'Briefing: Contextual data in undergraduate admissions': www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.1490281/fileManager/201408%20Contextual%20Data%20briefing.pdf

- The Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools (LEAPS)⁴⁸ was developed from the University of Edinburgh's University Special Entrance Initiative (USE) in 1995 to become a collaborative partnership with the other Higher Education Institutions in Edinburgh and the four local authorities in Edinburgh and the Lothians;
- Pathways to the Professions was initiated by the University in 2001 to provide advice and guidance to local state school students interested in applying to study Medicine, Law, Veterinary Medicine or Architecture. There are currently over 500 school students from 46 state schools in Edinburgh and the Lothians registered on the programme;
- Educated Pass⁴⁹ was established in 2004 following an approach from Ayr United Football Club Youth Manager to engage boys in education. The project is innovative in that it targets boys – particularly those from under-represented groups – through their coaches and clubs and builds upon their commitment to sport to generate a similar interest and commitment to education. The project is supported by local Further Education Colleges.

2.1.29 We provide a range of other outreach projects that are sector leading in impact and evaluation.⁵⁰ Collectively, these have helped us to exceed our Scottish Funding Council Outcome Agreement target in widening participation for academic year 2014/15. The number of LEAPS entrants continues to increase each year. The University admits more LEAPS students than any other university in Scotland (in 2014/15 we admitted 446 LEAPS entrants, more than twice as many as the second largest intake).

2.1.30 In 2013/14 the University had 1,469 entrants from widening participation (WP) backgrounds (Rest of UK and Scotland-domiciled, based on a basket of measures) compared with 1,243 in 2012/13, representing an increase of 18 per cent. 1,014 (69 per cent) of the WP entrants were Scotland-domiciled, of whom 367 were LEAPS entrants. 371 of the Scotland-domiciled entrants were from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 40 data zones.⁵¹

2.1.31 We provide one of the most generous packages of bursary support for Scotland-domiciled students, and those from the rest of the UK with a family income of less than £16,000. The University allocated undergraduate bursary funds of £4.5 million in 2013/14 to assist UK students who might have been deterred from starting their studies at the University due to lack of financial resources to meet living costs. This provides over 1,700 undergraduate students with a bursary.

2.1.32 The University's bursary support comprises three main schemes: Access Bursaries⁵² for UK students; the University of Edinburgh Bursaries for students who normally live in England, Wales or Northern Ireland; and the Scotland Accommodation Bursaries.⁵³ Our

48 LEAPS: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-recruitment/widening-participation/projects/partnership-projects/leaps

49 Educated Pass: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-recruitment/widening-participation/projects/educated-pass/history-background

50 Widening participation projects: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-recruitment/widening-participation/projects

51 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>

52 Access bursaries: www.ed.ac.uk/student-funding/undergraduate/uk-eu/bursaries/access-bursaries

53 Scotland accommodation bursaries: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-funding/undergraduate/uk-eu/bursaries/accommodation

most generous scheme offers an annual bursary of £7,000 per year to students from England, Wales or Northern Ireland whose residual household income is £16,000 or less. In 2013/14 over 300 students received this maximum award. Last year also saw the first awards under the Scotland Accommodation Bursaries scheme which provides support to Scotland domiciled undergraduates. Over 220 students received this bursary in 2013/14. A review of the impact of bursary provision on both recruitment and retention of those from under-represented groups is proposed in 2015/16.

- 2.1.33 Once on programme, our retention rate for widening participation students is the same as for our student cohort as a whole.⁵⁴ Also, analysis of progression data shows that the University outperformed the HESA Performance Indicator, the Scottish sector average and the UK sector average.
- 2.1.34 We take our responsibility to widening participation seriously as demonstrated in the Senate discussion on widening participation at its meeting in February 2012.⁵⁵

Planning for more flexible entry and exit points to our degrees

- 2.1.35 The University has responded to international and Scottish Government interest in developing more flexible patterns of study at University.^{56, 57} We are committed to developing flexible entry and exit routes into our four year-degree, enabling students where necessary to pause their studies at appropriate points and support their return. Our degree regulations for undergraduate programmes recognise prior learning to allow for students to be admitted to second or later years, which assists efficiency, and students can also gain intermediate awards.
- 2.1.36 As part of our commitment to increasing access and flexibility in study, we have made significant investment in the Distance Education Initiative (aimed at increasing postgraduate distance programmes), and have a strategy to expand and enhance our distance education provision and deliver an outstanding student experience both online and on-campus. Distance learning can assist with the effectiveness and efficiency of the learner journey, providing flexibility and convenience for learners and enabling learners to gain a high quality degree, typically course by course.

Planning for more opportunities to gain an international experience

- 2.1.37 The University Strategic Plan 2012-2016 has set a target to create at least 800 new opportunities for students to gain an international experience as part of their Edinburgh degree. We are enhancing the opportunities for our students to gain an international experience as part of their studies through increasing the number of traditional year abroad opportunities and also by exploring the value and accessibility of shorter periods of work or study abroad.

54 'Widening participation at the University of Edinburgh: Contextual Admissions, Retention and Degree Outcomes', Journal article, Edinburgh University Press, May 2014: www.eupublishing.com/doi/abs/10.3366/scot.2014.0017

55 Senate discussion on widening participation initiatives, February 8th 2012: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/Senate/2011-12/20120208Minute.pdf

56 Discussion paper: potential for flexible entry and exit points to Undergraduate degrees at the University of Edinburgh. LTC 11/12 1 B: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/2011-12/20111019AgendaPapers.pdf

57 Learning and Teaching Committee minutes, October 2011: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/LTC/2011-12/20111019Minute.pdf

- 2.1.38 In 2013/14, 2,053 instances were recorded where students had a formal international experience as part of their programme of study. This is defined as an experience lasting more than one week. This figure compares with 1,562 in 2012/13 and 1,738 in 2011/12 and represents an overall upward trend.
- 2.1.39 To further support international mobility the University launched the Go Abroad⁵⁸ initiative in 2013/14. Go Abroad provides opportunities for all students to have an international educational experience of 1 to 8 weeks, and is supported by the Principal's Go Abroad Fund⁵⁹ that offers funding for at least 200 students to undertake a short-term international experience. In 2014/15 the Principal's Go Abroad Fund worked with the Santander Universities Programme to offer a further 30 awards of £1,000 each for international experiences in certain countries.
- 2.1.40 Specifically to encourage and support widening participation (WP) first year students, the new Widening Horizons project is an innovative collaboration between Student Recruitment and Admissions, the International Office and EUSA which gives WP first year students an immersive study abroad experience. The project has spearheaded a range of international opportunities aimed at WP students. Funding has been extended and is supporting another three initiatives, based on this model, to provide a range of activities from Summer Schools to Internships. The project was shortlisted in the widening participation Initiative of the Year category of the 2014 Times Higher Education Awards.⁶⁰

2.2 Supporting equality and diversity in our student population

- 2.2.1 We have a strong and long-standing commitment to Equality and Diversity (E&D). We are committed to embedding E&D across all our work and to developing a positive culture which supports inclusion, celebrates difference, challenges prejudice and promotes fairness. Within this context, we are committed to increasing diversity and providing equality of opportunity for all prospective and current students.
- 2.2.2 Since ELIR 2011 our work in this area has focused on making use of our sector leading widening participation initiatives to extend our reach and widen access for underrepresented groups, and in mainstreaming Equality and Diversity (E&D) in the curriculum. Our approach to mainstreaming seeks to be inclusive of all students; we do not perceive E&D to be restricted to protected groups as defined by legislation.
- 2.2.3 To extend the agenda around Equality and Diversity more widely than its legislative description, we are working to ensure that students have the opportunity to thrive and to excel regardless of their background or characteristics. Each of our students is unique and valued, and we look to areas where adjustments in support of one group of students can be of value to many. We also understand that many people do not wish to be defined by their personal characteristics and hence aim to provide support in an inclusive and anticipatory manner.

58 Go Abroad: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office/go-abroad/home

59 Principal's Go Abroad Fund: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office/go-abroad/go-abroad-fund/fund

60 THE Awards shortlist 2014: www.the-awards.co.uk/the2014/shortlist

2.2.4 We are delighted that our students consistently rate the University highly in terms of Equality and Diversity and inclusion. In our 2014 Edinburgh Student Experience Survey, completed by pre-final year undergraduate students, 92 per cent of respondents agreed that they had received fair and equal treatment from the University (regardless of age, caring responsibilities, disability, pregnancy and maternity/paternity, race/ethnic origin, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation and transgender status), and 94 per cent agreed that they were treated with dignity and respect.

Strategy and leadership for Equality and Diversity

2.2.5 Promoting equality and widening participation is a key strategic theme in the University's Strategic Plan 2012-2016. We have a specific Equality and Diversity Strategy⁶¹ first developed in 2003, and appointed our first Vice Principal Equality and Diversity in 2007 (renamed Vice Principal People and Culture in 2015), the first such appointment in Higher Education in Scotland, with responsibility and oversight for leading the implementation of the University strategy and performance in relation to Equality and Diversity for both staff and students.⁶²

2.2.6 We have set targets at University Strategic level as well as developing a single Equality Action Plan⁶³ to address our duties under the Equality Act 2010 encompassing all of its protected characteristics. Specific targets relating to learning and teaching are remitted to the relevant Senate committee convener who makes an annual update on progress via the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance who is a member of the Equality and Diversity Management Committee representing the Senate Committees. Senate Quality Assurance Committee discussed the latest report on progress on the Equality and Diversity Action Plan at its April 2015 meeting. In addition to the Equality and Diversity reporting that occurs at the school level via the Annual Quality Assurance Reports, Equality and Diversity monitoring is undertaken at the institution level via the Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee.⁶⁴

2.2.7 Edinburgh achieved its first Athena Swan Institutional Bronze Award in 2006, which was successfully renewed in 2009 and again in 2012. The Vice Principal People and Culture led the University's preparations for an Athena Swan Silver application (submitted April 2015) and a Race Equality Charter Mark application (submitted April 2015).⁶⁵ The application builds on existing Silver and Gold Awards at school level across the University. The schools of Biomedical Sciences, Biological Sciences, Informatics, and the Roslin Institute already hold Silver Awards, and the School of Chemistry has achieved a Gold Award (the first in Scotland and the second in the UK). Eight other schools have Bronze Awards. The Silver Award application has a greater focus on Equality and Diversity for students (compared to a mainly staff focus for the Bronze award), and builds on our work in mainstreaming equality into the curriculum outlined below (from 2.2.13).

61 Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/about/strategy-action-plan

62 Equality and Diversity website: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity

63 Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/about/strategy-action-plan

64 Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/edmarc

65 Athena Swan at Edinburgh: www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/innovation-development/athena-swan

Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity in governance

- 2.2.8 Equality and Diversity (E&D) considerations are embedded within all the University's decision-making procedures. University committee papers include consideration of E&D impacts as a standard part of the governance process. We actively consider E&D impacts in decisions to approve a new or revised policy or practice⁶⁶ and provide online training in E&D and Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to support staff in such activities.⁶⁷
- 2.2.9 Completed Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) on policies and procedures are publicly accessible on the University's website.⁶⁸ Good practice examples of EqIAs are also published on the University website as a way of disseminating enhancement in this area. The Academic Services EqIA template for University policies, procedures or guidance in the areas of learning and teaching, quality assurance, researcher student experience and enhancement activity is highlighted as good practice at the governance level.⁶⁹
- 2.2.10 The student voice is well represented in our Equality and Diversity endeavours. EUSA officers are members of institutional self-assessment teams that were responsible for preparing applications for the Race Equality Charter Mark and the Athena SWAN Institutional Silver Award. As part of this a variety of student-based and student-focused activities are being undertaken.

Supporting students with disabilities

- 2.2.11 We continue to provide specific specialist support for students with disabilities, through the Student Disability Service, which has recently seen satisfaction levels with its service rise by 14 per cent in the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey 2013/14. We have responded to the Public Sector Equality Duty by mainstreaming a number of the adjustments for students with specific learning needs into the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy (detailed from 2.2.14 below) to benefit all students. We also continue to provide support to all students who need it via the Student Counselling Service; the only fully accredited University Counselling Service in Scotland.
- 2.2.12 We have recently increased our focus and attention on the provision of mental health support via the Mental Health Strategy Group, a short life working group convened under the auspices of the University Equality and Diversity Committee. Its purpose is to consider and agree improvements to the way in which the University supports students with mental health issues. Discussions with stakeholders have suggested that whilst there is much excellent work in this area being undertaken within the University, there is also a need for further and more strategic development to consider areas such as: fitness to study policies; staff and student communications; staff training; governance arrangements; and the collection and use of data.

66 Equality Impact Assessment: www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/impact-assessment

67 Equality Impact Assessment training: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment/training

68 Published Equality Impact Assessments: www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/impact-assessment/a-z-assessments

69 Academic Services EqIA template: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment/good-practice

Supporting the development of an inclusive curriculum

- 2.2.13 The ELIR Report 2011 noted that “the Teachability activity has included some very positive work, and the review and monitoring of this represents good practice” (paragraph 59). At the time of ELIR 2011 the work of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee Teachability Task Group⁷⁰ was ongoing and the University was taking part in the Higher Education Academy’s one year programme, Developing an Inclusive Culture in Higher Education. The outcome of our involvement in both these activities resulted in the production of a series of awareness-raising and capacity-building workshops to support staff in developing an inclusive curriculum and the development of a framework to support this, in the form of the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy.
- 2.2.14 The Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy⁷¹ was approved by Senate Learning and Teaching Committee in January 2013. The policy formalises the University’s commitment to promoting Equality and Diversity in learning and teaching and to mainstreaming a set of common adjustments for all students. We believe our approach is sector-leading in this area. Implementation of the policy has been supported by operational guidance on the Institute for Academic Development’s website⁷² for both staff and students. There is wide support for the sentiment of the policy, but there are some ongoing practical issues affecting its implementation that remain to be resolved (in particular concerning the use of microphones). Hence, we acknowledge that it will take time before it is fully embedded. For this reason, we have decided not to extend the range of mainstreamed adjustments at the present time, but focus on consistently embedding the existing adjustments in the current policy.

EUSA’s work to support Equality and Diversity

- 2.2.15 EUSA supports four student Liberation Groups (LGBT, Black and Minority Ethnic, Women Students, Disability and Mental Wellbeing), which exist to promote equality, diversity, and social justice, while addressing issues affecting these groups traditionally marginalised within society. EUSA also provides a forum for specific sections of the student population to discuss and take action on issues which matter to them, through the International, Postgraduate, and Mature and Part-time student groups. Coupled with the work outlined earlier to support cultural diversity through EUSA Global, this demonstrates EUSA’s commitment to supporting and promoting Equality and Diversity of our students in its widest sense.

2.3 Engaging and supporting students in their learning

- 2.3.1 The ELIR Report 2011 noted: “Students are positive about the learning experience provided by the University, particularly the emphasis placed on research-led teaching” (paragraph 135)

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

71 Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Accessible_and_Inclusive_Learning_Policy.pdf

72 Guidance on implementation of the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/inclusive/mainstreaming

- 2.3.2 Our approach to engaging and supporting students in their learning has deepened in a series of steps since ELIR 2011 supported by significant investment (as outlined in section 1). A number of large-scale projects aimed at major improvements in how we support and engage students have been undertaken alongside steady improvements to existing provision via centrally provided student services, strengthened by the appointment of the Deputy Secretary (Student Experience).
- 2.3.3 A key feature of our approach to engaging and supporting students has been through partnership between EUSA and the University, and between academic and professional support units. The major developments since ELIR 2011 include: the introduction of a new Personal Tutor system as part of the Enhancing Student Support Project; the Student Experience project, including amongst other things the development of a new Student Surveys Unit and peer support; enhanced student support services; significant attention to assessment and feedback; developments in technology enhanced learning; and enhanced timetabling.
- 2.3.4 Students continue to be supported and engaged in their learning through our existing student representation system. In addition though, we have extended the concept of student engagement to take account of our students as active co-creators or leaders in a number of learning and teaching projects including: leading peer support initiatives; student-led projects in Innovative Learning Week; in student-staff partnerships in submitting proposals to the Principal's Teaching Award Scheme; and the student-led PATH project. PATH is a course information and selection tool that was developed initially by students in the School of Mathematics as part of a dissertation project. It was subsequently piloted in other schools in the College of Science and Engineering and is now rolling out across the University supported by Information Services and Student Systems. PATH won the Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA) Award for Excellence in March 2015. UCISA was particularly impressed at how the system had developed from a student initiative to a fully functional and user-friendly institutional service, and that it had the facility to incorporate student feedback to help inform the selection of courses. Through its Student Systems team the University has developed a medium term roadmap for the further development and roll out of PATH, and is committing the resources needed to deliver against the roadmap through the Deputy Secretary's (Student Experience) budget.

Enhancing Student Support Project

- 2.3.5 A key outcome of the Enhancing Student Support project has been the development of the Personal Tutor system, ensuring that all taught students, undergraduate and postgraduate, now have a named academic mentor and a local source of help and advice from teams of Student Support Officers based in each School.
- 2.3.6 At the time of ELIR 2011 our plans for redeveloping the previous Director of Studies System were in development. In the 2011 ELIR Report (paragraph 31) we were "strongly

encouraged to prioritise the implementation of the revised arrangements [for the new Personal Tutor System] and to maintain strategic oversight of this area to ensure there are significant improvements for students”. The introduction of the Personal Tutor system was prioritised following ELIR 2011. We took the year following ELIR 2011 to develop and agree key roles and responsibilities and supporting structures, and implemented the system in a phased manner initially to undergraduate students in 2012/13 and to postgraduate taught students in 2013/14. This phased approach allowed us to introduce the Personal Tutor system rapidly but also make enhancements from one phase to the next, learning from the lessons in the initial phase. Case Study 1 provides a full account of the development of the Personal Tutor System, its governance and evaluation of the impact to date.

- 2.3.7 Responsibility for oversight and further development of the Personal Tutor system will pass in 2015/16 from the Enhancing Student Support project to a newly constituted sub-group of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee. At the same time, enhancements are planned to the way student survey data is collected and presented, giving those responsible for management of the student learning experience access to a more sophisticated dashboard of management information, and the ability to “drill down” into specific areas of performance
- 2.3.8 We are now scoping out the support required for postgraduate research students, which will require a different approach to that provided by the current Personal Tutor system.

Student Experience Project

- 2.3.9 A review of student services in 2012 identified opportunities for enhancing the support provided to students, culminating in the development of the Student Experience Project (SEP).⁷³ The SEP consists of a set of related strands focussed around three key aims:
- to develop a better understanding of the student experience;
 - to pilot and implement developments to services and activities;
 - to enrich the experience of all students of the University.
- 2.3.10 The Student Experience Project has developed and delivered new services and new approaches to supporting and working with students in an increasingly diverse environment; enhancing University practices in relation to the applicant experience, transition into university and induction, student communication, and course and programme information delivery and use; delivering student surveys and providing data that is leading to a better understanding of the student experience; leading on the development of the University’s role in promoting a healthy living and study environment for students; and working to improve the University’s engagement with students, including through student/community volunteering and service learning developments beyond the University.

73 Student Experience Project webpages: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/initiatives/sep

- 2.3.11 During the summer of 2014 the University conducted a formal mid-term evaluation of the impact of the Student Experience Project.⁷⁴ It is evident from that exercise that much has been accomplished. The coordination of separate areas of activity is yielding synergies that are unexpected and rich (such as the role of the Student Surveys Unit in understanding the student experience of induction and pre-arrival support), while the wide engagement of staff from across the University means that the project has had significant reach.
- 2.3.12 The University has now identified how best to ensure that the innovations and benefits delivered by the project to date are carried forward into the future. This includes:
- Further, recurrent investment in “mainstreaming” a number of highly impactful workstreams, including Peer Support, School Councils / Student Representation, Student Surveys and Pre-Arrival and Induction;
 - Reprioritising existing budgets to support activities such as development of the PATH course database, access to the therapeutic “Big White Wall” website and student/staff communications;
 - Embedding some work – such as future strands of the Programme and Course Information Management project, developments in emergency response and online innovations – within “business as usual” for the relevant teams.

Peer support

- 2.3.13 A key objective of the Student Experience Project is to provide peer support^{75, 76} to all students so that students with more experience can share their knowledge and expertise with new or less experienced students. All schools now have peer support available to at least one year group of the undergraduate programme (typically first year) and peer support is beginning to develop in postgraduate taught programmes. The peer support project has been developed in two phases that mirror the timeline of the Enhancing Student Support Project, in particular the rollout of the Personal Tutor system: phase one focused on undergraduate students and phase two is focusing on postgraduate and online/distance students.
- 2.3.14 There are over 40 peer support projects across the 22 schools in the University.⁷⁷ The form of peer support provided includes Peer-Assisted Learning Schemes (PALS), Academic Families, Befriending, Mentoring and House Systems among others. The models vary from informal to more structured projects. There is also a suite of peer support options tailored to the needs of specific student groups, for example: international students; students with disabilities or learning differences; and the Peer Mentoring scheme for widening participation students.⁷⁸ Crucially, though, all those involved in developing and leading peer support attend training provided by EUSA and the University to ensure that all students receiving peer support experience a quality experience.

74 Student Experience Project Interim Report: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/news/student-experience-interim-report

75 EUSA Peer Support webpages: www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/getinvolved/peer-support/

76 Student Experience project: Peer Support: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/initiatives/sep/peer-support/whats-happening

77 EUSA Peer Support in schools: www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/getinvolved/peer-support/search/

78 Widening participation, peer mentoring: www.ed.ac.uk/student-recruitment/widening-participation/projects/peer-mentoring/about

- 2.3.15 The peer support system is part of the overall framework of student support provided to students and works alongside the Personal Tutor system, Student Support Officers and support provided via central support services (see Case Study 1). Additionally, for the peer mentors it provides an opportunity for senior (honours) students to grow in confidence and maturity – as they facilitate the learning and a positive experience of pre-honours students – and to be recognised for this achievement via the Edinburgh Award (see Case Study 2).
- 2.3.16 The scale and success of the Peer Support Project at Edinburgh has achieved both national and international recognition including: an NUS and UKCISA Award for Excellence in International Student Support; shortlisted for an NUS UK Academic Representation Award 2014; recognised as a best practice case study in an HEA Report on Mapping Peer-led Student to Student Learning; invitations to present at international conferences in Sydney and Missouri; and requests for advice and guidance on setting up and running peer support projects from the universities of Glasgow, Stirling, Strathclyde, Napier, West of Scotland and Skyline Dubai. The University is providing further support to EUSA over the next three years to continue developing this activity.

Student feedback and the Student Surveys Unit

- 2.3.17 The University is committed to listening to and responding to the student voice.⁷⁹ This was acknowledged in the ELIR 2011 Report that stated: “Student engagement and feedback is valued by staff and students, and there is evidence of action being taken as a result” (paragraph 137).
- 2.3.18 Since ELIR 2011, we have developed a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to surveying the student experience and communicating this to the wider University community. The work for this originated in a Senate Quality Assurance Committee task group (Assuring the Quality of the Student Experience), that led to the development of the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey and the vision for a University level Student Surveys Unit.
- 2.3.19 The new Student Surveys Unit is providing a central point of contact for information on student surveying in the University, providing us with a holistic overview of the student experience that was not possible previously. Additionally the unit assists in communicating to students the actions taken as a result of surveying.
- 2.3.20 The ELIR Report 2011 noted that “it is clear that the University places considerable significance on the outcomes of these external surveys and that action to address any unfavourable outcomes is monitored carefully” (paragraph 21). However, we felt that there was room for improvement in providing a holistic overview of the student experience from all the external and internal surveys through the conduit of the Student Surveys Unit. The Student Surveys Unit now has oversight of the main student surveys including: the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey, the

79 Listening to the student voice: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/about/student-voice

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and the National Student Survey, as well as reporting on free text comments from these surveys and running a number of ad-hoc surveys. The impact of the Student Surveys Unit was already being felt widely across the University at the mid-term evaluation of the Student Experience Project.⁸⁰ Ninety-two per cent of respondents to a staff survey said they now know who to contact for queries about survey data; 79 per cent said it is now easier to access information on student survey results; 83 per cent agreed that survey results provided by the Student Surveys Unit have helped them become more informed about factors affecting the student experience.

- 2.3.21 The ELIR 2011 Report noted: “There would be benefit in the University promoting greater consistency in the gathering and reporting of student feedback information at course level” (paragraph 82) “as a means of helping to identify trends across the institution” (paragraph 140). Over the last two years, since its inception, the Student Surveys Unit has been piloting and developing the use of the EvaSys course evaluation software to provide a standardised approach to the gathering and reporting of course level student feedback. The level of interest and demand from schools has been very positive and currently 15 of the University’s 22 schools have opted into the use of EvaSys. Adoption of the software has not been without its challenges, but the benefits are being seen in terms of the ability to benchmark and compare data within schools at the course level, with some schools (e.g. the Business School) making very sophisticated use of the data. However, only when all schools are fully participating in the use of EvaSys will we fully reap the benefits that a standardised questionnaire system can provide in delivering transparent and comparable data at an institution level.
- 2.3.22 Having developed the Student Surveys Unit under the auspices of the Student Experience Project, the University has agreed to provide additional recurrent funding and to mainstream and embed the work of the Student Surveys Unit into existing professional service structures.

Student support services

- 2.3.23 Complementing college, school-based and EUSA provision is a wide array of centrally managed high-quality professional support services⁸¹ including: Academic Services; Accommodation Services; Careers Service; Chaplaincy, Centre for Sport and Exercise; Information Services; Institute for Academic Development; International Office; Library; Student Administration; Student Counselling Service; Student Disability Service; Student Recruitment and Admissions; Student Systems; University Health Service; and the EUSA-run Advice Place.⁸²
- 2.3.24 Our centrally provided student support services are available to all students throughout their programme of study on campus or at a distance. Steady improvements have been made to all types of provision since ELIR 2011. The appointment of the Deputy Secretary (Student Experience) in 2013 is enabling the University to take a more strategic and

80 Student Experience Project Interim Report: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.1566591/fileManager/student-experience-project-interim-report.pdf

81 Student Services: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/students/student-services

82 The Advice Place: www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/

coordinated approach to designing and delivering student support services, by creating a Student Experience Services grouping within the University Secretary's Group.

- 2.3.25 A key challenge for several services is accommodating the increasing demand for support, particularly for the Student Counselling Service. The University has responded by making additional resources available that have increased the capacity of the Student Counselling Service by 50 per cent, allowing extended evening opening hours and counselling support over five campus locations during the academic year. The range of therapeutic approaches available to students has also been extended, including online counselling accessible to all students, especially those on study abroad programmes and online distance learners.
- 2.3.26 Services are increasingly looking at innovative ways of addressing increased demand through more online and self-help provision, informed by the Online and Innovation in Student Support Services strand of the Student Experience Project.⁸³ In 2014/15 the annual quality reports from the student support services included a mini theme of 'use of technology' to surface ways in which services are using technology to drive efficiencies, increase reach and access and enhance the student experience. The summary report on the key findings was presented to the April 2015 meeting of Senate Quality Assurance Committee.⁸⁴

Approaches to feedback on assessment

- 2.3.27 The ELIR Report 2011 acknowledged that in relation to our approach to assessment and feedback, "the University has undoubtedly taken action, in some cases adopting imaginative and innovative approaches" (paragraph 25) and "in a number of areas, for example feedback on assessment and research-teaching linkages, the University's enhancement activities represent sector-leading good practice" (paragraph 144). Notwithstanding, it was noted that action on feedback on assessment "is taking a long time to have a meaningful impact across the institution" (paragraph 25).
- 2.3.28 Following a number of years of unsatisfactory scores for feedback and assessment in the National Student Survey (NSS) and unsuccessful attempts to drive impact in this area, we embarked on a more systematic analysis of the nature of the problem in 2012 as a separate project to the Student Experience Project, but linked via the Student Surveys Unit's analysis of survey findings. The project involved taking an academic year to listen to our students through the NSS, Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, the development and implementation of our own internal student survey of pre-final year students (Edinburgh Student Experience Survey), through externally commissioned qualitative research with students and staff, and through benchmarking our activity with peers. Key findings from this analysis were that students felt we could do more to:

83 Online and Innovation in Student Support Services:
www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/initiatives/sep/online-and-innovation/overview

84 QAC 14/15 5 F. Report from the Sub-Committee on the Review of Student Support Service Annual QA Reports (Appendix 1):
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2014-15/20150422AgendaPapers.pdf

- provide prompt and useful feedback;
- listen to them;
- engage students as part of a learning community;
- raise the profile of learning and teaching;
- support tutors and demonstrators in improving assessment and feedback practice locally.

- 2.3.29 At the end of the evaluation, a paper was presented to Court and to Senate in May/June 2013 setting out a proposal for a wide range of activities to address the issues we had identified. At February 2015, six strands had been in operation for 18 months focusing on: prompt and effective feedback; enhanced student communication; valuing and rewarding teaching through our human resource processes; directly supporting schools in enhancing teaching practice, especially around feedback and assessment; ensuring our students feel part of a learning community; and the establishment of Junior Teaching Fellows to provide additional short-term support for teaching.
- 2.3.30 Regular updates on assessment and feedback to Court, Senate and the Student Experience Programme Board have ensured that our governance structures have a clear oversight of this activity. Our National Student Survey 2014 and Edinburgh Student Experience Survey 2014 results showed small but positive changes in most categories, including Assessment and Feedback. We expect our rate of improvement to become steeper as these measures are embedded.
- 2.3.31 Our Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey returns have improved annually since 2012, and we now perform above the Russell Group average for six learning and teaching themes out of nine, including teaching, engagement, assessment and organisation. Work to improve the taught postgraduate experience began in 2009 and indicates the inevitable existence of a lag time between action and survey impact.
- 2.3.32 The ELIR Report 2011 also asked the University to “take prompt action to clarify and monitor its expectations concerning feedback practice ...[and] ensure there is consistency in institutional guidance and practices relating to student access to examination scripts” (Paragraph 28) and to “communicate clearly to students their entitlement to feedback on their examinations” (paragraph 138).
- 2.3.33 The University’s expectations concerning feedback practice are set out in the Taught Assessment Regulations⁸⁵ that set clear expectations for at least one formative feedback or feedforward event to be provided for every course during the semester in which the course is taken and in time to be useful in the completion of summative work on the course (regulation 14), and for feedback on formative assessed work to be provided within 15 working days of submission, or in time to be of use in subsequent assessments within the course, whichever is sooner (regulation 15). Summative marks

85 Taught Assessment Regulations:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/TaughtAssessmentRegulations.pdf

are returned to students on a published timetable that is communicated to students at the start of the academic year. The current 15 day deadline for provision of formative assessed work is being extended in 2015/16 to some in-course summative assessments (excluding scheduled exams or significant pieces of work such as dissertations) and will be reflected in the Taught Assessment Regulations 2015/16 published in June 2015. Students currently have access to exam scripts to view feedback and this will continue in 2015/16 when we also intend to pilot the return of exam scripts to students in years 1 and 2. Feedback turnaround times are considered via Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee, the most recent consideration of feedback turnaround times was at its March 2015 meeting.⁸⁶

Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) Project

- 2.3.34 The LEAF⁸⁷ project aims to take a collaborative approach to enhancing assessment and feedback at the University. LEAF enables programme teams to capture the typical experience of assessment and feedback on their programme using the Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment (TESTA) methodology. TESTA is a reflective process, exploring students' experience of assessment and feedback at a programme level by identifying the most popular degree pathway(s). The audits consist of: creating an assessment blueprint; gathering student experience data (survey and focus groups); writing a LEAF report and a staff workshop.
- 2.3.35 Phase 1 of the LEAF project (October 2013 to September 2014) was a joint initiative with Birmingham, Glasgow and Nottingham Universities and three subject areas (four programmes at Edinburgh) participated. Phase 2 (October 2014 to December 2016) expands the use of TESTA across the University, with the aim to have completed 20 programme audits by project conclusion. Following phase 1, the methodology was developed and enhanced to meet the needs of the University. For example, the student survey questions were reviewed and amended and the staff workshop session format was redeveloped. Additionally, the project has been responsive and adaptive to programme needs which has been well received by staff. For example, additional questions may be added to the student survey or focus group where a programme wishes to explore a particular aspect of assessment and feedback.

Student representation structures

- 2.3.36 The ELIR 2011 Report acknowledged that “the University places a high priority on student representation, and there is clear evidence of an extensive and effective partnership between the institution and EUSA, particularly at the strategic level” (paragraphs 20 & 137), and that our “arrangements represent good practice” (paragraph 16). At the same time, the report identified opportunities for strengthening this further; in particular we were encouraged to continue to “enhance student representation at college and school levels” (paragraph 137).

86 CSCP 14/15 4 N. Feedback on Assessment: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/CSCP/2014-15/20150319Agenda.pdf

87 How to LEAF guide (wiki): www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/LEAF/LEAF++Leading+Enhancement+in+Assessment+and+Feedback

- 2.3.37 In close partnership with EUSA, under the leadership of Vice Principal Learning and Teaching, we have taken significant strides to ensure that students engage in assessing and critiquing their studies, through supporting student representation at all levels within the University and through the development of our work around student surveys. Our commitment to student engagement is set out in our joint EUSA/University student engagement statement⁸⁸ that recognises students as active partners and co-creators of their learning. A number of developments since ELIR 2011 outlined below have served to strengthen this.
- 2.3.38 Developments put in place by EUSA have strengthened the student representation system and the student voice. The single Student Council has been replaced by three separate councils: Academic Council, Welfare Council and External Council. This structure now provides a dedicated space through the EUSA Academic Council where student reps can meet with Sabbatical Officers to discuss purely academic matters.
- 2.3.39 Students are represented on all the key student-related University committees via the EUSA sabbatical officers. Elected school representatives are members of relevant college committees (e.g. College Learning and Teaching Committee, College Research Training Committee, College Quality Assurance Committee and College Library Committee). The ELIR Report 2011 noted the “importance of the University having professional and consistent student representation, particularly at the college level” and we were “encouraged to continue seeking ways of enhancing this area of student representation” (paragraph 17). Since ELIR 2011 colleges have put considerable effort into strengthening the engagement of students at the college-level. The College of Humanities and Social Science developed a Student Quality Forum approach in partnership with EUSA in 2012/13, with two events held in November 2012 and March 2013. The third Forum was held in March 2014 with student representatives on the College Quality Assurance Committee taking a lead in developing the format of the event and in chairing the forum. The event discussed issues raised in the annual College quality assurance and enhancement report. In 2014/15, two ‘Meet the Deans’ events took place under the auspices of the Student Quality Forum. This gave class reps the opportunity to speak directly to the Deanery, with issues identified being taken forward by the College during the year. A fourth Student Quality Forum event, for undergraduates, in April 2015 has again discussed the most recent College Annual Quality Assurance and Enhancement report and identified issues to take forward. A fifth Student Quality Forum, focusing on postgraduate issues, is scheduled for June 2015.
- 2.3.40 In the College of Science and Engineering students identified pressure of time and volume of College committee meetings as barriers to their involvement in student representation at College level. The College therefore adopted a more flexible ‘Group of College representatives’ model to maximize students’ availability. The approach has had mixed success and further work is being carried out in 2014/15 to improve efficiency and

88 EUSA and University Student Engagement Statement:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Quality/studentengagement/StudentEngagementStatement.pdf

benefit. The College launched a 'College student representatives forum' in 2013/14 to provide a platform for student representatives, including an online space in LEARN for committee papers and a discussion board where College reps can share comments and ideas.

- 2.3.41 An extensive class representative system operates at the school level to ensure representation on all courses and programmes. The ELIR Report 2011 confirmed that the "class rep system is generally working well", but noted that "staff appeared to be uncertain about the framework for the class rep system" and "variation in the operation of the class rep arrangements ... presents challenges for the University in identifying and resolving matters that are raised across programmes and schools" (paragraph 19). Accordingly, we were "encouraged to ensure that the new guidelines for the class rep system are introduced and promoted to ensure that all students have equivalent opportunities for having their views represented, and to facilitate the collection and consideration of comparable information about student views across programmes and schools" (paragraph 20).
- 2.3.42 In order to address these comments, new guidelines for class reps were implemented by EUSA and communicated. Additionally, a set of Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) Principles were developed jointly by Academic Services and EUSA in 2012/13 and implemented in 2013/14. These key principles set out the key roles and responsibilities of SSLCs and student reps and aim to ensure a degree of consistency in the key principles for SSLCs whilst also allowing for necessary flexibility to account for school-level issues.
- 2.3.43 Throughout 2014/15 EUSA used the college Quality Assurance Committee structures to review the effectiveness of current student engagement frameworks in schools. The review included the method of recruitment of the representatives, the structure of the School's Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs), the frequency of the SSLCs, and how issues from SSLCs are fed back to students and staff. EUSA have since used a Class Rep training session to compare and contrast the experiences of schools. The insights from the exercise are feeding into the development of school-specific guidance for Class Reps in the next academic year.
- 2.3.44 Student representation structures are devolved to schools but supported centrally by EUSA which provides training and support throughout the year. EUSA works closely with Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs) and the National Union of Students in support of student representation. Each year student Class Representative Trainers are supported by EUSA and sparqs in a comprehensive four-day train-the-trainer session, preparing the trainers to train over 500 new Class Reps per year. In 2014/15 there were over 1,400 Class Reps (representing 1,800 courses, programmes, and year groups).
- 2.3.45 In the run-up to academic year 2014/15, EUSA worked in partnership with schools to coordinate school-specific induction events for Class Reps, presented jointly by the

school and the EUSA-elected school representative. These school induction events for Class Reps were attended by over 80 per cent of the representatives in many schools; in the School of Education over 100 students participated. The sessions ensured Class Reps were given an important induction to the student representation structures available in each school, were recognised by their school as taking on an important position, and were able to develop an early rapport with the members of staff, School Reps as well as their fellow Class Reps. As a result, Class Rep engagement with training and with SSLCs has been particularly active during 2014/15.

- 2.3.46 In anticipation of increasing numbers of students on online/distance programmes, we established a Task Group in 2014/15, via Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), to review current and potential student representation structures in online/distance programmes. The Task Group reported its findings to QAC at its February 2015 meeting,⁸⁹ which identified the need to formalise and communicate structures and processes for online/distance student representation. Actions being taken forward include: the development of a new web presence for online/distance student representation, primarily aimed at students but also of value to staff; updated guidance; briefings for schools and for training providers in relation to technologies; and meeting protocols and management. Online/distance student representation is also being explored via a specific internal review of online/distance programmes in 2014/15 in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine that will report later in the year and forms the subject of a forthcoming presentation at the sector's Teaching Quality Forum.

Class Rep Open Badges

- 2.3.47 With support from Information Services, EUSA launched in semester 2 of 2014/15 an online achievement "Open Badge" scheme for Class Reps via the VLE. The badges consist of three streams of activity: student representation; research and communication; and student development. There are specific achievements and criteria that students must demonstrate in order to be rewarded with an Open Badge.
- 2.3.48 The badges are accessible to all Class Reps to share and constitute a stepping stone towards achieving an Edinburgh Award for Representing Students. Students have to write a brief summary of their activity evidencing how they meet the criteria for the badge. This enables both EUSA and the University to develop reports on the activity of Class Reps, as well as better motivating and guiding Class Reps towards the various opportunities available to them.
- 2.3.49 While the majority of EUSA's Class Rep engagement is from the Undergraduate community of students, the Badge descriptions and criteria are broad enough to encompass the work done by all Class Reps, including Online Distance Learners, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research students. Since the badges have only recently been launched, EUSA is focusing on promoting them and encouraging engagement.

89 QAC 14/15/ 4 E. Report from Student Representation for Distance Learners Group:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2014-15/20150205AgendaPapers.pdf

School councils

- 2.3.50 We have supported EUSA to explore models of local student representation through School Councils which are strengthening the reach and impact of student representatives and fostering wider engagement of students beyond the representatives.⁹⁰ The work is being funded initially for two years from August 2013 through the Student Experience Project. Nine School Councils were formed in academic year 2013/14 and a further five in academic year 2014/15.
- 2.3.51 The aim of School Councils is to foster student-staff partnership through dialogue. School Councils seek to create a local level of representation that can be practical, creative and agile enough to respond to the diverse challenges facing student representation across the University. In this way, School Councils serve to complement Student-Staff Liaison Committees and to strengthen student engagement and representation within schools, as well as building academic community through the projects that can be discussed in the Councils. School Councils have had a number of concrete wins, including securing a large amount of funding to mainstream lecture podcasting in Biology, mobilising student support to set up Academic Families in Biomedical Sciences, and securing student participation in the design of first year induction events.⁹¹
- 2.3.52 The ELIR Report 2011 also highlighted the need to strengthen student representation at the college level. A number of new initiatives were developed in 2012/13 to improve student engagement, including the quality innovation group in the College of Humanities and Social Science and a similar forum in the College of Science and Engineering.

Learning spaces

- 2.3.53 The University has invested heavily in the improvement of its estate, in particular in its learning and teaching spaces. The effective management of space was acknowledged in the ELIR 2011 Report: "Overall, it is clear that the University has taken proactive steps to ensure that its approach to designing and managing its learning spaces has been informed by national and international practice, and by staff and student views" (paragraph 135). Since ELIR 2011, we have continued to invest in our estate. Significant developments since ELIR 2011 include: the Noreen and Kenneth Murray Library at the King's Buildings, the significantly refurbished 50 George Square that now houses in a single location the School of Literature, Languages and Culture (previously housed in several buildings), and the ongoing refurbishment of Edinburgh College of Art buildings.
- 2.3.54 An area we were asked to focus on in the last ELIR was postgraduate research study space. "From discussions during ELIR, it emerged that the provision of study and office space for postgraduate students varies considerably across the Schools and Colleges. The University has a code of practice for research students and supervisors which sets out minimum expectations. There would be benefit in the University ensuring that these are adhered to across the institution." (paragraph 50).

90 School Councils website: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/initiatives/sep/school-councils

91 Biomedical Sciences School Council case example:
www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/initiatives/sep/school-councils/case-study

- 2.3.55 The Senate Researcher Experience Committee (REC) established a task group to review the provision of postgraduate research student study space. The task group reported its findings and recommendations to REC at its meeting on 2nd October, 2012.⁹² The task group observed that study space facilities do vary, sometimes due to disciplinary requirements, but also suggested that lessons learned from effective space use could be adopted more widely. These recommendations were taken forward initially by the Learning and Teaching Spaces Advisory Group, but are now feeding into the development of research student study spaces in new refurbishments.
- 2.3.56 The current Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students⁹³ sets out what the University provides centrally for all research students and what students can expect to receive (i.e. library facilities, email and computer/network access), and indicates what may be provided locally in schools and departments. Schools are responsible for the precise configuration of facilities which will vary according to school and, as set out in the code, are responsible for communicating to students before they enrol on their degree programme the space and facilities they can expect to have use of.

Technology enhanced student support

- 2.3.57 We build from strong foundations since ELIR 2011. Our approach to Technology Enhanced Learning supports a key aim of the emerging vision for learning and teaching, which is to embed technology in all degree programmes and Continuing Professional Development short courses and provide students with an opportunity to take at least one online course as part of their Edinburgh degree.
- 2.3.58 A four-year Technology Enhanced Learning programme of enhancements⁹⁴ from 2013/14 outlines a roadmap for achieving our ambition, and is informed through cross-university Horizon Scanning workshops that review and recommend priorities via appropriate committee structures.
- 2.3.59 The College of Science and Engineering is supporting developments in this area through a major new investment in academic leadership via the creation of seven Chairs in Technology Enhanced Science Education (five appointed to date). The ambition is that these new appointments will lead the development of online and blended learning approaches across the sciences, increasing global accessibility and enhancing the student experience for students studying both on-campus and at a distance.
- 2.3.60 The ELIR 2011 Report stated: “Students increasingly expect some form of engagement with a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as part of their study, and there would be benefit in the University identifying minimum expectations in this area” (paragraph 54). We have not needed to set an expectation since use of VLEs is now generally widespread. Over 70 per cent of academic courses use one of the centrally supported VLEs or online

92 Senate Researcher Experience Committee, 2nd October, 2012 Agenda and Papers: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/REC/2012-13/20121002AgendaAndPapers.pdf

93 Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Codes/CoPSupervisorsResearchStudents.pdf

94 Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.1496051/fileManager/IS%20Technology%20Enhanced%20Learning%20Strategy.pdf

learning platforms; a suite of new and refreshed tools was delivered in 2012/13 that include Blackboard Learn, Learn Mobile, Blackboard Collaborate, Moodle, PebblePad and Virtual Online Desktop. Of those that do not use a centrally supported VLE, customised locally provided VLEs are used. For example, the Schools of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine use EEMeC and EEVeC respectively, the School of Informatics uses Theon and Edinburgh College of Art has its own Learning Management System.

- 2.3.61 A range of online, awareness and self-help tools have been created, including introductory videos for our portfolio of services and a resource discovery toolkit (Technology Resources for Educational Enhancement, TREE⁹⁵), which links to our online learning and teaching case study collection hosted by the Institute for Academic Development.⁹⁶ The centrally managed Technology Enhanced Learning services received positive recognition in the 2014 Periodic Review of Information Services. More widely, the University has become recognised as one of the world leaders in digital education, underpinned by excellent research.
- 2.3.62 An additional element in our Technology Enhanced Learning portfolio is the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).⁹⁷ The University was an early developer of MOOCs and has a leadership position globally in this field of education. Our first six MOOCs were launched in early 2013. At the end of 2014, we had 16 live courses across nine schools and a further eight in development in four additional schools. We plan to have a portfolio of more than 30 MOOCs by mid-2015. The number of learners enrolled on Edinburgh MOOCs now exceeds 1 million across launched courses and more than 55,000 statements of accomplishment have been distributed to date.
- 2.3.63 Our Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) are widely available through the Coursera and FutureLearn platforms. We have also developed a restricted instance of the MOOC, Critical Thinking in Global Challenges,⁹⁸ as part of a U21 partnership that is available only to students of U21 Universities.
- 2.3.64 Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) do not fall within the remit of ELIR, but we include them here as an example of how we are using this innovative space to reach potential students and widen access to education, to develop and test pedagogical innovation (that we are now beginning to import into credit-bearing courses), and to highlight their impact as a benevolent disruptor to our traditional understanding of University learning and teaching.⁹⁹ We are exploring ways to take the lessons learned from MOOCs into curriculum design at all levels. For example, the 2014/15 Annual Postgraduate Quality Assurance Report from the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (included in the Advance Information Set) notes that the lessons from the Critical Thinking MOOC have proved useful in the design of new courses in the School of Biomedical Sciences (e.g. Biomedical Sciences 1 and Biomedical Sciences 2 foundation

95 Technology Resources for Educational Enhancement (TREE): www.tree.is.ed.ac.uk/

96 IAD Case Studies: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/casestudies/IAD+Case+Studies

97 Edinburgh MOOCs: www.ed.ac.uk/studying/online-learning/moocs/moocs

98 Critical Thinking in Global Challenges MOOC: www.coursera.org/course/criticalthinking

99 Minutes from Senate presentations on MOOCs and Distance learning, 5th June 2013: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/Senate/2012-13/20130605Minutes.pdf

courses for the new intake of Biomedical Sciences Honours students from September 2015).

Timetabling

- 2.3.65 The ELIR Report 2011 noted that “There would also be benefit in the University continuing to work in partnership with EUSA to ensure that it can achieve the intention for EUCLID to provide students with a simple, straightforward and seamless experience” (paragraph 13). EUCLID is essentially a student record that provides data to support other functions and processes. A key development since ELIR 2011 has been how we are supporting the student experience through better use of data in EUCLID and other systems to provide students with a seamless experience. A key example of this is our new approach to timetabling.
- 2.3.66 A new approach to timetabling¹⁰⁰ was introduced in 2012, with subsequent developments seeing the introduction of a personalised timetable service to taught students.¹⁰¹ This period has also seen the introduction of timetabling planning tools to assist schools with more flexible and smarter timetable planning that supports greater choice and timetabling efficiency from the student’s perspective. There has been a significant increase in the number of spaces students can book online for study purposes.
- 2.3.67 PATH (course information and selection tool), the Programme and Course Information Management project and the Personal Tutor system also draw on EUCLID data and other data sources to provide a seamless experience in relation to course choices, course and programme information and pastoral and academic support.

Principal’s Teaching Award Scheme

- 2.3.68 Principal’s Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) was originally developed in 2007 with annual funding of approximately £100,000 from the University Development Trust to provide staff at Edinburgh the opportunity to apply for grants of up to £15,000 for pedagogical research and development projects, which will make a significant contribution to enhancing teaching, learning or assessment practices within their school.
- 2.3.69 In 2014, PTAS was extended to include joint applications from students and staff. The scheme is an invaluable source of support for educational innovation and enquiry within the University. The PTAS scheme has good reach within the University with 212 different members of staff having been involved in successful PTAS projects since the start of the scheme across 20 different schools.

Innovative Learning Week

- 2.3.70 At the time of ELIR 2011, Innovative Learning Week was a new initiative. The ELIR Report 2011 commented: “This is a potentially powerful opportunity for promoting innovation in learning and teaching across the University with a subject-level focus” (paragraph 133)

100 Shared Academic Timetabling: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.75077!fileManager/T@Edautumnwinter2011.pdf

101 Shared Academic Timetabling, Policy and Guidance: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.112961!fileManager/STU192%20Policy%20Document-v3%206_approved.pdf

- 2.3.71 Innovative Learning Week is designed to provide space and time in the curriculum for students and staff to try something new with their learning.¹⁰² During one week in Semester two, normal teaching activities and room bookings are suspended, with schools, staff and students encouraged to offer a range of events designed to explore new subjects, teaching methods, connections with employers and other external groups, make new connections and have fun.
- 2.3.72 Over 350 events ran during Innovative Learning Week (ILW) 2014 with 59 per cent of students surveyed attending one or more ILW event (an increase in participation compared to previous years). The employment of students as ILW Ambassadors and encouraging students to lead or co-lead events and blog about their experiences remains a key element of our approach. Around 60 events were entirely student-led with a further 100 events jointly organised by staff and students. Senate reviewed ILW in spring 2014 and agreed to continue it in 2014/15 and then to evaluate it comprehensively in May 2015.

Student-led curriculum

- 2.3.73 The concept of student engagement in the curriculum is central to the emerging Vision for Learning and Teaching, and the University is working in partnership with EUSA to pilot various approaches to this. We are planning to pilot Student-Led Individually Created Courses (SLICCs) with students in a range of schools during summer 2015. SLICCs will allow students to undertake self-directed experiential learning (for example in relation to volunteering experience, a community or personal development project, a research project, a placement, work experience or internship) and to be assessed and awarded credit for it.
- 2.3.74 We have also explored a range of other 'flipped classroom' approaches; for example through a Students as Makers and Creators event in early 2015, and through various activities during Innovative Learning Week. In addition, in 2014/15 the EUSA Vice President (Academic Affairs) identified student demand for a pre-Honours course in Gender Studies; a concept that the School of Social and Political Science is currently working on taking forward with EUSA.

2.4 Approaches to promoting the development of graduate attributes including employability

- 2.4.1 The ELIR Report 2011 noted that overall the University "has made good progress with its aim of embedding employability and graduate attributes" (paragraph 44). Our work in this area stems from Scottish Funding Council and Quality Assurance Agency Scotland support for Universities via Learning to Work, and extends through our participation in Learning to Work 2 and in the QAA Scotland enhancement themes around 21st Century Graduates and Employability. Similarly, we anticipate our engagement with the new enhancement theme of Transitions will further develop our enhancement work around key priorities.

¹⁰² Innovative Learning Week: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/students/academic-life/studies/innovative-learning

- 2.4.2 Our Graduate Attributes Framework¹⁰³ provides the reference point for supporting our students in the development of their graduate attributes through curricular and co-curricular opportunities. Our work on graduate attributes is overseen by the Employability Strategy Group and informed and guided from two sources: our internal Employability Consultancy and our external Employer Advisory Group, a set of senior employers from a wide range of backgrounds, who give us clarity and steer on the capacities our graduates need to enter the careers they wish to pursue. The Edinburgh Award (see Case Study 2) allows us to recognise and validate the achievement of graduate attributes and our progress with the Higher Education Achievement Record (see 2.4.10) has increased our capacity to recognise co-curricular activity.
- 2.4.3 Curricular activity in this area is supported through the embedding of graduate attributes at the point where courses are developed, monitored annually and subject to periodic review.
- 2.4.4 In addition, we have an ambitious programme of pilot work to explore the real potential of a University experience to allow for the development of graduate attributes. These include LAUNCH.ed (an entrepreneurial channel for all students), the development of on-campus internships, the Principal's Go Abroad Challenge, Innovative Learning Week, and the employment of a Community Engagement Officer to develop outreach instances at scale for our students.
- 2.4.5 At postgraduate masters level our award winning scheme, Making the Most of Masters,¹⁰⁴ (winner of 2013 Times Higher Education Award, Outstanding Employer Engagement Initiative category) allows students to engage with employers for a Work Based Project in lieu of a more traditional masters dissertation. We have developed this methodology further for the masters programmes supported by Scottish Funding Council Highly Skilled Workforce Scholarships.
- 2.4.6 Our Employability Consultancy¹⁰⁵ exists to support strategy, policy and initiatives regarding employability and graduate attributes. Since ELIR 2011 we have expanded the Consultancy, appointing an Edinburgh Award Coordinator and an Educational Developer, reflecting our holistic approach that encompasses students' formal and informal learning.
- 2.4.7 Through the Consultancy's collaboration with other institutional units we have worked to build staff capacity and curriculum development, for example by: piloting staff placements with employers; providing workshops and training; developing guides and resources for Personal Tutors and other staff; and supporting schools in reviewing their provision.
- 2.4.8 Support for our students' development through their informal learning has benefitted significantly from the mainstreaming and rapid expansion of the Edinburgh Award, along with other projects such as the science outreach work of Pro Science¹⁰⁶ and the development of self-directed resources for students reflection. By the end of 2013/14

103 Graduate Attributes Framework: www.employability.ed.ac.uk/GraduateAttributesFramework.htm

104 Making the Most of Masters website: www.mastersprojects.ac.uk/

105 Employability Initiative: www.employability.ed.ac.uk/SupportAvailable.html

106 Edinburgh Award (Pro Science): www.employability.ed.ac.uk/Student/EdinburghAward/HEAR/2012-13/ProScience/index.html

more than 500 students had received an Edinburgh Award, exceeding the target set in the University's Strategic Plan 2012-2016 half way through the planning cycle.

- 2.4.9 The Employability Strategy Group¹⁰⁷ set up the Student Employability Employer Forum (SEEF) in 2012, so that we can benefit from close engagement with senior management in companies that recruit our students. This group meets annually to inform our strategic thinking on student employability and graduate attributes. SEEF discussions have also significantly influenced our initial thinking on the future vision for learning and teaching. As a result of annual discussions we are working to:
- embed employability and graduate attributes from the earliest stages, with a particular focus on attitudes and dispositions,¹⁰⁸ building these within our new Induction Framework and piloting pre-arrival reflective questions for students that are linked to the Personal Tutor system;
 - foster a clear sense of students driving and reflecting on their own learning and development across their experiences, for example through the Edinburgh Award and the MyEdGE¹⁰⁹ resource in PebblePad.

Higher Education Achievement Record

- 2.4.10 The University introduced the Higher Education Achievement Record¹¹⁰ (HEAR) covering a range of students' wider achievements, in line with the Burgess Report, 'Beyond the Honours Degree Classification' 2007. All students (with the exception of MBChB and Research Postgraduates) who have graduated from summer 2012 onwards will receive an achievement report. This includes students achieving an undergraduate or postgraduate Certificate or Diploma and visiting students. The HEAR production is built into our student systems facilitated by EUCLID and students can view their HEAR via the MyEd Portal.

LAUNCH.ed

- 2.4.11 At LAUNCH.ed,¹¹¹ the University of Edinburgh's award-winning service for student entrepreneurs, we work with students to help them explore their ideas, find funding and business partners, and ultimately, to create jobs for themselves and others. Our services are free, confidential, and available to any Edinburgh student for the duration of their studies, as well as alumni up to two years after graduation.
- 2.4.12 In 2013/14, the LAUNCH.ed team engaged with over 1,300 students and 40 events, leading to over 600 one-to-one advisor meetings and 28 student companies formed. The services cover advisors, startup bootcamps, mentoring, events and free legal and accountancy clinics.

107 Employability Strategy Group: <http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/ESG.htm>

108 Good practice examples of graduate attributes in the curriculum: <http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/GoodPracticeExamples.htm>

109 MyEdge Workbook: <http://www.employability.ed.ac.uk/MyEdGE/>

110 HEAR: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/other-info/hear>

111 LAUNCH.ed website: www.launch.ed.ac.uk/

2.4.13 Our students gained national recognition through securing five Royal Society of Edinburgh Enterprise Fellowships,¹¹² winning the Converge Challenge kickstarter and securing second and third places in the main competition and winning five of the six fresh ideas prizes through the Scottish Institute for Enterprise. At a national level, a student secured second place in the postgraduate category of the Santander Universities Entrepreneurship Awards, and Edinburgh College of Art won the first Guardian UK award for best employability project in 2013.

Internships on campus

2.4.14 Our summer internship programme Employ.ed on Campus,¹¹³ introduced in 2012/13, offers managers and students structured support throughout the summer, culminating in students being able to attain an Edinburgh Award. The programme is pan-institutional; 26 different units hosted 39 interns in summer 2014. Interns gain valuable experience through a diverse range of roles, e.g. Distance Learning Data Analyst, Legal Intern, Financial Accounting Intern, Publishing Intern, Exhibitions Intern, Digital Collections Intern, Marketing and Outreach Intern, while contributing a great deal to the units they worked in.

2.4.15 The Employ.ed model was extended through the University's partnership with Santander to our Employ.ed in an SME (small and medium-sized enterprises) programme, offering full and part-time internships throughout the year for students and graduates within the crucial SME sector. In 2013/14 Employ.ed Overseas was piloted,¹¹⁴ sourcing international paid work experience exclusively for our students, and we are looking to expand this programme in coming years. We are currently piloting postgraduate research internships, offering part-time, short hour project work to doctoral students across the University.

Masters level graduate attributes

2.4.16 Making the Most of Masters (MMM)¹¹⁵ is a curriculum development project designed to test and embed the use of external Work Based Projects as an alternative to the traditional academic Masters dissertation. Run jointly with Aberdeen and Stirling Universities and led from the Institute for Academic Development in Edinburgh, MMM was supported through £780k of funding from the Scottish Funding Council and its Learning to Work 2 programme from 2010/11 to 2013/14.

2.4.17 By the end of academic year 2013/14 more than 700 Work Based Projects (WBPs) (compared to a target of 300) had been offered in the three partner institutions (including more than 400 in Edinburgh) and a robust and flexible set of resources and guides developed. The project team also developed a deep understanding of the challenges and benefits of offering WBPs in a range of different Masters programmes involving many different employers and economic sectors. A comprehensive Making the Most of Masters (MMM) resource pack has been developed and this was launched at an open

112 RSE enterprise fellowships: www.royalsoced.org.uk/564_EnterpriseInnovationFunding.html

113 Employ.ed on campus: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/careers/looking-for-work/internships/employed-on-campus/on-campus

114 Employ.ed overseas: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/careers/looking-for-work/internships/employed-overseas/programme-details?language=pl%3Fperson_id%3D86

115 Making the Most of Masters on IAD website: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/about-us/projects/masters

dissemination event in early June 2014. These resources are free to use and available from the MMM website.¹¹⁶

- 2.4.18 Making the Most of Masters (MMM) won the 2013 Times Higher Award for Outstanding Employer Engagement Initiative and there has been significant interest in the potential of implementing the MMM model in other institutions across Scotland and beyond. An economic impact study of MMM commissioned from BiGGAR Economics identified and quantified specific economic impacts around the employability and earnings of students, impact on turnover and staff recruitment savings for employers, knowledge exchange and business/University links, and recruitment to Masters programmes for students. For academic years 2011/12 and 2012/13 this total economic impact has been estimated at between £3.75m and £6.2m across the three original partner Universities.¹¹⁷

2.5 Effectiveness of our approach to enhancing the student learning experience

- 2.5.1 We are responding to a planned growth in student numbers, and to a variety of enhancement agendas, with a far reaching set of initiatives. Early examples, such as the introduction of Personal Tutors, have provided us with useful learning, and our approach has now been finessed into one which is scholarly, project-based, evaluative, reflective, rigorous, self-critical and yet flexible. This has allowed the University Court and senior team to engage with this agenda very effectively, and as a result we are supported to develop effective and ambitious improvements to the student experience. As we have developed our methodology, our scope and ambition have also grown, resulting in a set of developing visions for our future support for students.
- 2.5.2 Strengths of this approach include our ability to experiment with new and innovative ways of approaching student learning and support. The Student Experience Project is probably our best example of this, with multiple strands which have added value to existing student support and introduced new ones into the University. Some of our approaches are recognised as sector leading, for example our introduction of Peer Support, which is now being shared widely and internationally. Making the Most of Masters won a 2013 Times Higher Award for Outstanding Employer Engagement Initiative.
- 2.5.3 While our approach allows us quickly to achieve excellence in pockets of activity, there are two challenges which we are working hard to overcome. One is our capacity to carry project work into the mainstream of University activity. The other is ensuring parity and appropriateness of opportunity for our students. While we value our diversity and recognise that consistency is not always an appropriate goal, a downside of locally developed innovations is that this can be perceived as contributing to increased heterogeneity in the student experience. We are also mitigating this risk by discussing with schools and colleges appropriate levels of autonomy and commonality of student

116 Making the Most of Masters external website: www.mastersprojects.ac.uk/

117 Economic Impact of the University of Edinburgh's Commercial Activity: www.research-innovation.ed.ac.uk/News/Economicimpact.aspx

experience, and working as a community of practice towards a shared understanding of this issue.

- 2.5.4 Overall, we look to learn from our project approach and to finesse the operation of large, soft (change management) projects. We aim to be reflective and realistic as we scale some of our smaller pilots to a wider audience across the University. In doing these two activities, we aim to work to a shared view on appropriate diversity and appropriate consistency within the learning and teaching sphere of the University. While both ends of this spectrum are easy to define and to defend, the centre ground is only amenable to experiential learning and reflection based on this.

3. Enhancement in learning and teaching

3.1 Approaches to identifying and sharing good practice

Overview

- 3.1.1 The ELIR 2011 Report noted “evidence that enhancement has become embedded more prominently into institutional processes since the 2006 ELIR” (paragraph 120) and “the University is engaged in a variety of innovative and imaginative enhancement activities, a number of which represent sector-leading good practice” (paragraph 133). We have continued to build on the innovative enhancement activities reported in ELIR 2011 and to embed these further.
- 3.1.2 Our approach to enhancement in learning and teaching is based on two strands. Our first approach is to use our growing understanding of student analyses of our learning and teaching provision to develop and improve our offer. A key example of this is our work around responding to the National Student Survey scores and our students’ assessment of their learning experience. Our second approach is to look outside the University and to begin to map our provision onto the skills and attributes that our students will need in long and varied postgraduate careers. This goes beyond the traditional approach to graduate attributes and begins to explore the nature of a degree and the importance of students as agents of learning and agents of design in their learning experience. Work in this area is exemplified by the development of the University’s vision for learning and teaching and by the development of Innovative Learning Week.
- 3.1.3 In order to deliver our two strands of work we need a clear understanding of our students’ experiences, which is achieved through listening to the student voice and our selective use of external evaluation. We also need to be alert to best practice in University learning and teaching, internally and across the international sector. We achieve this through a variety of internal practice sharing events, through engagement with external networks of colleagues and through the hosting and supporting of conferences on and off campus.
- 3.1.4 Learning and teaching depends on student engagement and on having an academic workforce skilled, valued and motivated to excel in learning and teaching. We have developed multiple pathways to allow staff to gain skills in learning and teaching, including accredited routes to Higher Education Academy fellowships. We have adapted and improved our Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, our training for Chancellor’s Fellows, and are taking the learning from these instances to benefit academic development more broadly via the Continuing Professional Development Framework¹¹⁸ for learning and teaching. We have adapted our promotion criteria to explicitly value learning and teaching at all levels of academic staff, which has been in operation for a full promotion round.

- 3.1.5 We engage with a number of approaches to sharing good or promising practice. We identify good practice from routine monitoring and review processes as well as more ad hoc processes. We identify good practice internally and externally through engagement with peers and via benchmarking activities.
- 3.1.6 The mechanisms that we use for sharing identified good practice are many. We have systematic mechanisms in place to allow us to share good practice internally through internal workshops, local conferences based on specific themes we are seeking to enhance, symposia for staff in specific roles (for example members of Senate committees), a case-study wiki, and the development of staff networks around particular themes or around specific roles or levels of study. We also engage with external best practice through active participation in networks (e.g. Universitas 21, League of European Research Universities, Russell Group) and conferences (e.g. Quality Assurance Agency and Higher Education Academy), and through taking a leadership role in areas of activity where we have particular expertise.
- 3.1.7 Much of the good practice identification and sharing goes on within and among schools and colleges, via relevant quality assurance and learning and teaching committees and groups, and is not necessarily visible at the institutional level. We would expect and encourage this as part of ongoing reflection on practice and enhancement activity. The school annual quality assurance and enhancement reports provide many examples of good practice that are discussed and shared at college committees. Good practice that is of wider benefit beyond the college is highlighted in the college annual quality assurance and enhancement report to be shared at the Senate Quality Assurance Committee. Schools are also encouraged to share their good practice cases via the Institute for Academic Development's case studies wiki.
- 3.1.8 We are particularly open to and welcome the identification of good practice by students, for example via the EUSA Teaching Awards.

Sharing best practice internally

- 3.1.9 We run best practice workshops and network events through the Institute for Academic Development (IAD). Sharing practice and learning from innovation can be challenging in a university as large and diverse as Edinburgh. One approach to this has been to establish an IAD case study wiki.¹¹⁹ This showcases best practice in different schools, drawn from many different aspects of University life and linked to key University priorities in supporting student learning.
- 3.1.10 All case studies are publicly available and have been thematically grouped, as well as grouped by college, and can also be searched. Typically, prospective authors are approached and invited to submit a case study when members of the team identify interesting practice, such as from the EUSA teaching awards, from internal review panels or successful Principal's Teaching Award Scheme applications. In addition to describing

119 IAD Case Studies wiki:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/advice/practice/case-studies-wiki

and reflecting upon what was done in each case, authors are specifically asked to highlight which aspects of their exemplar are most readily scalable and transferable.

- 3.1.11 With more than 100 case studies the wiki provides an overview of the diverse, creative and innovative approaches to learning, teaching and student support that exist across the University. New case studies are being added all the time and the wiki is used as a resource for staff development events and in responding to internal review.
- 3.1.12 The ELIR 2011 Report noted: “Overall, the University has effective processes in place for sharing the good practice arising from monitoring and review” (paragraph 105). Building on this, we have held ‘Learning from Internal Review’ workshops twice since ELIR 2011, with a further workshop due to take place later in 2014/15. These workshops are providing an opportunity to celebrate good practice highlighted by internal review and build capacity in enhancement in those areas about to undergo a review.

Gearing up for induction

- 3.1.13 Gearing Up for Induction is an annual event that enables academic and support staff from across the institution and Edinburgh University Students Association to come together to focus on student induction. Participants are given the opportunity to reflect on the previous year’s student and staff experience of pre-arrival and induction and then begin to discuss and plan enhancements for the forthcoming cycle. The event provides a cross-University forum and ensures that student induction and transition remain high on staff agendas. Gearing Up includes: external and internal keynote speakers, optional workshops, poster sessions highlighting best practice and opportunities for networking and more informal sharing of good practice. The student voice is included through a student panel presentation and a discussion of that year’s student survey findings. Videos from the 2014 Gearing Up event can be found on the Student Experience Project’s web pages.¹²⁰ In 2015, the Gearing Up event will broaden its focus beyond induction to include transitions through and out of the University, in order to align with the new QAA Enhancement Theme.

Senate Committees’ Symposium

- 3.1.14 One of the benefits of the Senate Committees’ Symposium is that it allows a wide range of stakeholders to come together and participate in a learning and teaching conference-style event. There are opportunities to hear external speakers discussing their experience on a particular aspect of learning and teaching. A horizon scanning presentation is included in the programme which focuses on internal or/and external developments that could impact on the work of the Committees and their stakeholders.

Staff networks

- 3.1.15 Edinburgh is a highly devolved University where schools have freedom to implement strategy and policy in a way that best suits their academic discipline. This allows

120 Gearing Up events: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/initiatives/sep/pre-arrival-induction/gearing-up

schools flexibility to ensure students are at the heart of their strategy, however it can be challenging for staff within schools to have input into the central decision making process. We have established a number of networks of colleagues in comparable roles as a means of sharing good practice as well as ensuring a means of communication with particular roles to ensure important University expectations are adhered to.

- 3.1.16 The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) has developed a network for staff who work with the taught postgraduate cohort to facilitate staff participation in strategy, whilst also allowing IAD to ensure that staff are aware of the IAD provision, and can inform their students.¹²¹ The network is supported by a series of lunchtime discussion sessions, and a mailing list, which have both proven to be a valuable conduit to taught postgraduate staff, and is a model which has been replicated for other audiences. Additionally, every two years, IAD runs a taught postgraduate strategy conference. The 2014 conference featured a keynote from Professor Roni Bamber, as well as workshops on topics such as the University's taught postgraduate strategy, and assessment and feedback techniques.
- 3.1.17 Networks have also been established with key roles involved in delivering pastoral and academic support (the Senior Tutors' Network and Student Support Teams' Network). The specific purpose of these networks is discussed in detail in Case Study 1.

EUSA Teaching Awards

- 3.1.18 Since their launch in 2008/09 as the first student-led Teaching Awards scheme in the UK, EUSA's Teaching Awards¹²² have been a phenomenal success, and they represent an extremely positive partnership with the University. The Teaching Awards Scheme allows students to nominate teaching staff, support staff, courses, and learning communities for awards which are assessed by a student judging panel. EUSA then holds a high profile annual awards ceremony at the end of each academic year to recognise the award winners and runners up. There are many benefits to running this Teaching Awards scheme. They give students an opportunity to say 'thank you' and recognise the staff members who help them in their studies and contribute to their student experience. The Teaching Awards are a way to recognise and reward best practice in teaching and disseminate it across the University. EUSA Teaching Awards featured in the sparqs March 2015 news digest.¹²³
- 3.1.19 In recent years, EUSA has been focusing on strengthening the quality of the nominations, encouraging students to describe and elaborate on why they are nominating particular individuals, courses, or programmes. We are proud that the Teaching Awards provide a rough metric of teaching quality, and that becoming a EUSA Teaching Award winner or multiple runner-up can be used as an Exemplar of Excellence in Student Education for academic staff at grades 9 and 10. In 2012/13, EUSA received 2,416 Teaching Award nominations from students, and in 2013/14, 2,557 nominations were received.

121 IAD Masters Network: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/networks/masters

122 EUSA Teaching Awards: www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/getinvolved/campaigns/teachingawards/

123 sparqs March 2015 news digest: www.sparqs.ac.uk/news-detail.php?page=417

Sharing best practice sector-wide

Participation in external networks of best practice

- 3.1.20 The ELIR 2011 Report commended “the University’s proactive approach to learning from national and international practice to inform initiatives within the institution” (paragraph 144). The University continues to play an active role in Scottish, UK and international networks linked to practice sharing and innovation in learning and teaching. This includes standard membership of the Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee and the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee. In addition, the Vice Principal Learning and Development is a member of the organising committee for QAA’s 2015 annual International Conference on Enhancement and Innovation in Higher Education.
- 3.1.21 Beyond the UK, Edinburgh participates in the League of European Research Universities (LERU) Vice Rectors for Teaching and Learning community, the Universitas 21 (U21) Educational Innovation Cluster and the Network for Enhancing Teaching and Learning in Research-Intensive Universities. These networks allow us to benchmark ourselves internationally. Membership of these networks also provides valuable opportunities for collaboration and innovation (including the launch of a new U21 shared online course), based on the University of Edinburgh’s MOOC, Critical Thinking in Global Challenges, with U21 institutions allowing students to learn online in groups from different institutions and continents. Edinburgh is hosting the 2015 meeting of the U21 Educational Innovation Cluster.

Leadership roles that inform and develop best practice

- 3.1.22 Our senior team includes active participants in a range of leadership activities across the Scottish sector and beyond. The majority of our senior learning and teaching team are ELIR reviewers; we are represented on external Higher Education Academy boards (for example the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey Advisory Board), on the Higher Education Public Information Steering Group and on other sector-wide enhancement bodies such as Higher Education Careers Services Unit. We hold research grants in areas of learning, teaching and quality assurance/governance as well as informing international practice, for example the European Commission-funded project in the development of quality assurance structures in Kosovan Universities by the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance.
- 3.1.23 Our intention in taking active external leadership roles is to bring our scholarship and internal learning to bear on significant issues facing the sector and to be in a position to learn at the cutting edge of decision making.
- 3.1.24 The range of our self-evaluative approach extends beyond the taught student experience to inform our activity in international partnerships and the research student experience. In 2012, the University and Aarhus University embarked on the collaborative project ExEDE (Excellence in European Doctoral Education) to discuss, develop and evaluate practice in

relation to excellence in European doctoral education. A one year ExEDE pilot project was run during 2013 to help identify best practice and develop new methods of supporting doctoral education in the context of its changing landscape. Evaluation of the impact of the project will inform future work in delivering key messages for policy makers and funders.

3.2 Impact of the national enhancement themes and related activity

- 3.2.1 The ELIR 2011 Report noted: “The University has been a significant contributor to the national programme of Enhancement Themes, and there is considerable evidence of the institution using the outcomes of the national Themes to inform its own policies and practice” (paragraph 145). We continue to be fully engaged in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Enhancement Themes. We have established an institutional steering group under the leadership of the Assistant Principal Learning and Development to coordinate our engagement with the current Enhancement Theme of Transitions.¹²⁴ While the Theme covers various types of transition, it is affording us an opportunity to continue our focus on induction for new students and continuing induction for existing students, an activity which has been significantly enhanced by the work of the Student Experience Project. We are connected to sector-wide enhancement activity via the Assistant Principal Learning and Development’s coordination of QAA Scotland’s international conference in 2015, and taking an institutional lead in the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee.
- 3.2.2 The previous enhancement themes have similarly had a positive impact on the University. The Enhancement Theme of Integrative Assessment was led on behalf of the sector from Edinburgh, and resulted in numerous sector outputs which fed into various University discussions and efforts to enhance feedback. We also drew extensively on the work of the Research-Teaching Linkages theme, as demonstrated in our ELIR 2011. Indeed, the ELIR 2011 Report commended us for our work on research-teaching linkages, noting “in a number of areas, for example ... research-teaching linkages, the University’s enhancement activities represent sector-leading good practice” (paragraph 144). This work has been developed further under the theme of Graduates for the 21st Century that has ensured that the development and implementation of the University’s graduate attributes framework has been enriched through familiarisation with cognate frameworks in many other universities within and beyond the UK. It also initiated our thinking around the potential for the Higher Education Achievement Report and our internally developed Edinburgh Award (see Case Study 2).

3.3 Engaging and supporting staff

- 3.3.1 A significant focus of attention since 2013 has been on staff support and engagement. This theme emerged clearly from our work around addressing the National Student Survey (NSS) results, and has been taken forward as a strand of that work, although it is clearly of much wider benefit and significance to the University community and our ambitions have been comprehensive rather than being limited to this context.

¹²⁴ Enhancement Theme Student Transitions Wiki activity: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/ETST/Activities

- 3.3.2 Three related areas of activity were identified by our work on the National Student Survey, on all of which we have made significant progress. These are: the need to provide a wide variety of training opportunities for our staff especially in, but not limited to, learning and teaching; the need to recognise and reward contributions to leadership of, and best practice in, learning and teaching; the need to ensure that a focus on learning and teaching is embedded in the way we recruit, mentor and develop our staff base.
- 3.3.3 Examples are given below of work in each of these areas and also of our further development of EUSA teaching awards which offer recognition outside formal human resource or Continuing Professional Development processes for outstanding staff.
- 3.3.4 The opportunity to begin the process of rounded staff development (for research, knowledge exchange and learning/teaching) was offered by our appointment of a significant number of early career academic staff (Chancellor's Fellows) during 2013 and 2014. Work on their induction and support during their first year of employment has highlighted best practice which is now being considered for all staff through our People Committee.

Provision of training opportunities in learning and teaching

- 3.3.5 The ELIR 2011 Report asked the University “to ensure greater equity and consistency in a number of key places, including training of new staff, tutors and demonstrators; staff appraisal; and academic and personal support” (paragraph 138). We have reviewed and enhanced our approach in all these areas. Details on staff training for new staff, PhD supervisors and tutors and demonstrators are detailed below. Consistency in our approach to appraisal (Annual Review) is outlined at 3.4.29. Case Study 1 provides details of our approach to equity and consistency in academic and personal support via Personal Tutors and Student Support teams.
- 3.3.6 Since ELIR 2011, the University has developed an overarching Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework¹²⁵ for Learning and Teaching which provides a coherent structure within which to offer educational development to colleagues involved in teaching and supporting learning. This Framework builds on the rich opportunities for CPD which were already available to provide structured and flexible routes to the different levels of fellowship set out within the UK Professional Standards Framework.
- 3.3.7 New Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provision has also been developed to enhance the range of possibilities for engagement. This Framework is now accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and several pilots of new elements of the provision have taken place. For example, the Edinburgh Teaching Award programme, part of the CPD Framework for Learning and Teaching, started on a pilot basis in April 2014. 55 members of staff are currently working within levels one and two of the award toward Associate Fellow or Fellow of the HEA. Another 28 started levels 3 and 4 of the award in February 2015. One person has successfully completed (level 2, gaining HEA

125 Continuing Professional Development framework:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/cpd/cpd

Fellowship). The intention is to maintain the existing CPD offer as well as run larger pilots of new elements in academic year 2014/15. Evaluation of these pilots will be followed by efforts to substantially increase the numbers of staff participating in 2015/16.

- 3.3.8 The ELIR 2011 Report asked the University to “ensure that its stated requirements are fulfilled in practice and, specifically, that all staff do undertake the orientation” (paragraph 62). The Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) web page¹²⁶ states that new teaching staff are expected and encouraged to participate in the orientation element of the PGCAP, but it is not a requirement; some staff may be able to demonstrate that they have received suitable training previously. However, we strongly encourage participation and have been working hard to increase engagement. Since ELIR 2011 we have seen a significant increase in the number of staff participating in elements of the PGCAP (from 370 in 2011 to 412 in 2014) and the numbers graduating with the award has more than doubled (from 12 in 2011 to 29 in 2014). Attendance of new staff at the Get Connected Welcome Day, the specific orientation for new Chancellor’s Fellows and researchers, has been a huge success (see 3.3.21). More generally, though, we have put considerable effort into engagement in development events run by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD). In the 8-month period between the start of the academic year 2014/15 and March 2015, 5,335 participants were recorded as attending development events (excluding the PGCAP) run by the IAD, compared to 4,622 in the same period in the previous year.
- 3.3.9 The University was encouraged in the ELIR 2011 Report (paragraph 63) to give further consideration to the development of peer observation of teaching, in liaison with the IAD. Whilst we encourage colleagues to take part in peer observation of teaching as part of normal teaching practice, we do not require that this happens. In the absence of clear evidence of the effectiveness of peer observation of teaching, we are focusing on the Continuing Professional Development framework. This aims to enhance and develop learning and teaching practice through a different approach to that of mainstreaming peer observation of teaching that is mapped against professional standards and expectations of the skills and capabilities of learning and teaching professionals at various stages of their career.

PhD Supervisor briefing

- 3.3.10 The ELIR 2011 Report stated: “it is a University requirement that all supervisors should attend a briefing event at least every five years. The briefings and the requirements to undertake them represent good practice, but the numbers attending suggest that the requirement is not being fulfilled. There would be benefit in the University ensuring that its policy relating to supervisor briefing is implemented” (paragraph 64). And “there is no apparent central oversight of this stated requirement” (paragraph 65).
- 3.3.11 It continues to be a University requirement that all supervisors should attend a briefing event every five years.¹²⁷ To support the implementation of this, and improve uptake,

126 Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/courses-events/postgraduate-certificate/registration-fees

127 Compulsory supervisor briefing events: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/research-roles/research-managers/development/briefing

the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) is working closely with schools to deliver tailored training for each school annually. This ensures that all supervisors have access to subject-specific training once per year, but they can also attend briefing events in other schools, or at college level if applicable. A key development since ELIR 2011 is that central oversight is now facilitated via attendance recorded by IAD; numbers and names of those who have attended are reported back to schools via the college research training committees twice a year (or more frequently on request). Schools and colleges then use this information to follow up with individuals whose training has expired, or encourage new supervisors to attend. It is the responsibility of a Head of School to ensure that all relevant staff have undertaken the required training. Additional optional training events are also provided by IAD.¹²⁸

- 3.3.12 Training and mentoring is also provided ‘on-the-job’ by ensuring that staff new to doctoral supervision must first work alongside experienced staff. The Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students (section 2.1.2 of the Code, ‘Appointment of Supervisors’)¹²⁹ ensures that academics who have not previously supervised at doctoral level must first serve as Assistant or Co-Supervisor alongside an experienced member of staff before they can serve as Principal Supervisor. Moreover, staff who are examining a PhD for the first time will be accompanied by an experienced colleague who participates in the role of a non-examining chair.

Tutors and demonstrators training

- 3.3.13 Training and development for tutors and demonstrators is provided locally at the discipline level and centrally. To supplement school-based briefings, the Institute for Academic Development¹³⁰ provides a range of generic courses for tutors and demonstrators including orientation courses, courses for experienced tutors, online tutors and information to support staff who work with tutors and demonstrators.
- 3.3.14 The ELIR 2011 Report stated: “The University is asked to assure itself that its requirements relating to tutor training and development are being carried out in practice.” (paragraph 65). This is recognised as a high priority for the University, and since ELIR 2011 two key developments have occurred that have served to strengthen this area: (1) Oversight has been strengthened by the move to guaranteed hours contracts for all tutors and demonstrators; (2) As part of ongoing efforts to bring together enhancements of orientation, guidance, remuneration and training, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) has appointed two new part time staff to support Continuing Professional Development (CPD) specifically for tutors and demonstrators. This has enabled IAD to work more with staff who support tutors and demonstrators locally and develop accredited CPD routes for experienced tutors and demonstrators to gain recognition for their teaching.

128 Optional supervisor training: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/research-roles/research-managers/development/seminars

129 Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Codes/CoPSupervisorsResearchStudents.pdf

130 Tutors and demonstrators: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/tutors-demonstrators

3.3.15 Notwithstanding, we intend to undertake further work in support of tutors and demonstrators. Following a short-life working group on tutors and demonstrators, an overview of the issues was presented to Principal's Strategy Group in August 2014.¹³¹ Subsequently, a three-year task group, reporting to the People Committee and chaired by the Vice Principal Learning and Teaching, commenced work in November 2014, to oversee the articulation of a number of strands of work aimed at improving the ability of tutors and demonstrators to contribute to learning and teaching. The intentions for the project will take us beyond the scope of the recommendation made in the ELIR 2011 Report.

Reward and recognition for learning and teaching

3.3.16 We are moving towards a framework of recruitment, annual review and promotion which clearly describes learning/teaching, research and leadership/management as areas of equal esteem. This process has now been completed with regard to promotion, through the development of Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education. The other work packages will be completed during academic year 2015/16.

Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education

3.3.17 The University has Grade Profiles for academic staff that match individuals' activities and achievements to the University's staff grades 6-10, with respect to teaching, research and leadership/management. Reward processes have, historically, recognised contributions in these three areas. Exemplars of productive activity and excellent performance in research and leadership are well established and understood within their discipline-specific contexts and cultures. Concrete and unequivocally-evidenced exemplars of excellence in teaching have proved to be more elusive. While some outstanding promotions have been made for teaching-focused activity, we have previously lacked an accepted set of flexible and dynamic exemplars to put flesh on the bones of the Grade Profiles with respect to student education.

3.3.18 To address this, in 2013 for the first time, a set of Exemplars of Excellence in Student Education was available for use as part of all academic promotions processes. They aim to ensure that rewards for excellence in student education are equal in status, and most importantly in value to the University and its students, to those for excellence in research. The exemplars have been cited by individuals applying for promotion and, in some cases, by external reviewers of promotion cases. They gave many cases for reward for excellent teaching a better evidence base and highlighted shortcomings in others. The intention is that, as the exemplars become more widely used, they will cause a gradual, but real, culture change towards an ethos where teaching and research are seen by all as equally valuable contributions. This, in turn, may be the single most important long-term strategic move that we can make to improve the student experience in a sustainable and systemic way.

¹³¹ Principal's Strategy Group, 25th August 2015, Paper E: Review of systems around tutors and demonstrators at the University of Edinburgh (Closed paper).

- 3.3.19 A set of exemplars should not, by definition, be exhaustive. It will thus develop continuously as (a) experience of its use in our own reward processes improves its clarity and usefulness; (b) the nature of student learning per se evolves and (c) new exemplars emerge. This 2013 document¹³² should not therefore be regarded as either a fully-formed, complete document or a one-off experiment. It is, rather, the first step in a process that will stimulate the growth of a more diverse set of exemplars of educational excellence drawn from future promotion/reward cases that have been inspired and informed by this initial list. The descriptors for Personal Chairs have also been revised to improve clarity on the role of excellence in student education in the promotion process. These have been agreed for publication and will be used for the next academic promotions round from June 2015.
- 3.3.20 The exemplars have been sufficiently well-received across the institution that similar documents are already being created for knowledge exchange and academic leadership.

Chancellor's Fellows and learning from this initiative

- 3.3.21 The University has made a major investment in the future of its academic staff with the appointment of prestigious tenure-track Fellowships across all disciplines. University of Edinburgh Chancellor's Fellowships are five-year Fellowships intended to support outstanding candidates at the start of their independent academic career. The Chancellor's Fellowship scheme was launched in 2012 with 100 posts advertised. A second round of the scheme was advertised in spring 2013 and 50 additional Fellowships were advertised in December 2013. There are currently over 200 Chancellor's Fellows across all 22 schools in the University.
- 3.3.22 A Chancellor's Fellow will have demonstrated the ability to conduct world-leading research and exhibit clear potential to become an international leader in their discipline. The first year of the Fellowship focuses on establishing the Fellow's research programme, with a limited amount of teaching and other duties. Teaching and administration gradually increase over the five year period to that of a normal academic load in the relevant discipline and substantial mentoring and development support are available through and beyond their Fellowship provided by the Institute for Academic Development.
- 3.3.23 Chancellor's Fellows are offered the opportunity to make an important contribution to enriching student learning experiences through both their teaching and their role as Personal Tutors. They are given suitable training, support and strong encouragement to enable these roles to be gradually learnt and delivered.
- 3.3.24 The Institute for Academic Development and University Human Resources Services established a joint project in June 2012 to:

- develop and coordinate induction, orientation and professional development provision for Chancellor's Fellows;
- link this provision to probation, annual review and promotion processes;
- gain insights into the development of a more integrated induction, orientation and professional development provision for all academic staff, particularly those making a transition from a research only role to a broader academic position.

3.3.25 The implementation of the Chancellor's Fellowship scheme, in addition to meeting its original aims, has been a valuable source of learning for the institution. The experience has been mixed but good practice is informing other areas of development. The project team has successfully used this opportunity to look carefully at the support and Continuing Professional Development that we offer all new academic staff and has introduced several new approaches that have already become embedded and extended to all academic staff. We have also been able to identify a number of areas where practice and support could be usefully changed or further developed, particularly around addressing inconsistencies between the operational procedures of different schools. The scale of recruitment has also afforded the University an opportunity to statistically analyse the recruitment and reward of a specific cohort of staff to inform institutional learning.

Mentoring

3.3.26 The University has a Mentoring Connections¹³³ programme, open to all academic and professional services staff. The Mentoring Connections programme was run as a pilot in 2012/13 and phase 1 of the rollout started in 2013/14. The evaluation report from the pilot includes recommendations for further rollout of the programme.

3.3.27 Mentoring can mean many different things but in the University we are aiming to provide time and space for staff to meet with a mentor to talk through a variety of issues that affect staff at various stages of their career and development, for example work life balance, career development, or promotion paths. We have invested in this because mentoring has been shown to be an effective development tool that encourages self-reflection and enables staff to prioritise areas for career development, now and in the future. The mentee has control over the relationship to talk about issues that affect them, to take control of their own agenda and most importantly, to affect positive change on their work and career.

3.3.28 Currently we have 110 mentoring partnerships, 60 from academic areas and 50 from professional services. For every area that has joined mentoring connections there is an internal local champion who works with the lead in University Human Resources Services to ensure local knowledge is utilised in matching and support of the partnerships. The initial evaluation of the programme has been positive, and this programme is supported by a framework of training and support materials.

133 Mentoring Connections:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/human-resources/learning-development/dev-opportunities/mentoring/mentoring-connections

Annual Review

3.3.29 The University's system of staff appraisal is Annual Review. A key focus since ELIR 2011 has been to increase Annual Review completion rates. In 2013/14, 93 per cent of all eligible employees across the University completed an Annual Review compared to 72 per cent in the previous year 2012/13. Some areas (such as Information Services and Student and Academic Services) achieved 100 per cent completion; the lowest completion rate was in the College of Science and Engineering at 86 per cent.

3.3.30 To ensure that Annual Review contributes towards meeting the University's strategic objectives, the Annual Review Task Group was established in April 2014 with the key purposes of: developing initiatives to meet the target of 100 per cent completed Annual Review returns; considering how to promote personal accountability and management engagement; considering the identification and training of reviewers; considering links between Annual Review and career progression.

3.4 Effectiveness of our approach to promoting good practice in learning and teaching

3.4.1 It is clear that we have made significant improvements to our practice and to our staff base through the activities described in this section of our Reflective Analysis. We have learned to take an evidence-based approach to the development of our curriculum and to acquire that evidence from our peers, our external networks and our students. We are training more staff in learning and teaching, and engaging explicitly with leadership in this area. We are rewarding staff for their work in this area and have a high level agreement to move towards a situation where the University works with a parity of esteem for learning/teaching and research, internally and externally.

3.4.2 It will take time to move these achievements from influence over a minority of our staff to the majority of our academic body. We are approaching this challenge explicitly with a major initiative in this area led by the Deputy Secretary (Student Experience) that sets out to address both the 'hard' and 'soft' aspects of culture change, including: leadership messages; enhanced support for Heads of School; further work on performance management, reward and recognition in the area of learning and teaching; use of metrics; shaping student expectations and growing the number of high profile events and awards that specifically recognise and promote excellence in learning and teaching.

4. Academic standards

4.1 Approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards

Overview

- 4.1.1 Our broad approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards has not changed since the last ELIR, although we have continued to reflect on and enhance our approach. Consistent with our devolved structure, formal responsibility is largely devolved to the University's three colleges but operating within clear and standard regulations, policies and guidance that ensure consistency in principles but enable flexibility in practice.
- 4.1.2 Our approach to quality assurance is outlined in the University's Statement on Quality Arrangements¹³⁴ which sets out the governance arrangements and the formal relationship between Senate and Court in assurance of standards. The key Senate Committees with responsibility for academic standards and quality are the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee and the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and respective college and school committees. The underlying principles of our quality assurance framework remain constant with a key focus on enhancement of the student experience, as outlined in our Ethos and Strategy for Quality Assurance.¹³⁵
- 4.1.3 The ELIR 2011 Report encouraged the University "...to continue pursuing its mapping of precepts in the QAA Code" (paragraph 87). Since the last ELIR we have conducted a systematic mapping¹³⁶ of our internal regulations, policies and guidance to all the UK Quality Code chapters. This has been valuable in confirming our broad approach and also highlighting a small number of areas for development. In response to the mapping, and based on our own reflection and self-evaluation, we have embarked on a number of key projects aimed at improving our approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards including: a review of the remit of Boards of Studies; the development of a new Code of Student Conduct; the External Examiner Project; the Programme and Course Information and Management Project; and the Collaborative Provision review (detailed in section 6). We will also introduce a more streamlined student appeal process in 2015/16.

Programme and course approval

- 4.1.4 The University's programme and course approval process meets the expectations in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B1: Programme design, development and approval, as demonstrated in the Advance Information Set. The process is set out on the University Quality Webpage.¹³⁷ By the end of the Programme and Course Information and Management project we will align fully with the expectation.

134 The University of Edinburgh Statement on Quality Arrangements: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/GaSP/Governance/QualityReport2013.pdf

135 Ethos and Strategy for Quality Assurance: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/ethos-strategy

136 Interactive mapping of the University of Edinburgh's policy framework to the UK Quality Code: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/external-environment

137 Programme and course approval: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/programmes-courses/programme-approval

- 4.1.5 Consistent with the University's Quality Assurance framework, a devolved approach to course and programme approval is operated according to University policy.¹³⁸ The policy has been developed in 2014/15 by the Programme and Course Design, Development, Approval, Changes and Closure group (a working group of the Programme and Course Information and Management project) taking into account the recent publication of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Chapter B1. The work also includes development of the Academic Services 'programmes and courses' webpages to provide definitive information on University level curriculum framework and relevant academic governance matters, the latter will incorporate a review of the terms of reference for Boards of Studies.
- 4.1.6 Proposals for new degree programmes begin in schools/subject areas and typically feature in the annual plans of schools. Such proposals ensure consideration is given to: academic rationale and coherency; likely student demand; input required from other subject areas or external contributors; resource implications; Quality Assurance Agency subject benchmark statements; and income generation.
- 4.1.7 Proposals for new degree programmes are developed in line with the University's academic year structure and one of the University's model degree types set out in the Curriculum Framework,¹³⁹ unless an opt-out is granted by Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. Opt-outs are used in exceptional circumstances and tend to occur in response to requirements of professional bodies (such as the General Medical Council).
- 4.1.8 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 undergraduate or postgraduate studies committee. Colleges have devolved authority from Senate for the final approval of new programmes.
- 4.1.9 As set out in the terms of reference for Boards of Studies,¹⁴⁰ Boards ensure that courses, programmes and awards align with: the University's Curriculum Framework; the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework; subject benchmark statements, where they exist; and any relevant professional body requirements. Boards of Studies membership includes student representation from the relevant discipline areas.
- 4.1.10 Each degree programme is required to have a programme specification which provides a concise description of the learning outcomes and how they are demonstrated and achieved. The programme specification is prepared, using a standard template,¹⁴¹ as part of the approval process. Once a programme has been approved the programme specification has several functions: it provides information about the programme for a variety of internal and external audiences; it is required to help the University meet its European Diploma Supplement obligations; it forms part of the evidence base for internal

138 Programme and Course Design, Development, Approval, Changes and Closure Policy: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/prog_course_design.pdf

139 University of Edinburgh Curriculum Framework: www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/staff/curriculum/curriculum-framework

140 Board of Studies Terms of Reference: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Quality/QA/BoardOfStudies.pdf

141 Degree programme specification template and guidance: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/curriculum/degree-prog-specific

subject review for the ongoing monitoring of academic standards. For all undergraduate programmes, the definitive copy of the programme specification is held on the online Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study¹⁴² adjacent to each degree programme title. This also supports the data requirement for Key Information Set (KIS) reporting. Programme specifications are also available in the online Undergraduate Prospectus for each degree programme as 'programme details' which supports applicants applying via the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Since KIS and UCAS do not apply to taught postgraduate programmes we have not yet made these programme specifications available in the same way, but it is our intention to do so.

- 4.1.11 Once a degree programme has been approved, schools and colleges ensure that a degree programme table is submitted to the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study and relevant Prospectus and all new courses are created and approved through the Course Creation Approval and Maintenance System.¹⁴³ Proposals for new courses (units within a programme) are approved by the same process, either as part of a new degree proposal or as a stand-alone proposal for a new course to be offered within an existing programme.
- 4.1.12 The same process is used to approve major changes to courses or programmes and for the closure of courses or programmes. In reality we close few programmes and courses: it is more common that existing courses/programmes undergo redevelopment over time and for approval for substantial changes to be made via the routes already outlined. We are aware through internal review of some subject areas holding a large number of dormant courses. We are taking steps to address this via the Programme and Course Information and Management project.
- 4.1.13 Proposals for new programmes/awards and/or courses that do not comply with the curriculum framework or academic year structure, which concern the wider University and/or major inter-college proposals must all be referred to the Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee for final approval.

Annual monitoring

- 4.1.14 Monitoring of undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research provision occurs on an annual basis. A separate annual monitoring process also exists for student support services (see 4.1.23 to 4.1.26), but the key institution-wide trends and learning points arising from each round of annual monitoring are discussed at the same annual meeting of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee.
- 4.1.15 Consistent with our devolved structure, annual monitoring is devolved to schools and colleges. Schools have some degree of flexibility in how annual monitoring is conducted within a clear framework of expectations and responsibility at each level of the University, as shown in Figure 4.1 and outlined on our quality web pages.¹⁴⁴

142 Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study: www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

143 Course Creation Approval and Maintenance System: www.studentsystems.ed.ac.uk/staff/Support/User_Guides/CCAM/index.html

144 Annual Monitoring:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/annual-monitoring-reporting

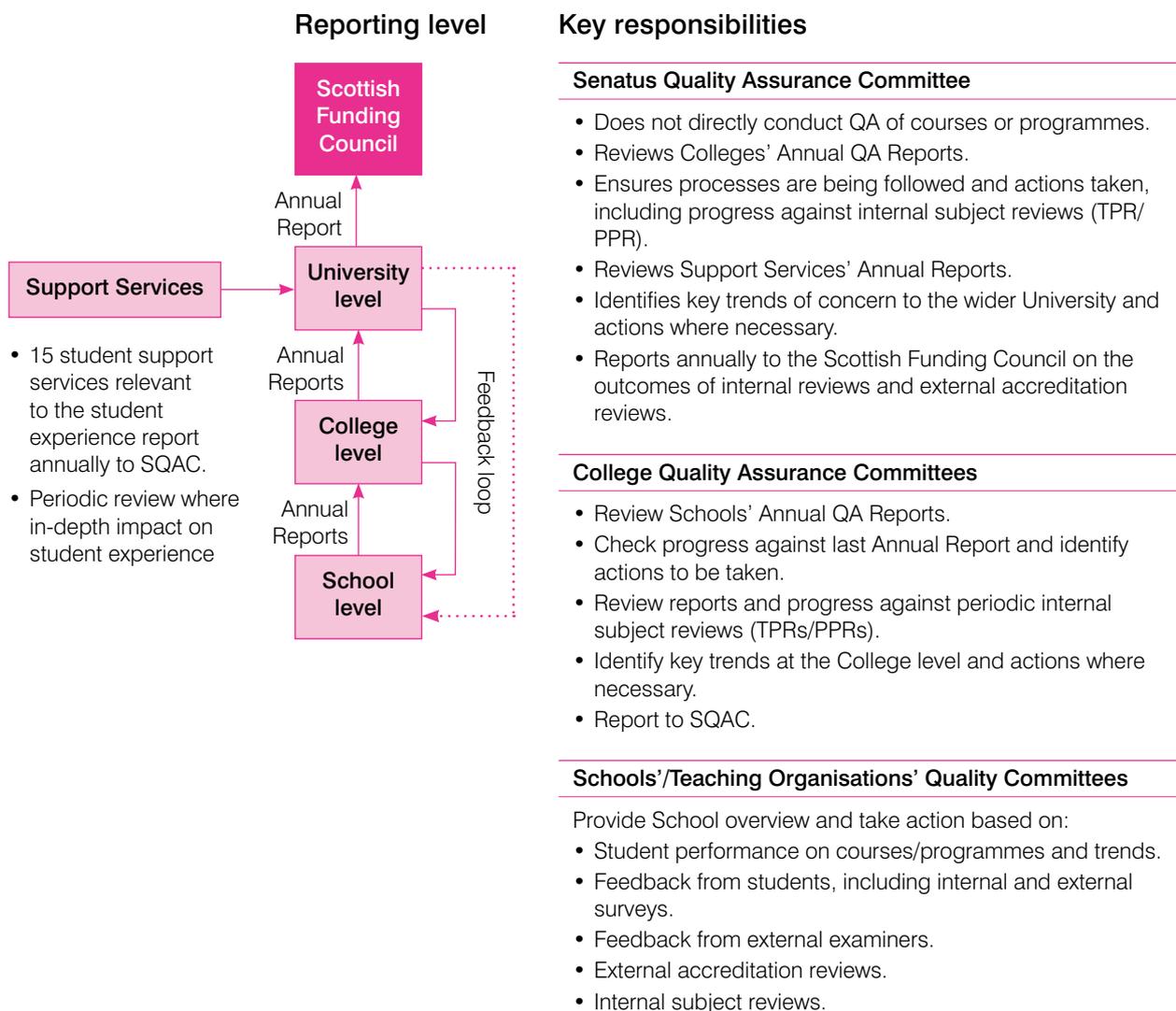
- 4.1.16 Colleges support schools in their annual monitoring by providing templates for course and programme monitoring. Regardless of the approach taken to annual monitoring, all schools are required to produce an Annual School Quality Assurance and Enhancement Report that presents the outcomes of their annual monitoring activities to a standard template to allow key trends and learning points to be identified at college and institution level. This template has been reviewed and modified in recent years to take account of updates issued by the Scottish Funding Council and in response to school engagement with the process to achieve greater clarity and value in use. The revisions and the collaborative approach taken to revising the template have been well received by School Directors of Quality.¹⁴⁵
- 4.1.17 Annual monitoring is supported by standard data reports to facilitate the efficient analysis of key student performance data to an institutional agreed framework. The content of the standard data reports is specified to support the Annual School Quality Assurance Report template approved by Senate Quality Assurance Committee and was developed following discussion with school and college colleagues involved in annual monitoring. Data reports are prepared centrally for all schools by Student Systems.
- 4.1.18 School Annual Quality Assurance Reports are reviewed at the relevant college committee with responsibility for quality assurance. Colleges make recommendations to schools and schools are required to respond in the following year's report on actions taken. Following the review of school reports, colleges produce an Annual College Quality Assurance Report for review at the Senate Quality Assurance Committee which makes recommendations to colleges and the wider university.
- 4.1.19 Key institutional trends and actions arising recently from the annual reporting process include:
- the need for ongoing enhancement to data to support school annual quality reporting, in particular postgraduate research progression monitoring. This is being addressed through the current Business Intelligence/Management Information project¹⁴⁶ and through initial scoping for a Quality Toolkit which will support quality processes.
 - further development of training and induction for external examiners. This is being addressed through the current External Examiner project.¹⁴⁷
 - enhancements to processes supporting collaborative activity. These are being taken forward as part of a review of collaborative provision reporting to Senate Quality Assurance Committee later in academic year 2014/15, some of which is outlined in section 6.

145 Senate Quality Assurance Committee minutes of meeting 5 February 2015, item 20:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2014-15/20150205Minute.pdf

146 Business Intelligence/Management Information Project:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/bi-mi/bi-project

147 External Examiner Project: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/projects/external-examiner-project

Figure 4.1: Annual monitoring process



Annual monitoring: Postgraduate research students

- 4.1.20 The reporting of postgraduate research through the School Annual Quality Assurance Report and the monitoring of postgraduate research is underpinned by the policy on Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Reporting of Postgraduate Research Provision¹⁴⁸ and by subject-level processes for monitoring individual research student performance via the Annual Progress Report. University-wide criteria exist for first year and subsequent annual reports and are set out in the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students.¹⁴⁹
- 4.1.21 Schools operate annual review procedures within University-level expectations set out in the Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students. The outcomes of the annual review process for each individual student are reported to the relevant college committee and constitute a formal decision on continuation year-on-year. The internal subject review process is a valuable mechanism for identifying areas for development across the range

148 Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Reporting of Postgraduate Research Provision: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Quality_Assurance_Reporting_Postgraduate_Research_Provision.pdf

149 Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Codes/CoPSupervisorsResearchStudents.pdf

of the University's provision. Recent postgraduate reviews have identified the need for specific enhancement of the formal milestones for monitoring postgraduate research student progression.

- 4.1.22 Annual Progress Reports are considered by the respective college postgraduate studies committee, or equivalent, and actions taken as appropriate. The committee also considers any issues as raised by students' examiners and takes action as appropriate. Research degree provision is considered in depth during Internal Review.

Annual monitoring: student support services

- 4.1.23 Since 2004, the University (via the Senate Quality Assurance Committee) has reviewed the annual reports of a number of student support services in relation to how they support the student learning experience. Over time the number of support services included in the quality assurance framework has expanded from 7 to 15. Services appreciate the greater alignment with learning and teaching that this process facilitates, and some services (i.e. student finance) specifically asked to be included for this reason. In our Reflective Analysis 2011 we set out a number of developments to the monitoring and review of student support services. The ELIR 2011 Report commented: "This has been a positive series of developments in line with sector expectations" (paragraph 75)
- 4.1.24 Since ELIR 2011 there has been some minor modification of the reporting template to improve efficiency and effectiveness of the process. For example, services are now encouraged to include optional case studies as a means of sharing particularly effective practice or enhancement with the wider group of student support services, and give consideration to any issues from outside the service area or apparent across the University that have a significant impact or carry a significant risk for the service. We are considering further modification of the reporting template based on the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE) value and impact framework, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the process.
- 4.1.25 A sub-group of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) – the Student Support Services Quality Assurance Framework Sub-Committee¹⁵⁰ – convened by Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance (including an external member from the wider HE sector, the Deputy Secretary (Student Experience), representatives of the support services involved, teaching staff and a student representative), reviews the annual reports of all support services at an annual event consisting of two meetings. Recommendations and commendations are made to individual services, and the key trends and learning points from the process are reported in a paper to QAC for consideration of the outcomes alongside the outcomes of the school and college annual monitoring process.¹⁵¹
- 4.1.26 Additionally, annual consideration is given by the sub-committee to the operation of the method. The sub-committee also reflects on the strategic impact of the approach,

150 Student Support Services Quality Assurance Framework Sub-committee:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/quality-assurance/sssqafsubcommittee

151 Report from the Sub-Committee on the review of Student Support Service Annual QA Reports, QAC 14/15 F 5:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/2014-15/20150422AgendaPapers.pdf

resulting in 2013/14 in a desire to include a thematic element to the annual review. For reporting during 2014/15 on activity in 2013/14 the theme was the ‘Use of Technology’, encompassing sub-themes of ‘key services driven by technology’, ‘accommodating diversity’ and ‘driving efficiencies’.

Periodic review

- 4.1.27 The ELIR 2011 Report commented: “The University has continued to review and enhance its periodic review processes, which meet sector expectations and are widely understood and embedded within the institution” (paragraph 80) and “The quality processes meet sector expectations and are supported by helpful and comprehensive guidance, briefing notes, and templates” (paragraph 139).
- 4.1.28 Internal review at Edinburgh comprises Teaching Programme Reviews (TPR) of taught programmes (at undergraduate level only or combining undergraduate and postgraduate level) and Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPR) of postgraduate provision (either research postgraduate provision only or joint reviews of research and taught postgraduate provision). Schools/colleges decide where best to include postgraduate taught provision (alongside undergraduate taught programmes or with postgraduate research programmes) to ensure that the review is meaningful, aligns with the organisational structure of the school and ultimately adds value. In the College of Humanities and Social Science most schools use TPRs for undergraduate programmes only and PPRs for reviews of taught and research postgraduate programmes, whereas the Colleges of Science and Engineering and Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM) have opted to conduct separate reviews of taught provision (undergraduate and postgraduate) and research provision to align to the teaching organisations and graduate schools or research centres respectively. At the request of the Law School we conducted a single review of all undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate provision in 2014/15 to allow the school to take a strategic overview of all provision simultaneously. This approach is possible in a single discipline school that has a relatively small number of programmes, but is unlikely to give sufficient granularity in large multi-discipline schools. Online/distance education programmes are included in standard reviews. However, in 2014/15 we are conducting a PPR of entirely online/distance taught postgraduate provision in CMVM, partly because there is a critical mass of Online Distance Learning (ODL) in that college and it makes practical sense to do so, but mainly because of the opportunity this is providing to test the suitability of our internal review process for ODL.
- 4.1.29 Both TPR and PPR operate to a common purpose¹⁵² and features,¹⁵³ and both meet Scottish Funding Council expectations and align with the relevant chapters of the UK Quality Code, as demonstrated by the mapping in the Advance Information Set. In some respects (e.g. externality) we exceed the external expectations.

152 Internal Review Purpose:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/internal-review/purpose

153 Internal Review Features:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/internal-review/features

- 4.1.30 Detailed guidance is available on the quality webpages for review team members and schools/subject areas under review.¹⁵⁴ Separate guidance is provided for TPRs and PPRs in order that certain unique characteristics of taught and research programmes can be highlighted as appropriate. Additional guidance is provided for review administrators to ensure consistency in approach across reviews and to provide additional support to this key role.
- 4.1.31 We continue to publish all Internal Review outcome reports and the schools' responses' to reports^{155, 156} on the website. The Analytical Reports (the self-evaluation documents prepared in advance of the review) are not published in order that colleagues can reflect openly and honestly on the areas for development within the review.
- 4.1.32 We consider that our system of Internal Review 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 teaching staff trust and to an agenda (review remit) with which they agree and have actively contributed to; it increasingly emphasises student engagement both through specific remit items proposed by students and through student representative structures in the preparations for and actions resulting from the review; and there is an increased emphasis on identifying good practice for wider benefit. It has therefore been widely accepted by schools and subject areas, which have generally found it valuable.
- 4.1.33 The remit for each review is carefully developed so as to ensure consistency across reviews as well as specificity to the review area. The starting point is the University standard remit;¹⁵⁷ this ensures that the review process is aligned to external expectations and that key reference points and sector themes are included. Key University, college, school/subject area and student priorities are added to the standard remit at a formal remit meeting of the review team members, subject area staff, head of subject/school, student representatives and relevant college Deans/Associate Deans. Collectively this forms the basis for the specific remit for the review and, together with the information contained in the Analytical Report, forms the basis for identifying key themes and meetings for the review.
- 4.1.34 In alignment with Scottish Funding Council guidance on quality arrangements, we engage with Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) to explore appropriate ways in which our parallel review processes may be streamlined and complement each other. Recent examples include working with the General Medical Council, the Scottish Social Services Council, and the Law Society of Scotland. Reviews reflect on the outcomes of relevant PSRB accreditations.

154 Internal Review Guidance:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/internal-review/guidance

155 TPR Reports and Responses: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/internal-review/teaching-programme-review/reports

156 PPR Reports and Responses: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/internal-review/postgraduate-programme-review/reports

157 University Standard Remit: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files//universitystandardremit201516.pdf

- 4.1.35 Considerable support and briefing are provided to both review teams and subject areas under review to enable them to get the most out of the review process. In the academic year before the review an Annual Review Briefing Meeting is held, bringing together all colleagues involved in all reviews in the forthcoming year from review panels and subject areas (usually a meeting of over 60 individuals). The purpose is to provide a brief overview of the process and key roles, key dates in the timeline and an opportunity for subject areas to meet the internal review team members and student reviewers for their review. Volunteers from the previous year provide a brief overview of their experience of being involved in the role of panel convener, student reviewer or review administrator.
- 4.1.36 Thereafter, support is provided for each review: a small number of further meetings are convened by the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance with each school/subject area and review team to progress the review and to provide support. Additional support is provided by Academic Services, such as Analytical Report writing sessions for review areas and additional briefing for review team roles, in particular review administrators and student reviewers.
- 4.1.37 Students and the student voice are central to our Internal Review. Each review panel includes a student reviewer recruited and briefed jointly by EUSA and Academic Services. The ELIR 2011 Report noted: “Overall, the University has effective arrangements for including consideration of all students in its monitoring and review processes” (paragraph 84). We are fortunate that students generally are keen to be involved in this role and there is not usually any difficulty in meeting the required demand. Recruitment of taught postgraduate students as reviewers is impacted because these students are on one-year programmes and are not yet in the University when recruitment for review panels takes place. We endeavour to ensure coverage of the taught postgraduate student experience by encouraging research postgraduates who have studied with us on taught masters programmes to apply to be student reviewers, by drawing on student reviewers’ experiences of taught postgraduate study elsewhere, and by ensuring that the taught postgraduate student experience is captured through meetings with current masters students where relevant to the scope of the review. Targeted guidance is provided for subject areas under review on engaging students with the process,¹⁵⁸ and for students on programmes being reviewed on how they can engage.¹⁵⁹
- 4.1.38 Since the last ELIR we have made a small number of key enhancements to the internal review process. To enable the review visit to prioritise enhancement of the student learning experience, we have reduced the number of meetings related to academic standards and quality and instead (drawing on the recent developments of ELIR 3) look more to documentary evidence for assurance. This has resulted in members of the review panel taking on specific responsibility for reading and commenting on key documents such as Annual Quality Assurance and Enhancement Reports and external examiner reports.

158 Information for Subject Areas and Schools on Student Involvement:

www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Quality/QA/Int%20reviews/TPRPPRSubjectAreasSchoolsStudentInvolvement.pdf

159 Information for Students on Programmes under Review:

www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Quality/QA/Int%20reviews/TPRPPRInformationForStudents.pdf

- 4.1.39 The ELIR 2011 Report commented that “the recently established Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) has improved institutional oversight of the outcomes from monitoring and review” (paragraphs 70 & 139), but also noted that “there would be benefit in the University pursuing its intention to introduce closer monitoring of the action taken following TPR and PPR” (paragraph 80) and “to introduce closer monitoring and more timely reporting on the outcomes of its periodic review methods within the committee structure” (paragraph 140).
- 4.1.40 We have responded to these comments by increasing the oversight by Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) of school responses to recommendations arising from reviews. QAC now receives and comments on the initial response to recommendations made by schools at 14 weeks after the review, where the emphasis is on planning for action in response to the review, and the year-on report, where substantial progress is expected to have been made. QAC provides feedback to schools to indicate whether good progress is being made with addressing the recommendations or to request additional information on actions taken or planned. Colleges continue to receive the same reports and provide support at the college level to schools, and play a key role in monitoring outstanding actions/progress, via the Annual School Quality Assurance and Enhancement Report, after the year-on response to QAC.
- 4.1.41 Since the last ELIR we have introduced periodic reviews of student support services. The first periodic review took place in February 2014 of Information Services. The Review of IS provided a number of learning points and recommendations for IS, as documented in the review report.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, it provided a number of learning points for the process including: considering reviewing large support services as smaller units, the need for reviews to be held at different times to the standard times for reviews of academic provision, according to the needs of the service, and inclusion of front-facing as well as management staff as appropriate to the nature of the provision.¹⁶¹ Consequently some adjustments were made to the process that were incorporated in the second review.
- 4.1.42 The second periodic review of student services took place in 2014/15 and focused on support for disabled students provided via the Student Disability Service and also in partnership with the University’s schools and colleges. As such, the review served as a holistic review of support for disabled students rather than a review only of the Student Disability Service. This model seemed to work well and it has been agreed by Senate Quality Assurance Committee that further periodic reviews will only be conducted on a thematic basis and will take into account a range of services and academic areas. The next review scheduled for 2015/16 will look at mental health provision across the University. Obvious service areas include the Student Counselling Service, Student Disability Service and Accommodation Service, but it is also likely to touch on the complaints and appeals processes and personal tutoring.

¹⁶⁰ Information Services Periodic review Report:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Quality/SSSQAF/PeriodicReviewReportInformationServices.pdf

¹⁶¹ Student Support Services Period Review:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/internal-review/periodicreview

Figure 4.2: Internal Review Process

Timeline	Key event	Key actions
January before the review	Early preparations	Identify TPR/PPR Liaison and nominate externals
March before the review	Annual briefing meeting	General briefing of review teams and review areas
Week –16	Remit meeting	Identify subject-specific remit items
Week –12	Pre-review visit	Internal team visit to review area
Week –8	Submit Analytical Report	And supporting documentation for circulation to review team
Week –2	Internal briefing meeting	Finalise review programme
Week 0	The review	Panel meets with staff and students
Week +2	Draft report	Sent to review panel for comment and then on to school to check for factual accuracy
Week +7	Final report	Sent to school to consider response
Week +14	14-Week response	School's initial response and action plan submitted to Senate Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for feedback
One year after the review	Year on response	School's detailed account of action and impact submitted to QAC for feedback
February annually	Closing the loop	Update on outstanding actions reported in the School Annual Quality Assurance and Enhancement Report and monitored via the respective college quality assurance committee

4.2 Management of Assessment

- 4.2.1 The ELIR 2011 Report confirmed “The University has effective mechanisms in place for setting and maintaining academic standards. There are clear and detailed regulations and guidance for these processes which are publicly available and which are kept under regular review to address external developments, changing practices in learning and teaching, and the planned changes to the student population” (paragraph 98).
- 4.2.2 Assessment is managed via several related processes. Key regulations and policies include: the University’s assessment regulations, degree classification procedures, operation of examination boards (including special circumstances policy), academic misconduct policy, and external examiners. Assessment practice is underpinned and supported by a set of assessment principles, the Edinburgh Common Marking Scheme and guidance on moderation of marking.
- 4.2.3 Since ELIR 2011 the governance of the academic regulatory framework has been greatly strengthened, as part of the wider strengthening of academic governance. The Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee has oversight of the academic regulatory framework, and fosters a culture of self-reflection and engagement which has led to greater ownership of the assessment regulations by academic staff. The assessment regulations are subject to annual review to be responsive to curriculum development and innovations in learning and teaching.

4.2.4 The University's assessment regulations set minimum requirements and standards for students and staff, expressing in practical form the academic goals and policies of the University. Separate assessment regulations exist for taught¹⁶² and research¹⁶³ programmes. Key changes to the taught assessment regulations¹⁶⁴ and the research degree regulations¹⁶⁵ are published annually in a separate document for ease of reference.

Boards of Examiners

4.2.5 Boards of Examiners operate according to clearly defined principles, remit and operational guidance.¹⁶⁶ Operational guidance is provided for key roles (convener, course organiser and regulations expert). Each Board has a designated regulations expert to ensure the correct and consistent application of the assessment regulations. School level experts on University regulations are supported in their role by designated experts at the college and institution level. Annual training is provided in the assessment regulations, related policies such as student appeals, and the operation of Boards of Examiners, and has been very well received.

4.2.6 Special Circumstances Committees consider all individual cases of special/extenuating circumstances at a separate meeting before the Board of Examiners, anonymously and independent of degree performance. Special circumstances are circumstances outside the control of the student (such as severe illness or bereavement) that may have an adverse impact on assessment performance.

4.2.7 The University's Special Circumstances Policy¹⁶⁷ sets out what constitutes a special circumstance and what decisions the Committee can make (such as permitting a resit or re-assessment, or disregarding marks or course components affected) based on the impact of the circumstances on assessment performance. The decision of the Special Circumstances Committee is binding and must be implemented by the Board of Examiners.

4.2.8 It is a student's responsibility to report any special circumstances, including all relevant documentary evidence. Personal Tutors assist and advise students in such matters. The current Special Circumstances Policy is the result of a review of special circumstances conducted in 2012/13 to ensure greater consistency in policy and practice and fair and equitable treatment of students across the University.

Assessment practice

4.2.9 Our assessment practice is underpinned by a set of key principles¹⁶⁸ that ensure that assessment is: beneficial and fosters active learning; fair, reliable and valid; varied and representative; transparent; effective; practical and secure.

162 Taught Assessment Regulations: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/TaughtAssessmentRegulations.pdf

163 Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/PGR_AssessmentRegulations.pdf

164 Key Changes to Taught Assessment Regulations: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/KeyChanges_TAR.pdf

165 Key Changes to Postgraduate Regulations: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/KeyChanges_PGR.pdf

166 Boards of Examiners: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/assessment/boards-examiners

167 Special Circumstances Policy: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Special_Circumstances.pdf

168 Principles of Assessment: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Regulations/Principles_of_Assessment.PDF

- 4.2.10 Common Marking Schemes¹⁶⁹ ensure consistent application of grades and grade descriptors within degree programmes and achieve parity across programmes. Schools provide supplementary guidance to contextualise the descriptors within their disciplines.
- 4.2.11 We safeguard assessment standards by ensuring that the outcome of a student's overall assessment is not influenced by an individual marker or examiner. This is achieved by internal moderation of marking. The expectation is that internal moderation is conducted on all assessed work that is marked by one marker. The method used for moderation can be determined by schools so as to be appropriate to the assessment. The University has provided operational guidance for internal moderation.¹⁷⁰ Internal moderation occurs before assessments are viewed by external examiners and is designed to assure ourselves of our internal assessment processes and to ensure that appropriate decisions are taken regarding borderline cases. Additionally, regulation 28 of the Taught Assessment Regulations 2014/15 states that any single item of assessment equivalent to 40 credits or more (such as a dissertation) must be independently double marked before any external examining process.

External examiners

- 4.2.12 External examiners play a crucial role in monitoring and maintaining standards of all our awards at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The University employs in the region of 550 external examiners. To enhance the value we derive from the external examining function and to continue to align with Chapter B7 of the UK Quality Code, we embarked on the External Examiner Project in September 2013. The project has led to the development of the revised External Examiner Policy (to replace the previous Code of Practice for External Examining) and External Examiner Handbook (that was previously embedded in the Code of Practice), the development and implementation of an online reporting system for external examiners with an integrated online facility for University staff to respond to external examiners' reports, and business process change to support the move from a paper-based reporting process to an online reporting process. The online system is being piloted throughout 2014/15 with full rollout expected 2015/16.
- 4.2.13 The project is aimed at facilitating faster and more consistent reflection on issues arising from external examiner reports at University, college and school level. The IT tools have been designed to enable the extraction of common themes from external examiner reports, including areas for further development and good practice. This will enable the University more effectively to disseminate good practice which has University-wide relevance and to identify key issues requiring institution-level action.
- 4.2.14 The role of the external examiner is embedded in our regulations and outlined in the External Examiner Policy.¹⁷¹ Every external examiner is asked to address the question of standards and to relate his or her view of our students' performance to that in institutions with which he or she is familiar. Issues raised are addressed at the appropriate level

169 Common Marking Schemes:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

170 Guidance on Moderation of Marketing: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Guidance/Moderation_Guidance.pdf

171 External Examining Regulations and Guidance:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/external-examining/codesofpractice

(usually programme level). As a result of the External Examiner Policy review, we have clarified and separated the roles of course and programme external examiners, and from 2015/16 separate report forms will exist for programme external examiners who will be asked additionally to comment on the programme as a whole. Since ELIR 2011, there have not been any instances where external examiners have raised serious concerns at an institutional level about the standards of degrees. The Advance Information Set provides a detailed analysis of the themes that have been raised in recent external examiner reports relating to both effective practice and areas for further development.

- 4.2.15 Our revised External Examiner Policy fully aligns with Chapter B7 of the UK Quality Code. The Policy stipulates that names of external examiners are published in course and programme handbooks and details students' rights to access external examiner reports.

Award of credit for study abroad

- 4.2.16 The ELIR 2011 Report noted that “while there is no single institution-wide approach to grade recognition and the award of credit for study abroad, there is consistency within the bands of similar programmes in line with the learning outcomes of the degree programmes. There would be benefit in the University introducing a consistent approach to the arrangements for recognising grades and awarding academic credit for study abroad opportunities” (paragraph 33). In addition, the Report asked us to ensure that the Code of Practice for University of Edinburgh Students Studying Abroad “is implemented consistently and that the student experience is monitored to ensure all students receive the support intended” (paragraph 33).
- 4.2.17 In response to this, the University has reviewed models of degree classification for students on study abroad programmes and arrangements for consistent support for students studying abroad and decided that we will not move towards a single institution-wide approach to grade recognition. We consider that the approaches taken are appropriate for the nature of the degrees and that we operate consistently within each model and degree programme. A key change to emerge from the review, however, is that the University level Study Abroad Progression Committee will be replaced from summer 2015 by College Study Abroad Progression Boards. These will operate within the existing framework for Level Two Examinations Boards (progression) ensuring consistency with examination processes and enable decisions to be made faster and more efficiently and closer to where the issues have an impact. In March 2015 Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee¹⁷² approved terms of reference for the operation of College Study Abroad Progression Boards and guidance on the University's models for study abroad and the rationale for the different methods in operation. The guidance will help ensure clarity and consistency in the University's approaches for recognising grades and awarding academic credit for study abroad. To enhance support for students studying abroad a consistent framework has been introduced formalising the roles of Exchange Coordinators, Personal Tutors, the International Office and other relevant staff.

172 College Progression Boards for Optional Study Abroad: Terms of Reference:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Staff/ExamBoard/Study_Abroad_College_Progression_Board.pdf

Academic misconduct (including plagiarism)

- 4.2.18 The University's central activities of teaching, learning and research can only be achieved effectively if members of the University community have mutual trust and confidence and can live and work beside each other in conditions which permit freedom of thought and expression within a framework of respect for the rights of other persons. The University expects all students to behave appropriately and to comply with University policies and regulations, including those for maintaining academic standards and student conduct. The University's Code of Student Conduct aims to promote good behaviour. In addition it outlines misconduct offences and explains how these are dealt with by the University. This is supplemented by guidance for students and staff.¹⁷³
- 4.2.19 Suspected incidents of academic misconduct are usually dealt with via a devolved network of School and College Academic Misconduct Officers (SAMOs/CAMOs). There is also provision within the Code of Student Conduct for very serious academic misconduct cases to be referred to and dealt with by the University Student Discipline Committee.¹⁷⁴ During 2013/14, 200 students were disciplined for plagiarism offences. This was an increase of just over 30 cases on 2012/13 figures as a result of increased use of plagiarism detection software across our largest college, the College of Humanities and Social Science.

4.3 Use of external reference points in managing academic standards

- 4.3.1 Consistent with practice in the Scottish sector, key external reference points in managing academic standards are the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and the UK Quality Code, as well as external examiners. The Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance is a member of the SCQF Quality Committee.
- 4.3.2 Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) are a key external reference point. Thirty eight PSRBs accredit 134 of our degree programmes, providing another important mechanism for assuring the external comparability of the quality and standards of our degree programmes. Our links with PSRBs help ensure that these programmes remain current and relevant and help promote the employability of our students graduating from them.
- 4.3.3 Externality is a key feature of our Internal Review processes. We ensure that each review has at least two external subject specialists on the panel which exceeds the Scottish Funding Council expectation of one external. Having two externals gives us greater flexibility to appoint, where relevant, both academic and industrial experts. In some cases, we have included externals from professional accrediting bodies (for example, the Scottish Social Services Council) to foster greater alignment between academic and professional standards.

173 Code of Student Conduct: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/undergraduate/discipline

174 Discipline Committee: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/discipline-committee

4.4 Effectiveness of our arrangements for securing academic standards

- 4.4.1 The ELIR Report 2011 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 ELIR 2011 we have continued to reflect on, review and develop our arrangements for setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards, including ongoing review of our assessment regulations, Boards of Examiners, external examining and Code of Student Conduct. We believe that our approach is well embedded and robust, meets (and in some cases exceeds) sector-wide expectations, and assures the standards and quality of programmes.
- 4.4.2 We consider that a key strength of our approach to maintaining standards is our willingness to engage in ongoing reflection, review and development. This has facilitated much greater staff engagement with and ownership of the regulations and policies that underpin academic standards. This also ensures that the regulations remain fit-for-purpose and keep pace with curriculum development and innovations in learning and teaching.
- 4.4.3 The ELIR 2011 Report commented "The university has created more explicit links between its monitoring and review processes and its enhancement arrangements" (paragraph 19). Arising from our self-evaluation since ELIR 2011, there are several areas that we have identified for further development. These include: the enhancement of performance and monitoring data, that is being taken forward as part of the Quality Toolkit element of the current Business Intelligence/Management Information project; streamlining the processing of student appeals in 2015/16; and improvement of the consistency of information, that forms the focus of the current Programme and Course Information and Management project.

5. Self-evaluation and management of information

5.1 Key features of the University's approach

Overview

- 5.1.1 The ELIR 2011 Report noted: “Overall, the University has an effective approach to the management of information, which has been strengthened by the implementation of EUCLID” (paragraph 92) and “The University's policies and practices are informed by a wide range of external reference points, notably external examiners and the outcomes of student surveys” (paragraph 89).
- 5.1.2 As a research-intensive university a scholarly and evidence-based approach lies at the heart of our approach to self-evaluation. This is supported by robust internal data, managed through mature data systems, and by key external data and reference points. Since ELIR 2011 the data available and used for self-evaluation has increased (for example, the introduction of Key Information Sets and a new internal Edinburgh Student Experience Survey), and we are currently implementing a strategy for the future delivery of Business Intelligence/Management Information to increase access to core data and empower decision-makers.
- 5.1.3 An enhancement-led approach to the student experience is not always best supported by hard metrics such as degree outcomes, important though these are. The ongoing enhancement of our current approach, as well as the key developments described in this section, should therefore be seen in this context, as we strive towards approaches which will allow us more effectively to evaluate the impact of our enhancement-led approach on a constantly changing student body.

University level – strategic context

- 5.1.4 As indicated in Section 1, the University's Strategic Plan 2012–2016 sets out clear objectives under the strategic goal of excellence in education and the strategic theme of ensuring an outstanding student experience. To ensure that our strategies are effective in achieving our overall goals, we monitor our performance against targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Our Governance and Strategic Planning Group¹⁷⁵ leads the annual process of reporting against our targets and KPIs through the University's Court and committee structure. However, the real ownership of the implementation of the plan and the data used to monitor it lies with the groups in the University that can influence the direction of these key measures. For example, our Careers Service provides information on the numbers of graduates in employment or further study, and commentary on what is being done to make improvements.
- 5.1.5 Through regular, cyclical review and reporting of the plan we aim to ensure that it keeps in line with changes in the environment within which the University operates and

¹⁷⁵ Governance and Strategic Planning group: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning

improvements over time in the information available to underpin decision making. We refresh the plan regularly and have already begun the process of considering the next University Strategic Plan to follow the current one from 2016 onwards.

- 5.1.6 As with any large organisation, planning operates at different levels across the University and is an iterative top-down/bottom-up process. A number of strategies and plans are in place which are complementary to, and underpin, the University's overall Strategic Plan (outlined in section 1 of this Reflective Analysis). These include longer-term strategies which cut across the University's organisational hierarchy and annual plans developed and implemented by colleges and support groups. School annual plans are forward looking plans that set out key objectives and resource requirements that relate to the whole of a school's business. As such, they draw on insights from a number of internal monitoring, evaluation and review processes as well as external drivers. Key inputs relating to teaching and learning include outcomes from the school's annual quality assurance processes, internal reviews, professional or accreditation reviews.
- 5.1.7 We are on track to meet our targets in relation to the vast majority of the Key Performance Indicators for the student experience of learning and teaching. Although we currently lag behind the benchmark for the overall student experience as measured by the key external surveys, the introduction of the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey has given us a more nuanced view of our undergraduates' perceptions of their experiences before they near the completion of their studies, and is a possible predictor of future improvement in the key indicators measured.
- 5.1.8 The efforts made by the International Office and by individual schools have increased awareness of and opportunities to participate in international exchanges, particularly in the last year in relation to the Go Abroad scheme, with nearly 300 more students going overseas to study in the last year.
- 5.1.9 The Edinburgh Award scheme (Case Study 2) has grown over the period of our current Strategic Plan to recognise 32 types of student activity and more than 500 students have received the Award, thus exceeding our Strategic Plan target in this respect two years ahead of schedule. Schools and colleges receive feedback on local-level progress against targets and Key Performance Indicators to help them in annual planning cycles and to identify where their efforts are having the best effect.
- 5.1.10 In 2013 the University Knowledge Strategy Committee identified the strategic need for improved and wider access to core data for a range of Business Intelligence/ Management Information (BI/MI) requirements and approved a project to build directly on existing work in the University in this area. Business Intelligence is a set of methodologies, processes and technologies that transform raw data into meaningful and useful information to enable more effective decision making. It aims to create a positive Business Intelligence culture across the University; to create a common framework for data and its governance; to improve the University's management information, systems

and tools, and to create Business Intelligence capability which enables and supports better decision making. The first phase of work was completed at the end of August 2014, resulting in the development of a clear strategy and a road map of future projects.¹⁷⁶ The BI/MI Strategy¹⁷⁷ will be supported by a three year programme of work structured along eight parallel strands.

- 5.1.11 Helping support and shape the development of the BI/MI Strategy is an associated roadmap of projects as part of the vision of the Student Systems Roadmap 2013-16. The aim of the roadmap is that by 2016 "...our student systems will provide decision makers and external bodies with timely, accurate, joined-up and trusted information." Student Systems are supporting the broader objective of embedding a business intelligence culture across the University by developing the common framework for student data, providing an advisory service to staff, sharing its knowledge of student data and how it can be used, and continuing to enhance the networks within which staff operate.
- 5.1.12 Current provision in data capture is being strengthened and enhanced through the creation and promotion of a report writing service for users which will enable users to run the outputs they require while retaining trust in the data quality at local and central level. This will be underpinned by continuing attention to close and effective management of data quality and datasets. Student Systems is currently exploring with colleagues in schools opportunities to challenge and develop the way we view and use the student data set within the University. The Student Systems Board will commission research on the use of student data and student use of data (i.e. the opening up to students of anonymised or non-personal data to support student choices/decision-making) to help establish project and developmental priorities for the next few years as the Student Systems Roadmap is refreshed.
- 5.1.13 The development of our quality assurance framework features within the Roadmap in the emerging concept of a Quality Hub. This is envisaged as an online resource which will pull together the key student course and programme information, student data, student feedback and internal and external benchmarking to support annual and periodic quality processes. As we begin the process of scoping the technical infrastructure we are preparing to reflect on the questions we ask of our data within quality assurance processes and how they support action thereafter. The infrastructure work is being led by the Director of Student Systems in close collaboration with the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance.
- 5.1.14 An emerging priority is to ensure that we have the capability to move our focus from the collection and quality of data to the use of data to enhance our practice. To this end a number of projects have recently been delivered or are underway, including: enhanced admissions data to support widening participation and outcome agreement objectives; student self-service; PATH, a course selection and programme building tool currently being rolled out; and assessment, engagement and attendance monitoring. Highlighting

176 Business Intelligence/Management Information Project wiki, Deliverables, Roadmap: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/BM/Deliverables

177 Business Intelligence/Management Information Strategy: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/BM/Deliverables

the last by way of example, improved systems around engagement and attendance monitoring will over time maximise the way in which the data can be used to underpin student support activities.

- 5.1.15 Looking further ahead, the group of services (Student Experience Services) which come under the remit of the Deputy Secretary (Student Experience) are in the early stages of developing a Digital Strategy. In a context where most of our students are digital natives, with more online learning and teaching, and where a range of digital tools, channels and data is available, we are looking at how support services can prepare for and respond to these changes and how they can help us to continue to provide a high quality service to students. Areas of the strategy will focus on the opportunities to personalise communications to students; understand how student data can be used to identify areas for improvements; understand the staff development required to ensure colleagues can utilise technology effectively; and work with our colleagues in Information Services Group to identify areas where technology can help transform our services.

Self-evaluation in quality, standards and enhancement

- 5.1.16 In the area of quality and standards our focus on self-evaluation pre-dated sector requirements: we introduced periodic internal review of our provision voluntarily, for example, and were among the first institutions to produce detailed, publicly available mappings of our alignment with the UK Quality Code and to use these as the basis for self-reflection and evaluation of our policy framework.

Annual and periodic reflection

- 5.1.17 Our processes of annual and periodic reflection are robustly supported by data. Performance data used in annual and periodic internal review (e.g. Teaching Programme Reviews (TPR) and Postgraduate Programme Reviews (PPR)) processes align with Scottish Funding Council and UK Quality Code expectations. The ELIR 2011 Report noted that “practice demonstrates an increasing emphasis on self-reflection in a number of key processes, in particular TPR and PPR” (paragraph 89).
- 5.1.18 In keeping with our ethos of quality assurance that monitoring should take place as close as is possible to delivery and be reflective and evaluative, our most granular level of reflection is carried out by schools at the course level. In their annual quality assurance and enhancement report to their college, schools make use of performance and achievement data from a standard suite of centrally generated reports produced from student record data, widening participation markers and equality and diversity data, together with external examiners’ reports and feedback from students.
- 5.1.19 The range of data we take into consideration has expanded since ELIR 2011, due to the production of standard data tables and to the availability of more data, for example from widening participation and the University’s survey of pre-final year undergraduates, the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey.

- 5.1.20 The framework for college Annual Quality Assurance and Enhancement Reports includes a reflection on alignment and engagement with University strategy, and with the process of self-evaluation. Recent development of the school and college annual reporting requires a specific reflection by schools and colleges on how the effectiveness of the annual self-evaluation can be enhanced, and the opportunity for schools and colleges to identify where college and university levels can assist with progressing action or removing barriers. Action taken recently in response to issues identified by schools includes earlier publication of the exam timetable to aid planning by students (the summer 2015 diet will be published two weeks earlier than previously), and improvements to training and induction of external examiners (being taken forward as part of the External Examiner Project).
- 5.1.21 Within the Student Support Services Quality Assurance Framework, student services reflect annually on a set of reference points including usage statistics, internally and externally derived standards and benchmarks, service level agreements and external reviews.
- 5.1.22 Our periodic internal reviews promote self-evaluation in a number of ways. The process of preparing for the review is designed to encourage self-reflection in the preparatory meetings, internal consultation by the review area with its staff and students on the items it wishes the review to advise on, and the writing of the self-reflective document. These reflections are supported by data suites prepared for the reviews by Student Systems. The data suites themselves are subject to ongoing review to ensure that they continue to support the process. We adapt our review coverage to respond to and anticipate strategic developments in provision: in 2014/15 we are carrying out a bespoke review of taught postgraduate online distance learning provision in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine with the aim of learning from this to embed a tailored approach to online distance provision in our standard review format.

Student engagement in reflection

- 5.1.23 Students are engaged in reflection at all levels of the institution through the partnership approach between EUSA and the University. Student views directly inform and help generate enhancement projects. Evidence of the University's growing responsiveness to the value of student reflection can be seen in our development of the Student Surveys Unit, discussed in more detail below. Major themes arising from student surveys are considered at Senate committee level, where all committees have student representation. Thereafter at increasing levels of granularity the results of student reflections are considered thematically and operationally in schools and colleges, and actions taken in response.
- 5.1.24 Within its own structures, EUSA actively engages in self-reflection. EUSA undertook a large-scale Strategic Review during the spring of 2014, which formed the basis for the development of its new four-year Strategic Plan. Over 3,500 students responded to a detailed survey, which asked wide-ranging questions about what they felt a Students' Association's priorities should be, and gathered opinions about how far EUSA in its

current form reflected these priorities. Externally-facilitated, structured focus groups were held with students to explore in more depth their vision for the future of their Students' Association.

Student Surveys Unit

- 5.1.25 The Student Surveys Unit¹⁷⁸ is a key resource in the University's self-evaluation approach. The Student Surveys Unit was established in 2013 as a result of the 'Assuring the Quality of the Student Experience' task group of Senate Quality Assurance Committee with the aim of developing a comprehensive and coordinated approach to surveying the student experience and in turn developing our understanding of the student experience. The Student Surveys Unit is responsible for running and analysing the external surveys (National Student Survey; Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey; Postgraduate Research Experience Survey; and the International Student Barometer) and our internal Edinburgh Student Experience Survey, and for communicating results and analysis to the University, its schools and colleges.
- 5.1.26 The Student Surveys Unit operates under the strategic oversight of the Student Surveys Advisory Group. Building on this structure, the University purchased the EvaSys survey automation suite in 2013/14 as a means to streamline the course monitoring process in schools and to maximise the consistency of data derived from the process. The Student Surveys Unit working in collaboration with schools ran a first year of school course monitoring pilots in 2013/14 with two schools, and this has been followed in 2014/15 by an expanded pilot extending to 15 of the University's schools. The demand for the use of EvaSys has been very encouraging and the Student Surveys Unit is now seeking to move to a more devolved approach for those schools that are in a position to manage their own EvaSys surveys in order that wider expansion can be achieved. Recently we have begun to see evidence of schools sharing innovative practice in their internal survey analysis and promotion with the Student Surveys Unit for wider dissemination and development, including adding contextual data relating to the teaching staff and course to better understand student feedback.
- 5.1.27 In addition to administering and analysing surveys, the Student Surveys Unit works with schools and with University level projects on increasing student engagement, initially in student surveys and now more broadly. The Student Surveys Unit played a key role in developing and analysing the survey data for the first phase evaluation of the Personal Tutor system. Another notable development has been a Student Panel which is in its first year of operation in 2014/15. The panel aims to provide the University with both an informal sounding board for ideas that would improve the student experience, as well as a pool of students who are willing to provide quick answers to questions at relatively short notice. The panel currently comprises 58 students broadly reflective of the demographic composition of the University's student body. Plans are in place to double the numbers participating by the end of the academic year. Systematic mechanisms are

178 Student Surveys Unit: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/initiatives/sep/student-surveys/

in place for the review of panel processes and engagement throughout the first two years of its operation. At the end of the second year it is intended to produce case studies demonstrating the panel's impact.

Self-evaluation based on appeals and student complaints

- 5.1.28 Senate Quality Assurance Committee considers an annual report on student appeals, quarterly monitoring reports on student complaints and an annual report on themes arising from student complaints. Learning points from the appeals report inform the ongoing development of the University's Assessment Regulations, and feed in to annual training for school Boards of Examiners delivered in partnership between college offices and Academic Services.
- 5.1.29 The University was the first institution to adopt the Scottish Higher Education Model Complaints Handling Procedure. The key emphasis of the Complaints Handling Procedure is on 'valuing complaints' and learning from them, and the annual reports to Senate Quality Assurance Committee therefore focus on these aspects. Since the reports were introduced recently, at the same time as the Complaints Handling Procedure, and since complaints tend to be highly individual in nature, it is too early to identify major themes. The emphasis of the committee's consideration is firmly on identifying learning points and using these to enhance provision for other students and to support staff in their handling of complaints. In all cases of appeals and complaints, individual learning points are communicated back to the schools and departments in question where the learning is often most valuable.

Key Information Sets

- 5.1.30 Our adoption of Key Information Sets demonstrates our ability to devote considerable resource to data collection. Recognising the value of the information to prospective students, the University took an early, strategic decision to develop Key Information Sets in advance of the requirement to do so by the Scottish Funding Council. We publish around 480 Key Information Sets annually, aligning fully with the Higher Education Statistics Agency guidance to publish a Key Information Set for all programmes recruiting via UCAS. Development of the Key Information Sets was taken forward by a working party including the Assistant Principal Learning and Development and the Director of Student Systems. The exercise has proved valuable in making data available for internal use at a more granular level than had been previously available.
- 5.1.31 Through the process of developing the Key Information Sets opportunities have been identified for streamlining existing systems and for using the data in support of enhancement projects. Our emphasis on drawing wider benefits from the development of Key Information Sets led to the identification of enhancements that could be made in the accuracy of data on accreditations by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies, and these are currently underway through a project led by Student Systems which will locate

all accreditations records on the central EUCLID system. Schools will have ownership of their data through input to the EUCLID record. The central record will allow streamlined data gathering and reporting for a number of internal and external purposes, including Scottish Funding Council requirements. We are looking at ways of making the full Key Information Set data (covering all institutions) available through our Business Intelligence Suite to support benchmarking at subject area and school levels. We intend that this will be available within academic year 2014/15.

- 5.1.32 The process of producing the Key Information Sets prompted us to reflect on a number of aspects related to our programmes, including contact time (taken into account via the Personal Tutor system), flexibility (being taken forward by the Programme Pathways project), and improved and more easily accessible course and programme data for the benefit of students and staff advising students (being taken forward by the Programme and Course Information and Management project).
- 5.1.33 Key Information Set data are currently being used in the College of Humanities and Social Science Programme Pathways project, which has established that less than optimal flexibility may exist in some cases for students to take a range of outside courses or transfer between degrees. The project aims to redress the balance between breadth of choice and flexibility on the one hand and coherence, subject depth and focus on the other.

Supporting staff in self-evaluation

- 5.1.34 We recognise that as the richness of our data environment increases, so too does the need to support staff in accessing, analysing and using the data for assurance and enhancement purposes. Annual training sessions on the relevant data reports are offered by Student Systems to staff responsible for compiling School Annual Quality Assurance and Enhancement Reports. The results of the major external student surveys and the University's own student survey, the Edinburgh Student Experience Survey (ESES), are available on the Student Surveys Unit wiki¹⁷⁹ at University, college and school levels, and analysed by the Student Surveys Unit into a variety of thematic and comparison reports. Guidance¹⁸⁰ is provided on the wiki on how to analyse the ESES results, and the general principles are transferable to the other surveys. The Information Portal¹⁸¹ created as part of the Business Intelligence/Management Information (BI/MI) Strategy contains links to key information and the guidance and training to help staff get the most out of the information. Looking ahead to our planned developments, the Student Systems Roadmap includes a focus on training and knowledge transfer while the BI/MI Strategy recommendation 4 aims to ensure support for staff in using and interpreting data for decision-making.¹⁸²

179 Student Surveys Unit Wiki: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/sur/Home

180 Student Surveys Unit Wiki, Edinburgh Student Experience Survey, ESES 2014 Results, 'Guidance on how to analyse your results': www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=171647795

181 Information Portal: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/IP/1.+About+this+portal

182 Business Intelligence/Management Information Strategy, Recommendation 4, page 11: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/BM/Deliverables

Evaluation of the Senate committees

- 5.1.35 We engage in ongoing reflection on the effectiveness of our academic governance. Following the introduction of restructured Senate committees in 2009/10 as a result of internal evaluation of their operation, and building on a useful commentary by the 2011 ELIR, the effectiveness of the Senate committees will next be evaluated internally during 2014/15, followed by an externally-facilitated review in 2015/16.

Developing our approach to self-evaluation

- 5.1.36 A notable feature of our emphasis on self-evaluation since ELIR 2011 has been the increasing use of innovative approaches to the delivery of strategic projects with an institution-wide impact on the student experience. In its Major Project Governance Assessment Toolkit¹⁸³ the University has robust mechanisms for the management of major projects, which aim to bring consistency and rigour to project governance in order to deliver successful outcomes. At the same time, the Toolkit recognises that projects within higher education are increasingly focused on delivering change. The Toolkit has thus evolved and has been adapted to be complementary to project and change management processes such as soft project management, described in more detail below.
- 5.1.37 Case Study 1 on Personal Tutors provides a fuller account of how our self-evaluation led to the adoption of soft project management tools and how the iterative and developing experience of the relatively large numbers of staff and students involved in the Enhancing Student Support project have informed and continue to inform our approach to subsequent enhancement and change initiatives.
- 5.1.38 The soft project management approach focuses on bringing about change rather than delivering a physical product. The Soft Project Management Toolkit¹⁸⁴ is currently being used for the Programme and Course Information and Management Project,¹⁸⁵ in Human Resources, the Institute for Academic Development, and the Student Experience Project.¹⁸⁶ The toolkit will continue to be reviewed and developed to ensure it remains useful.
- 5.1.39 The current External Examiner Project¹⁸⁷ presents another bespoke approach to project management within the overall University project management framework. The project aims to facilitate the evaluation of issues arising from external examiner reports and the identification and management of ensuing action by schools, colleges and the University. With its aims of delivering both changes to business processes and IT tools to enhance the qualitative and quantitative analysis of external examiners' reports, the project uses a blend of soft and hard project approaches. The former are used where flexibility and responsiveness are appropriate for the change management element of the project, with the latter prioritised in relation to IT systems.

183 University Major Project Governance Assessment Toolkit: www.projects.ed.ac.uk/webfm_send/3442

184 Soft Project Management Toolkit: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/PCIM/Soft+Project+Management+Toolkit

185 Programme and Course Information Management Project, Vision and Approach: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/download/attachments/171977946/PCIMVisionandApproach.pdf?version=1&modificationDate=1380199705000&api=v2

186 Student Experience Project: www.ed.ac.uk/staff-students/staff/enhancing-student-experience/initiatives/sep

187 External Examiner Project: www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/ExternalExaminerProject/Home

- 5.1.40 A distinguishing feature of our developing project approach has been the adoption of a formative, supportive evaluation framework in all strands of the Student Experience Project (SEP). The capacity to demonstrate the value of what the SEP delivers is pivotal to its sustainability and annual planning and enhancement. Traditional project feedback and evaluation at present largely measure 'satisfaction with' and 'usage of' services. While these measurements are an essential part of measuring improvement and are the most common externally facing indicators of success, we consider that they do not wholly demonstrate the value and impact of what is delivered through the SEP on the student and staff experience. The SEP has therefore adopted the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE) Value and Impact Toolkit, The Student Services Organisation model of evaluation.¹⁸⁸ Building on this model, the SEP created an impact evaluation project officer post in March 2014 to design and establish an impact evaluation framework and strategy for the SEP and to engage with and support project staff to plan and develop their approach to evaluation strategically and practically. Quantitative and qualitative reports on the project's impact to date have recently been delivered.
- 5.1.41 The Use of Student Data task group was established to review our current approach to collating and analysing the information collected around student performance and to explore its potential to inform future enhancements. In other parallel projects where online tools and networks were being used and developed it became evident that substantial amounts of information on student activity or engagement were already being collected; for example in the IT Tools for Personal Tutors, and in the Programme and Course Information and Management and PATH projects. It became clear that we should also be considering our position on the proactive use of learning analytics and in focus groups with students on the development of the MyEd portal. Our students were already clear regarding the types of real-time reminders/alerts, interactivity and personalised information they would ideally like to access in support of their learning.
- 5.1.42 The potential of using learning analytics is currently being explored and research studies are being conducted by both Student Systems and Learning Services to ascertain the feasibility and robustness of compiling various data sets such as engagement with and hours spent on Virtual Learning Environments, frequency of Library access and use of online catalogues and research tools, swipe-card access to University buildings, computer logins, mobility across campus via wireless access points and similar.
- 5.1.43 At this point these studies are solely intended to inform discussion on what is possible and most importantly what is desirable in the development of a University position and policy on the use of learning analytics to support and enhance student learning.

5.2 Use of external reference points in evaluation

- 5.2.1 The ELIR 2011 Report noted it is "evident that the University has a proactive approach to identifying and make use of a wide range of external reference points (paragraph 127).

188 AMOSSHE Value and Impact Toolkit: http://www.amosshe.org.uk/sites/default/files/u3152/Value_and_impact_toolkit_June_2011.pdf

- 5.2.2 The University aligns with the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies. Annual monitoring and periodic review processes are designed to give appropriate consideration to alignment with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and with subject benchmark statements, as well as the views of external examiners and the outcomes of reviews by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). The periodic review process invites comment from external stakeholders, for example PSRBs, major employers and placement providers.
- 5.2.3 A similar process applies to the periodic review of student support services. Several of our student support services are accredited by external agencies: the Advice Place and the Careers Service are accredited to the Matrix standard; several of our services have achieved Investors in People Bronze or Silver status; as a British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)-accredited service since 2006, the Student Counselling Service is the only student counselling service of a Scottish university and one of only four Russell Group counselling services to have BACP accreditation; the Student Disability Service was re-validated by the Scottish Government in June 2013 and examples of its practice will be used by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland as a model for the higher education sector in Scotland.
- 5.2.4 The University is an active participant in the League of European Research Universities, Universitas 21, and the Russell Group. Within the Scottish sector, the University participates actively in the Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee, The Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee, and the Theme Leaders Group for the current Enhancement Theme.
- 5.2.5 A large repository of information is available on our Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP) website.¹⁸⁹ While the primary function of this website is to provide University staff engaged in planning-based activities with a range of relevant materials and links, a by-product of this internal activity has been that 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.
- 5.2.6 Benchmarking against the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Performance Indicators and results and analysis of the Research Excellence Framework are carried out by GaSP. A summary analysis of University performance in the HESA Performance Indicators for Higher Education is publicly available on the GaSP website.¹⁹⁰ Russell Group data form another key benchmark, and annual consideration is given by Senate Curriculum and Student Progression Committee and Senate Quality Assurance Committee to degree classification data benchmarked to Russell Group institutions.
- 5.2.7 The Internal Audit department is responsible for reviewing the adequacy and effectiveness of all the University's internal control systems. It identifies process improvements, assesses whether value for money is being achieved, and monitors compliance with corporate governance. Its approach is risk-based, with the University risk registers

189 Governance and Strategic Planning website: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/home

190 University Summary Analysis:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/facts-and-figures/hesa-performance-indicat

being a key input to the Internal Audit Plan which also takes into account the University's Strategic Goals, management feedback, key projects and initiatives and known issues. In this way it provides independent assurance to the Audit and Risk Committee, Court and senior management on the operation of processes and controls, and contributes to the University's enhancement ethos by adding value through identifying better ways of working.

- 5.2.8 Areas relevant to learning and teaching planned for internal audit in 2014/15 are: admissions and recruitment processes, student assessment and feedback, and practice placements. Recent internal audits relevant to learning and teaching have been the 2012/13 audit of the project governance of the Personal Tutor System in the light of its status as a key strategy in meeting the University's objectives under the Excellence in Education strategic goal in the Strategic Plan 2012-2016. All actions from the audit have been completed. The outcomes of the 2013/14 internal audit of arrangements for collaborative provision have been used as part of work already planned to evaluate the processes and policies that underpin academic collaborations.¹⁹¹

5.3 Management of public information

Public access to University information

- 5.3.1 The ELIR 2011 Report noted: "Overall the University has an effective approach to managing public information about quality and standards" (paragraph 103) and "The University is committed to making a wide range of information accessible to the public through its website, and there have been positive developments since the 2006 ELIR to promote the currency and reliability of that information (paragraph 142). The University has adopted the Model Publication Scheme 2013 and complies with the Freedom of Information Act (2002) by having a publication scheme setting out the types of information we routinely make available.¹⁹² A University Records Management Policy Framework supports the robust and accurate management of the University records system.¹⁹³
- 5.3.2 We routinely make all main committee papers openly available on our website, with an ethos within Senate and its committees of making papers publicly available as the default unless Freedom of Information exceptions apply. We believe that in respect of our University-level committees we have one of the most open publication approaches within the Scottish HE sector. The Senate committees publish a regular digest of their business on the Academic Services website¹⁹⁴ as a means of making academic governance discussions and decisions quickly accessible to staff and students, and a digest of recent Court business is publicly available in the 'latest news' section of Staff News¹⁹⁵ on the University website. Governance and Strategic Planning publishes the golden copy

191 Paragraphs 3.3.1 and 4.3.3, Annual Report of the Senate Committees, Senate, 4 June 2014: www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/Senate/2013-14/20140604AgendaAndPapers.pdf

192 University of Edinburgh Guide to Information: www.pubs.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk/index.cfm

193 University Records Management Policy Framework: www.ed.ac.uk/records-management-section/records-management/policy-framework

194 Senate Committees Newsletter: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/committees/newsletter

195 Summary of Court meeting, Staff News, University website: www.ed.ac.uk/news/staff

record of the University's collaborative agreements.¹⁹⁶ A list of Associated Institutions¹⁹⁷ is published on the University's website, maintained by Communications and Marketing.

- 5.3.3 Promotion of the understanding of and support for the University's work is the responsibility of Communications and Marketing (CAM),¹⁹⁸ which communicates the activities and priorities of the University to a wide national and international audience. CAM oversees the production of undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses with significant input from Student Recruitment and Admissions, the International Office and college offices. An important development since ELIR 2011 has been the establishment of the Student Communications Team¹⁹⁹ within CAM. The team's function is threefold: to promote to students initiatives, events and support available; to advise staff across the University on aspects of student communication, including channels and messaging; and to liaise with EUSA on campaigns requiring University input.
- 5.3.4 Student Recruitment and Admissions²⁰⁰ provides information and advice about opportunities to study at the University to a wide range of prospective undergraduate and postgraduate students, teachers, advisers and parents. This is done online, in print and face-to-face, both on- and off-campus.²⁰¹

Website development

- 5.3.5 The University's website caters to multiple audiences, both external and internal. The Website Programme²⁰² supports the main University publishing framework and supports all users within the University regardless of the technology they use. The Website Programme delivers training and development for all users, with an emphasis on continuous appraisal and review of content as the basis for effective web management. Responsibility for the day to day management of public information lies with the individual directorates, colleges, schools or units responsible for information in their area. Systematic editorial control mechanisms are 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. Guided by the University's Website Programme, analytics are increasingly being used at all levels to inform the presentation and tailoring of information to key target audiences.
- 5.3.6 Following a programme review in 2010 and extensive consultation with the University community, the University Website Programme is now moving to the next generation of online presence, to be known as 'EdWeb'.²⁰³ The aim is to meet the ever-evolving trends in technology and online user behaviour (including use of smartphones and tablets), and to empower the University to do better business online. The choice of Drupal as the

196 Collaborative Agreements website:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/collaborative-activity/collaborative-agreements

197 Associated Institutions: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/associated-institutes

198 Communications and Marketing website: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/communications-marketing/home

199 Student Communications Team website: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/communications-marketing/student-communications

200 Student Recruitment and Admissions: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-recruitment

201 Go Abroad website: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office/go-abroad

202 University Website Programme website: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/website-programme

203 University Website Programme, EdWeb development: www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/website-programme/edweb

content management system will support ongoing speed of development, flexibility and opportunities for collaboration. Migration to EdWeb will take place throughout academic year 2014/15, with completion scheduled for December 2015.

UK Quality Code

- 5.3.7 A detailed review of the alignment of University policies and processes with the UK Quality Code²⁰⁴ was carried out by Academic Services, with input from relevant services across the University. Mappings of alignment were considered by Senate Quality Assurance Committee, with additional scrutiny by other Senate committees where appropriate. The revised Code has helped inform a number of projects, including the External Examiner Reporting Project, enhancements to student engagement and collaborative provision, and the student appeals process. The University academic policy and guidance templates managed by Academic Services show which chapter or chapters of the Code have been taken into account in the development phase. The interactive mappings to the Code are published on the University website and are kept under review as the Code evolves.
- 5.3.8 The University's Publication Scheme meets the indicators of Part C.²⁰⁵ Through our publication of Key Information Sets and our participation in the National Student Survey we meet the specific requirements of the Scottish Funding Council with regard to public information about quality.²⁰⁶ In our approach to the Scottish Funding Council's generic guidance on public information about quality, we believe that our stance of making University-level committee papers publicly accessible wherever possible, combined with a University website that recognises multiple stakeholder audiences demonstrates our commitment to the provision of public information.

5.4 Effectiveness of our approach to self-evaluation and management of information

- 5.4.1 We are confident that our approach to self-reflection and evaluation is enabling us to develop and enhance our approach to learning and teaching and improve the student experience. Our evidence-based approach to self-reflection is supported by robust data, mature data management systems and effective management of information for both internal and external reporting purposes.
- 5.4.2 As we move forward, we are considering how to take further advantage of the opportunities and challenges posed by our data-rich environment. Within this environment, we are considering how we should develop our use of student data to be fit for the future, how we can develop new approaches to data analysis from learning analytics and how we can learn from the evaluation and impact of the soft project management techniques developed through the major strategic enhancement projects to become more systematic in our approach to impact evaluation of enhancement projects.

204 Interactive mapping to the UK Quality Code:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/quality-unit/quality-assurance/external-environment

205 University of Edinburgh Publication Scheme: www.pubs.recordsmanagement.ed.ac.uk/index.cfm?event=viewscheme

206 Scottish Funding Council Guidance to Higher Education Institutions on Quality From August 2012, Section C:
www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Circulars_SFC132012/SFC132012.pdf

6 Collaborative activity

6.1 Key features of the University's approach

Overview

- 6.1.1 The ELIR 2011 Report confirmed: “Overall, the University has effective arrangements in place for managing its collaborative activity” (paragraph 109). Since ELIR 2011, we have continued to develop and strengthen our approach to collaborative provision. Following the publication of Chapter B10 of the UK Quality Code we embarked on a review of our processes and template agreements and have made a number of enhancements largely aimed at assisting colleagues with a clearer process and guidance materials.
- 6.1.2 The current development and trajectory of our collaborative activity supports the University's strategic goals in internationalisation, global impact and partnership as set out in the University's Strategic Plan 2012-2016.²⁰⁷ Specifically in relation to teaching collaborations this includes: to increase our headcount of non-EU international students by at least 2,000; and to increase the number of PhD students on programmes jointly awarded with international partners by at least 50 per cent.
- 6.1.3 These objectives are further reinforced by the University's Internationalisation Strategy.²⁰⁸ The Global Review and Impact Plan²⁰⁹ highlights the importance to the University of the development of “long-term productive relationships that augment the international standing of the University” and of partnerships “driven by shared academic interest and focused on generating sustainable outcomes that build on the synergies between the partners”.
- 6.1.4 Our current collaborative activity consists of: jointly awarded degrees (taught and research); 2+2 undergraduate degrees; various partnerships for the purpose of offering students study abroad opportunities; and one accreditation agreement with Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). The University has had a long-standing collaboration with SRUC through the College of Science and Engineering and currently accredits three BSc degree programmes delivered by SRUC and research degrees (although only a handful of students are currently registered for research degrees). The majority of SRUC's taught programmes are accredited by Glasgow University.
- 6.1.5 In addition to international partners, the University is committed to maintaining and developing partnerships with Scottish and other UK Higher Education institutions. In particular, we are seeking to introduce further flexibility in our degree pathways through closer working with strategic partner providers, and through direct entry to second year for undergraduates, although we do not currently have any formal articulation agreements in place with further education providers.

207 Strategic Plan 2012 -16:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/strategic-planning/strategic-plan-2012-16

208 Internationalisation strategy: Edinburgh Global: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.9821!/fileManager/internationalisationstrategy.pdf

209 Global Review and Impact Plan: www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.110545!/fileManager/Global%20Review.pdf

- 6.1.6 Our students continue to undertake a wide range of voluntary study abroad opportunities, primarily in their third year of study. The University has Erasmus agreements with 288 universities in more than 41 countries and a further 40 partner institutions in North and South America, Australasia and Asia through the International Office's International Programme. In 2013/14 a total of 667 students spent a year abroad at a partner university, 379 of these on the Erasmus Programme, and 195 on the International Programme and 93 undertaking international departmental exchanges, as part of their programmes.
- 6.1.7 We have adopted a measured approach to the development of collaborative provision, and have expanded our activity in those areas that meet our strategic aims. The University does not have any franchise agreements or validation/accreditation arrangements with overseas partners; neither do we have any overseas campuses. As such we consider our approach to collaborative activity to be low in risk.
- 6.1.8 A current list of the University's formal collaborative arrangements leading to the award of a University of Edinburgh degree is published on the University web site²¹⁰ and reproduced in the Advance Information Set. At September 2014, the University had collaborative agreements with 64 international institutions, and 20 UK institutions.

Development since the last ELIR

- 6.1.9 Since ELIR 2011, the number of collaborative agreements in place has increased slightly, although the overall number of students registered on collaborative programmes has not increased significantly.
- 6.1.10 The number of 2+2 agreements has grown slightly since ELIR 2011. The majority of our 2+2 agreements are through the College of Science and Engineering. The University has agreements with eight Chinese universities to admit students to the third year of an Edinburgh engineering degree following successful completion of an approved two years of study at the respective Chinese institution. There are similar agreements in place with Chemistry and GeoSciences. Through the College of Humanities and Social Science²¹¹ the University has recently developed a 2+2 agreement with Donghua University in China.
- 6.1.11 The number of joint postgraduate taught programme collaborations has also increased, and new jointly-awarded PhD programmes are being established both with UK partners and international partners. Agreements under the Universitas 21 programme are being further developed, with new individual student agreements established with the University of Melbourne and with the University of McGill (Chemistry).
- 6.1.12 The University's Online Distance Learning provision includes two collaborative programmes; one international and one with a UK institution.
- 6.1.13 The College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine is currently at an advanced stage of discussions with Zhejiang University in China regarding a major strategic development that is based on a dual award model of collaboration; the introduction of

210 www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/governance-strategic-planning/collaborative-activity/collaborative-agreements

211 Agreement with Shanghai International College of Fashion and Innovation, Donghua University – new UG joint programme in Fashion and Design, commencing 2014

an undergraduate programme in Biomedical Sciences. In order to facilitate this major strategic development, the University has developed a formal policy on dual, double and multiple awards and a framework to facilitate their operation.

6.2 Securing academic standards of collaborative activity

- 6.2.1 Our approach to the development and management of collaborative activity is set out in our collaborative provision policies²¹² and framework, which includes a clear focus on academic standards and academic governance.
- 6.2.2 The University's policies and procedures for the development, management, and review of partnership arrangements are aligned with the UK Quality Code Chapter B10. Through the policies and processes it has in place, the University ensures that the appropriate levels of scrutiny and review are given to collaborative proposals in order to secure academic standards, with approval routes and management proportionate to the assessed risk of individual collaborative proposals. Collaborative partnerships are assessed in terms of their strategic fit as well as associated risk, with the majority of our collaborations being low in terms of risk. Partnership proposals originate in schools with input at college level, and advice given where appropriate from specialist teams/units across the University. Proposals comprise a business case, risk assessment, and resource considerations.
- 6.2.3 Currently policy, guidance and advice on setting up collaborative programmes is provided and supported by three areas: Governance and Strategic Planning, who work closely with colleges, offering advice on collaborative provision; Edinburgh Global in the International Office where a dedicated team, under the direction of the Vice Principal International, provide advice and support to schools setting up partnerships, and maintain links with partner institutions; Academic Services, which provides guidance on academic standards and quality assurance and enhancement; and the Director of Legal Services provides legal guidance regarding the drafting of Memoranda of Understanding and Agreement. New collaborative proposals are considered on a case by case basis, with consultation between relevant stakeholders, and in line with Chapter B10 of the UK Quality Code.
- 6.2.4 Operational procedures have been established with regards to the management and support of collaborative programmes, in line with quality management processes identified in Section 4. Boards of Studies are responsible for curriculum discussion and approval within a school and ensure that any new programme proposals are academically appropriate and supported by evidence and documentation. Clearly defined and effective processes are in place in relation to the management, monitoring and review of our programmes of study, as outlined in Section 4. The University retains responsibility for the quality and standards of any award made in its name and ensures that awards meet and align with the expectations of the UK Quality Code.

6.2.5 Collaborative programmes are subject to annual monitoring and review in the same manner as the University's other programmes and as far as possible are included in standard internal reviews alongside other Edinburgh provision. Responsibility for the quality assurance of all programmes, including any collaborative programmes, is, as for all other quality monitoring, devolved to schools. Programme monitoring is undertaken in the first instance at school level, with reporting upwards to colleges who in turn report to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee. This Committee reviews and has oversight of collaborative programmes through a variety of quality reporting mechanisms, including internal review reporting and annual college quality assurance and enhancement reports. All University programmes are reviewed every six years through the Internal Review cycle. This review exercise includes activity that is delivered collaboratively or in partnership with other institutions. Reviews will include evaluation of how well school quality assurance arrangements for collaborative provision align with institutional quality assurance requirements, and external drivers.

Developments since the last ELIR

- 6.2.6 Since the last ELIR we have continued to develop and strengthen our approach to developing and managing collaborative provision, in anticipation of expansion in this area. In 2013 the University conducted an internal audit of its collaborations (including teaching and research collaborations). The internal audit report made a number of recommendations for the management of teaching collaborations. In 2014, we initiated a project to address the recommendations from the Internal Audit report and to assist the University to strengthen its approach to developing and managing collaborative programmes more generally. Whilst the Internal Audit Report acknowledged that our approach is robust, it noted opportunities to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of schools, colleges and University departments in the approval of collaborative programmes to reduce unnecessary duplication and to provide clearer guidance and support.
- 6.2.7 To address these points, the project is delivering: a revised suite of standard Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Agreement for collaborative activities; clear definitions of the different categories of collaboration that the University is engaging in; updated guidance for academic and non-academic approval processes for new collaborative programmes; an enhanced digital repository for recording of all types of learning and teaching based collaborative agreements (allowing agreements to be tracked from inception to finalisation, and providing increased management information on existing agreements and required review dates); and improvements to existing arrangements for recording collaborative programmes on the student record system. This work is ongoing throughout 2014/15.

6.3 Enhancing the student learning experience on collaborative programmes

- 6.3.1 Consistent with Indicator 11 of Chapter B10, a guiding principle is that students on collaborative programmes should have a learning experience equivalent to that which students receive on wholly Edinburgh delivered programmes. This ensures that the standards of any of the awards involving learning opportunities delivered by partners are equivalent to the standards set for other awards that the University confers at the same level.
- 6.3.2 At an early stage in the partnership approval process checks ensure that mechanisms are in place to support the student learning experience. For example, partner institutions are expected to have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that students are provided with opportunities to comment on their experience and engage in decision making through student representation.
- 6.3.3 Arrangements are monitored through site visits, and through Teaching Programme Reviews and Postgraduate Programme Reviews, which make recommendations for enhancement as appropriate. The effectiveness of partner arrangements is reviewed as part of the routine quality review processes.
- 6.3.4 Within existing support frameworks all students on collaborative programmes at Edinburgh are given access to pastoral and academic support²¹³ including students on Study Abroad and online distance students who have a Personal Tutor. Additionally, Exchange Co-ordinators provide a useful point of contact both with the University and the partner institution.
- 6.3.5 We also have agreements in place for student mobility and have revised the Code of Practice on Study Abroad since the last ELIR in 2011. The Code sets out responsibilities and expectations of all roles, including staff and students, to ensure appropriate support for students who are studying at a partner university.²¹⁴
- 6.3.6 Student feedback on the academic experience is routinely collected from all students, including those on collaborative programmes and from exchange students returning from Study Abroad, with supporting data analysis reviewed through embedded quality assurance processes. The International Office conducts a survey of students' experiences of study abroad and reports on this in its Annual Quality Assurance Report. This is reviewed by a sub-committee of the Senate Quality Assurance Committee at an annual meeting.
- 6.3.7 Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) is responsible for gathering and responding to feedback from students on their experience of the programmes accredited by the University. Any issues arising from the feedback are reported in the annual report to the University at the Accreditation Board. The Accreditation Board also reviews SRUC's progress in meeting the ELIR recommendations.

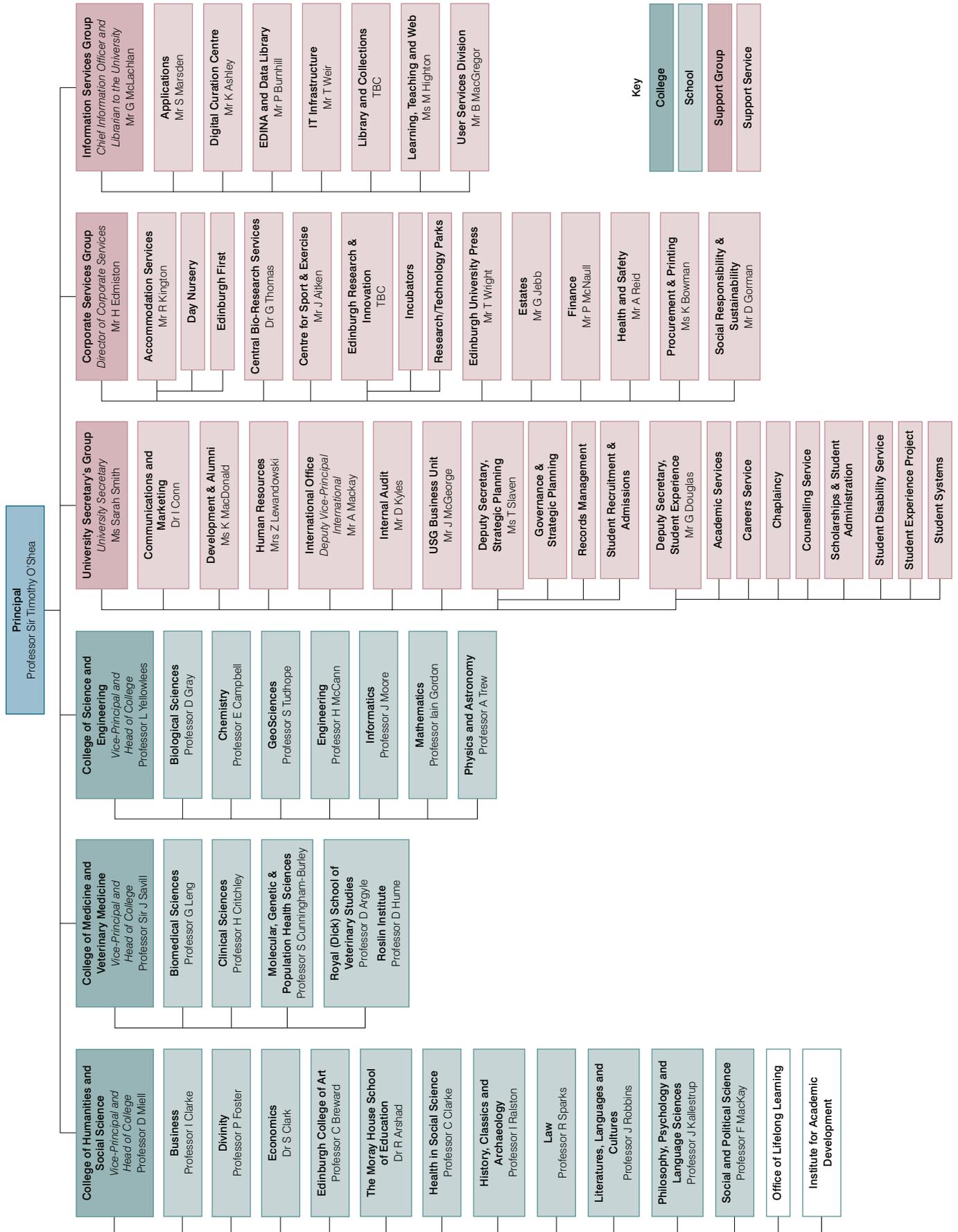
213 Policy: Academic and Pastoral Support Policy:
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Academic_Pastoral_Support.pdf

214 Code of Practice on Study Abroad:
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/international-office/go-abroad/staff-toolkit/guidelines-policies/code-of-practice

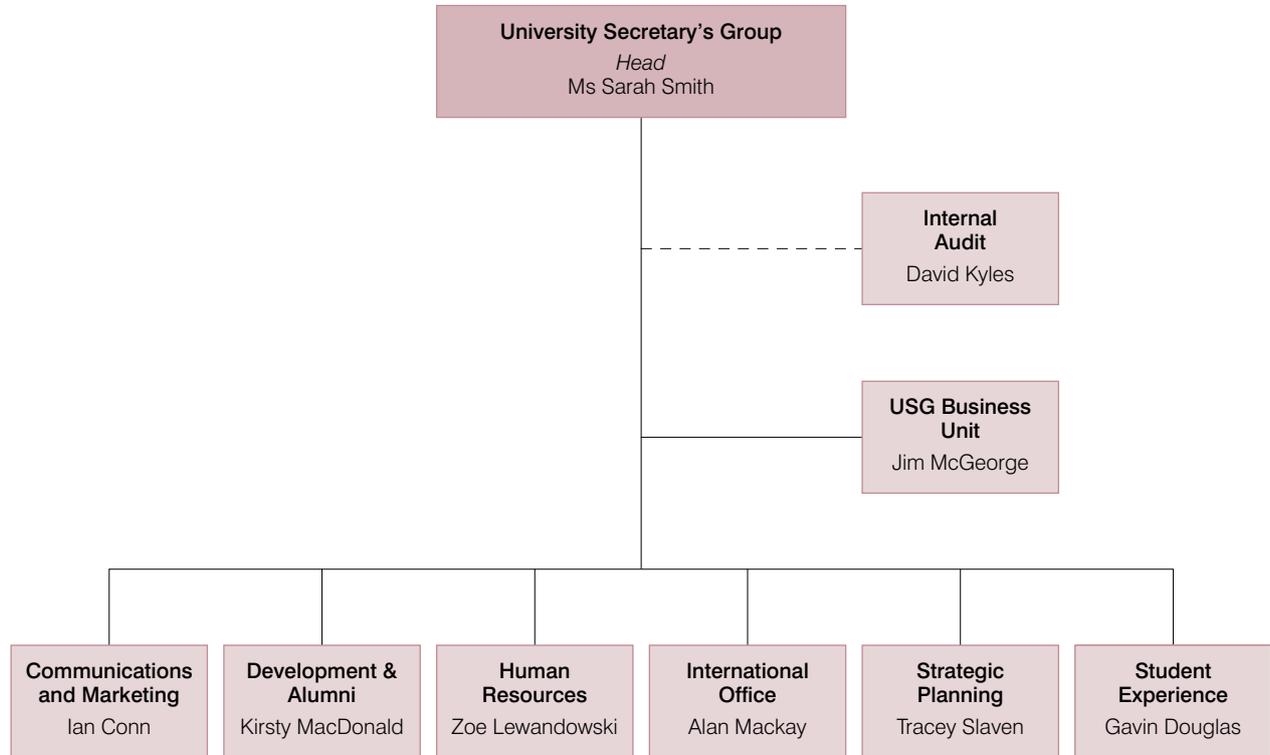
6.4 Effectiveness of our approach to managing collaborative activity

- 6.4.1 We believe we have an effective approach to managing collaborative activity that is proportional to the amount of such activity and the risk. Since ELIR 2011 we have reflected on our approach and have identified ways in which the approach can be enhanced further to provide greater clarity to staff seeking to develop collaborative programmes and to reduce unnecessary duplication and streamline processes. We believe that our current approach (including the planned enhancements) is appropriate for the amount and nature of collaborative provision that the University is engaged in.

Appendix 1: University organization structure



Appendix 2: University Secretary's Group (USG) Structure Chart (As at November 2014)

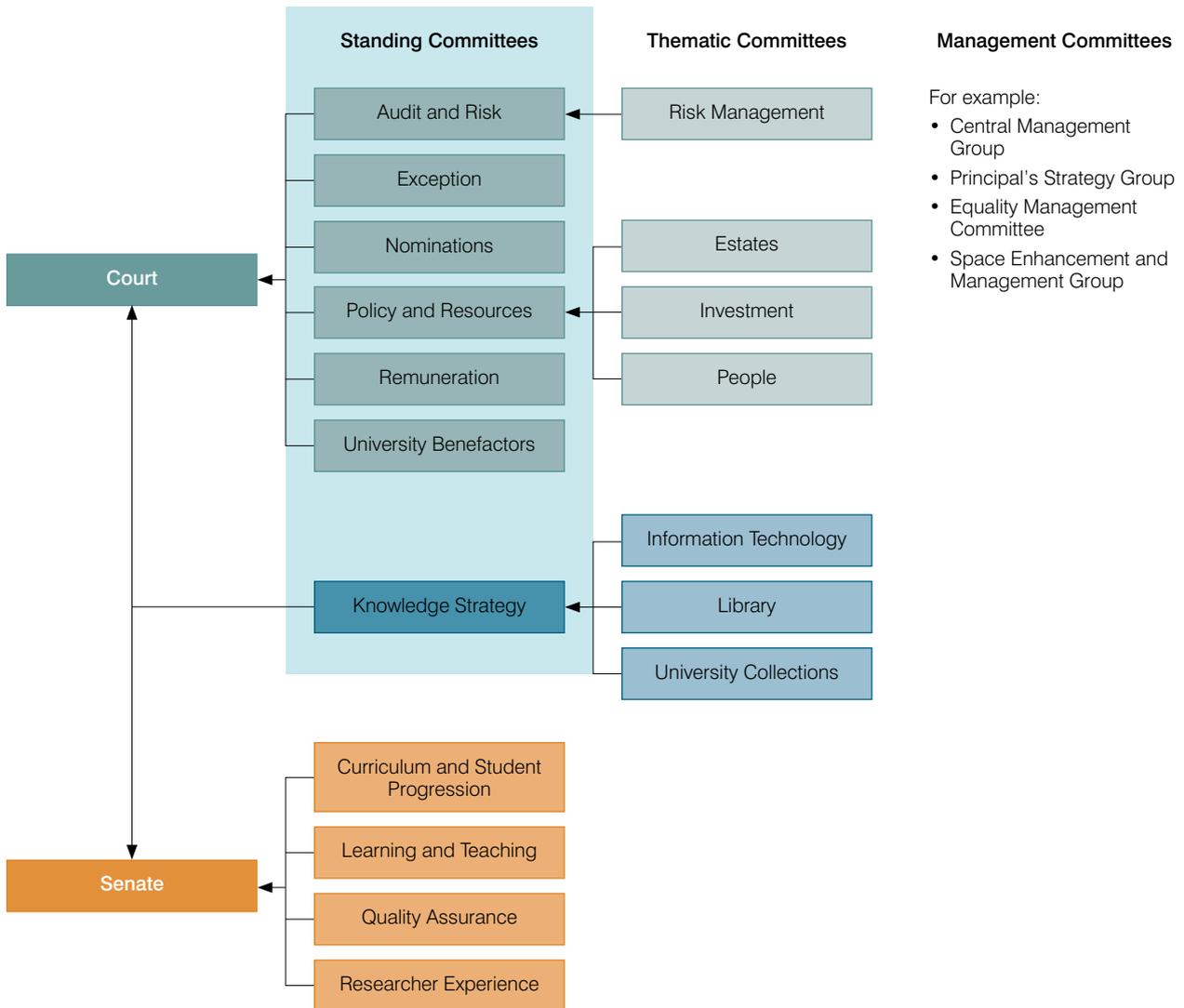


Strategic Planning has responsibility for Governance and Strategic Planning, Records Management Section and Student Recruitment and Admissions.

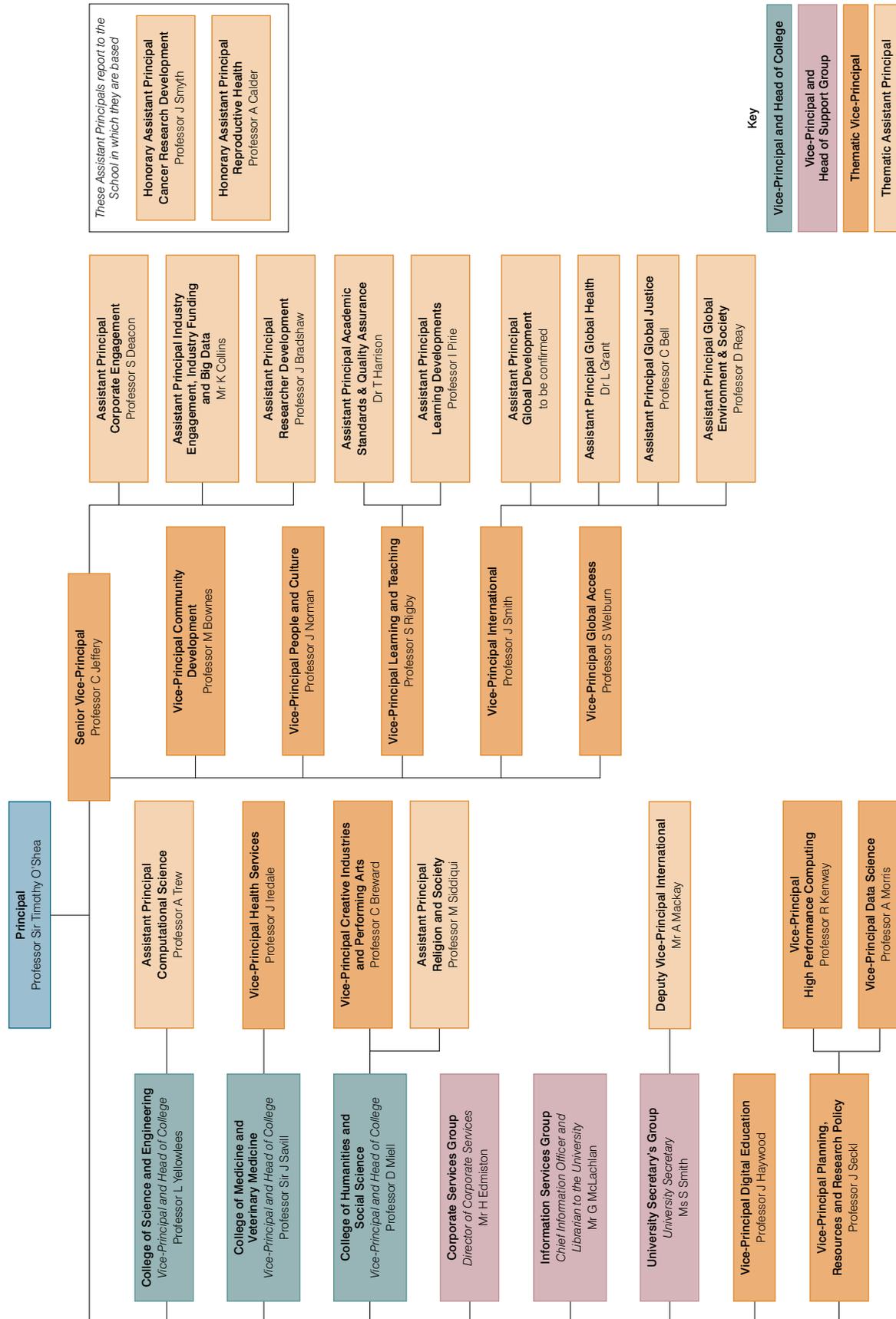
Student Experience has responsibility for Academic Services, Careers Service, Chaplaincy, Counselling Service, Scholarships and Student Administration, Student Disability Service, Student Experience Project, Student Systems, Pharmacy and University Health Service.

Internal Audit is independent of all functional areas of the University, and report directly to the Audit and Risk Committee (a standing committee of Court) to assure them that risks are managed effectively and controls are working as planned.

Appendix 3: Reporting relationship between Court and Senate



Appendix 4: Vice Principal and Assistant Principal roles and reporting structure



Appendix 5: Overview of trends in the University's student population 2010/11 to 2013/14

Study Level	Domicile	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	10/11–13/14 Diff %
Undergraduate	Scotland	8,304	8,490	8,660	8,668	4.38%
	Other	10,802	12,039	13,017	13,105	21.32%
	Total	19,106	20,529	21,677	21,773	13.98%
Taught Postgraduate	Scotland	2,021	1,928	1,835	1,770	-12.42%
	Other	3,616	4,363	4,689	4,760	31.64%
	Total	5,637	6,291	6,524	6,530	15.88%
Research Postgraduate	Scotland	1,610	1,641	1,666	1,662	3.23%
	Other	2,621	2,909	3,001	3,145	19.99%
	Total	4,231	4,550	4,667	4,807	13.59%
Overall Total		28,974	31,370	32,868	33,110	14.27%

Study Level	Studying Away	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	10/11–13/14 Diff %
Undergraduate	N	18,382	19,530	20,883	20,801	13.16%
	Y	724	999	794	972	34.25%
	Total	19,106	20,529	21,677	21,773	13.98%
Taught Postgraduate	N	4,654	5,144	5,031	4,718	1.38%
	Y	983	1,147	1,493	1,812	84.33%
	Total	5,637	6,291	6,524	6,530	15.88%
Research Postgraduate	N	4,194	4,470	4,565	4,679	11.56%
	Y	37	80	102	128	245.95%
	Total	4,231	4,550	4,667	4,807	13.59%
Overall Total		28,974	31,370	32,868	33,110	14.27%

Study Level	Visiting	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	10/11–13/14 Diff %
Undergraduate	Non-Visiting	17,755	18,907	19,296	19,330	8.87%
	Visiting	1,351	1,622	2,381	2,443	80.83%
	Total	19,106	20,529	21,677	21,773	13.98%
Taught Postgraduate	Non-Visiting	5,549	6,240	6,488	6,465	16.51%
	Visiting	88	51	36	65	-26.14%
	Total	5,637	6,291	6,524	6,530	15.88%
Research Postgraduate	Non-Visiting	4,167	4,435	4,541	4,679	12.29%
	Visiting	64	115	126	128	100.00%
	Total	4,231	4,550	4,667	4,807	13.59%
Overall Total		28,974	31,370	32,868	33,110	14.27

The number of PGT students Studying Away attributed to Online Distance Learning Course:

2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
1,117	1,402	1,716

Cover image

Natalie Pilakouta, University of Edinburgh postgraduate student, winner of the Principal's choice prize in the 6th annual international students photography competition, 2014. The theme of the 2014 competition was 'Diverse Edinburgh'. Natalie's photograph was taken in the Pentland Hills Regional Park on an excursion organised by postgraduate students.