

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

Thursday 20th February, 2pm –5pm

Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House & Microsoft Teams

A G E N D A

1.	Welcome and Apologies	
2.	Minutes of the previous meeting To approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5th December 2024• Note of e-business December 2024	SQAC 24/25 3A SQAC 24/25 3B
3.	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convener's communications	Verbal Update
SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS		
4.	Student Support Services Annual Review 2023-24 To discuss.	SQAC 24/25 3C
5.	Annual Monitoring: Reporting templates 2024-25 <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Programme template- School template- College template To discuss and approve.	SQAC 24/25 3D
6.	Internal Periodic Review: University Standard Remit - updated to align with new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) To discuss and approve.	SQAC 24/25 3E
ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING		
7.	Mid-year update on progress against SQAC priorities For information.	SQAC 24/25 3F
8.	Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP) For information.	SQAC 24/25 3G
9. Any Other Business		
10.	Date of next meeting Thursday 3 rd April 2025, Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and Microsoft Teams	

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on
Thursday 5th December 2024, 2-5pm
Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House
and Microsoft Teams

1. Attendance

Present:	Position:
Professor Tina Harrison	Deputy Vice Principal, Students (Enhancement) (Convener)
Professor Jake Ansell	Senate Representative
Professor Matthew Bailey	Dean of Quality, CMVM
Dr Michael Barany	Senate Representative
Professor Laura Bradley	Doctoral College Representative of CAHSS (PGR)
Marianne Brown	Head of Student Analytics, Insights and Modelling
Brian Connolly	Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
Dr Anne Desler	School Representative of CAHSS
Faten Adam	School Representative of CSE
Olivia Eadie	Co-Director, Institute for Academic Development
Professor Nazira Karodia	Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching, Edinburgh Napier University
Professor James Hopgood	Dean of Quality and Enhancement, CSE
Callum Paterson	Academic Engagement and Policy Coordinator, Students' Association
Dr Emily Taylor	Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation, CAHSS
Professor Patrick Walsh	Senate Representative
Sinéad Docherty	Committee Secretary, Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
Apologies:	
Dr Neneh Rowa-Dewar	School Representative of CMVM
Dylan Walch	Vice President (Education), Students' Association
In attendance:	
Nichola Kett	Head of Academic Quality and Standards, Registry Services
Ailsa Taylor	Academic Policy Officer, Registry Services
Meg Batty	Academic Policy Officer, Registry Services
Fiona Buckland	Learning Technology Team Manager, Learning, Teaching & Web Services Division, Information Services
Stuart Nichol	Head of eLearning Service, Educational Design and Engagement
Dr Melissa Highton	Assistant Principal and Director of Learning, Teaching and Web

2. Welcome and introductions

The Convener welcomed new members to the Committee; Professor James Hopgood as the new Dean of Quality and Enhancement for CSE, and Professor Jake Ansell and Professor Patrick Walsh who join the Committee as Senate Representatives following the recent election process.

3. Minutes of September meeting (SQAC 24/25 2A)

The draft of the September minutes had been made available for consultation ahead of this meeting. The Secretary noted that one comment from a member had been overlooked in the revision, and would be incorporated into the final version.

Action: Committee Secretary to amend minutes to include addition.

There was a query around the process for external reporting, which had been discussed in the matters arising segment of the September meeting. It was agreed that the Convener would add further detail to this section of the September minutes to better explain the external reporting process.

Action: Convener to add further detail to September minute to explain differences of the new external reporting process.

There was a question around metrics and measurements used in relation to student satisfaction with assessment and feedback, which had been discussed in the previous meeting. It was confirmed that there will be a focus in the National Student Survey (NSS) questions around assessment and the University will be looking for robust satisfaction data to come through via the NSS.

Action: Head of Academic Planning to share NSS question bank with the Committee when possible.

4. Matters Arising

- **Action log**

The Secretary shared the [action log](#) with members, which is saved on the Committee SharePoint. This details the updates and progress on actions as captured in meeting minutes.

The Secretary updated members on a particular action concerning the Senate newsletter. Whilst the recipients are known, there is no information available on engagement to give insight into how widely read the newsletter is. There are plans for Senate Support to circulate the newsletter via SharePoint rather than email, which will give greater insight into engagement. It was suggested that a link to the newsletter could be included in the University's Bulletin update to increase awareness of the Senate newsletter.

- **External review and sector updates**

The Convener informed the Committee that the University will be subject to its Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) in academic year 2027/28. The specific timing of the review will be confirmed in due course. The University has expressed its preference for the review to fall in semester 2 of 2027/28.

Action: Convener to share communication addressing timeline for review and associated actions, which will also be widely circulated within the University.

The Academic Policy Manager informed the Committee of a new sector initiative - Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP). A key focus of this new process is institutional collaboration on enhancement projects, and there are several areas of interest already pinpointed, including awarding gaps, Generative AI and student sense of belonging.

- **Student Data Monitoring Task Group update**

The Committee were informed that the Group have met twice this academic year, and discussions have explored the data that the University has available and where data analysis can be carried out. The Group have discussed gaps in equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) analysis of the student population and how to best understand the drivers of awarding gaps in the institution. Two workstreams are ongoing, with one area focussed on sector analysis and interventions that have been applied in other institutions, and the other focussed on data analysis.

- **Internal Periodic Review (IPR) Forward Schedule Update**

The Secretary updated Committee members on activity around the IPR schedule that had taken place since it was discussed in February 2024. To better balance the schedule for upcoming years, some Schools were asked to change their review year. Six Schools have volunteered to do so. The Secretary noted thanks to these Schools and to College colleagues who supported this activity.

5. Annual Report 2023/24: Academic Appeals (SQAC 24/25 2B – closed paper)

The Head of Academic Quality and Standards (the new name for the Academic Services area within Registry Services) was in attendance to speak to this item. The Committee were informed that the appeals process is managed through the Academic Appeals Regulations which belong with Academic Policy and Regulations Committee (APRC). However, this Committee was asked to reflect on the process from a QA perspective and identify any enhancements to the process where possible. The presenter noted thanks to the Academic Appeals Manager within Registry Services who compiled the reports and leads the appeals process.

It was reported that the number of appeals cases increased in 2023/24, continuing the upward trend in number of submissions. The appeals report showed that the upheld rate for an academic appeal had dropped to 5%, and that UG submission had increased whereas PG submissions had

decreased compared to the previous year. It was noted that there has been a slight increase in the numbers of appeals from students with a declared disability, although the percentage of 22.8% is in line with the overall student population who have identified as having a disability.

The Committee reflected that the increased number of cases is a trend across the sector and it may be reflective of students having a better awareness of the processes available to them and feeling safer about raising issues with the University. However, the upheld rate has decreased or remained static in recent years which indicates that the increased number of submissions does not correlate with the number of cases which meet the requirements for a successful appeal.

The Committee were informed that the Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) in 2023 had commented on the appeals process, and there has been ongoing focus on helping staff and students better understand appeals and relevant regulations. There has been work to increase understanding of what is within the scope of the appeals process and to help staff to understand when boards can reconvene in line with the regulations. The Committee recognised the effectiveness of these efforts to resolve cases outside of the full appeal committee process, where appropriate, and to help students better understand what constitutes an academic appeal. The Committee hope that these efforts can be shared across Schools as good practice.

The Committee discussed the data presented in the report and suggested some enhancements which could be made. It was felt that it would be beneficial to include more information on how the statistics correlate to the University population, which may indicate where targeted action can be taken. There was also a suggestion that the appeal form could be amended to include a tick box to ask whether the student had spoken to the Advice Place or to their Student Advisor. This may help with identifying areas for training, and may help to manage expectations around the outcomes that the appeals process can deliver for students. However, it was acknowledged that this may create a sense of gatekeeping whereas it is preferable to avoid any additional friction in the process. The Committee agreed that the appeal form would need to make clear that it is not mandatory to have spoken to a member of staff before submitting an appeal.

Action: Academic Appeals team to frame statistics in the context of student population in future reports.

The Committee agreed that it was useful to see the number of withdrawn appeals cases (62) and discussed the importance of Schools taking voluntary action where appropriate, and how best to ensure learnings from cases are shared at School and College level. It was confirmed that instances of themes or groups of issues (e.g. negative marking) are followed up by the appeals team, and overall learnings will be shared with Student Advisors who are the most student-facing role for student support. There is believed to be variation as to how Schools and College manage oversight of appeals at a local level; some Schools have a dedicated member of staff who co-ordinates all appeals whereas others rely on committee level oversight within the College.

There was a query as to why this paper was presented as closed. It was clarified that some of the data presented reflected small numbers of cases within Schools, and these could be an identifying factor in individual cases. There was a request for an open version of the paper to be made available so it can be shared with a College Committee for oversight and action at that level.

Action: Academic Appeals team to create a version of paper which Committee members can share with relevant School and College committees.

The Committee were informed that the appeals team had undertaken some benchmarking activity to compare the 2-year window for accepting appeals. It was reported that the timeframe within the sector is more commonly 1 year and therefore the University of Edinburgh is an outlier. The appeals team plan to consult with relevant areas of the University and move to a 1-year window if there is support for this. The Committee agreed that it is appropriate to be in line with the standard across the sector, but expect the consultation team to consider what the impact would be on students if the window for late appeals is changed.

6. Annual Report 2023/24: Student Conduct (SQAC 24/25 2C – closed paper)

Academic Policy Officers from the Student Conduct Team, Registry Services were in attendance to speak to this item. The Student Conduct Report provided summary data on the number of breaches of the student code and number of suspensions from student within the academic year. The number of cases reported were similar to figures from the previous year. The report covered instances of academic misconduct and other breaches of student conduct.

The presenters provided an overview of their investigations within academic year 2023/24 and the type of breach that required an investigation. The Committee were advised that there is a significant amount of work involved in cases which do not reach full investigation stage; these may have been withdrawn by the reporting party or action may have been taken locally to resolve the case before it reached investigation.

New procedures from 22/23, now being reported on for the first time, enabled School Academic Misconduct Officers (SAMOs) to impose penalties or a warning in cases of academic misconduct. This is understood to be a factor in the significant increase in reported cases against last year's figures. The marking and assessment boycott (MAB) may have also had an impact, insofar as results from 2022/23 were delayed until 2023/24 and therefore cases of academic misconduct were identified in the most recent year.

The report highlighted the increase in misuse of Generative AI cases, with the vast majority of cases being reported from CAHSS. No cases were reported from CSE. It was acknowledged that staff may be more aware of Generative AI tools now and more attuned to evidence of use within assessment. Assessment format was also understood to be a factor in the number of cases concentrated in CAHSS. It was proposed that the annual monitoring templates could include a question on assessment and Generative AI, which may help to identify good practice in assessment and to also bring consistent focus to this issue at individual School level.

The Committee agreed it would be useful to include misuse of Generative AI as a standalone category in future reports, rather than these cases being classified under cheating. In making misuse of Generative AI an explicit category, it is hoped that this will better communicate to students that this misuse is an offence. The Committee also requested that the data showing the

breakdown of offences within academic misconduct be further broken down to reflect the number of cases within each College.

Action: Student conduct team to classify Generative AI misuse as a specific category in future records and reports.

Action: Student conduct team to provide breakdown of academic misconduct within each College in future reports.

Action: Student conduct team to create an academic misconduct version of the report which can be shared more widely with College teams.

The Committee discussed cases relating to student behaviour and conduct. Comments addressed a potential gap in the policy about what outcomes can be for students, with concern that a better range of penalties may be required between warnings and exclusions. It was also noted that enhanced options for training, mentoring or support systems may benefit students whose behaviour has breached the student code. The Committee recommended that the Code of Student conduct be reviewed and consideration given to the outcomes and penalties that can be applied to cases.

The Committee were informed that the Code of Student Conduct is due for review in 2025/26 and both aspects noted above have been identified as areas for consideration. Probation periods and suspensions were suggested as suitable penalties to add to the available range. It was acknowledged that the University has changed its provision of training packages, and harassment training, for example, is no longer available to students. There was a suggestion from a member that students in breach of the Code of Student Conduct be liable for paying for their own training when it is not available within existing provision.

Action: Student conduct team to explore feasibility of students paying for their own training following a breach of the Code of Student Conduct.

7. College Annual Quality Reports 2023/24 (SQAC 24/25 2D)

College of Arts and Humanities (CAHSS)

The Dean of Quality Assurance and Curriculum Validation, CAHSS presented the report on behalf of the College. The Dean highlighted the amount of work undertaken to drive forward the initiatives detailed in the report and thanked the Schools for their collaboration. The Dean also noted specific thanks to colleague CAHSS Quality Assurance Manager for their contribution to the College report.

Several themes were highlighted in the summary of the report. Late submissions to the Exceptional Circumstances (EC) service were highlighted as an area of concern. The Committee were informed that CAHSS have held conversations with Academic Quality and Standards addressing late EC submissions and that one School has begun a trial to find an alternative way

to manage late EC submissions. It was confirmed that all Schools have been instructed to use the central EC process rather than implementing local policies.

The moderation policy was also highlighted as an area for further attention as the College has found that some Schools continue to interpret the policy differently. This has resulted in some inefficiencies of practice and inconsistency of quality. The College seek commitment from the University for issues around the moderation policy to be addressed within academic year 2024/25.

Action: Convener to take moderation policy discussion to the Assessment & Feedback Strategy Group.

It was noted that the focus within the College on assessment and feedback resulted in progress in many areas in 2023/24. The Convener noted thanks to the CAHSS Dean and colleagues for their work in this area. It is expected that the additional focus on assessment and feedback within the College will help to drive reflections on curriculum changes and transformation. The Convener informed the Committee that the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities are due for review by the end of 2025/26 and College work on assessment and feedback will be valuable to the review.

During discussion of assessment and feedback, the Committee were informed that Senate elected members recognised the value of work undertaken by CAHSS but noted caution around over extrapolating approaches that are thought to be effective and overriding discipline specific expertise. It was also noted that Senate elected members voiced concern as to where emphasis is placed, such as on points of assessment or on diversity of assessment format and feedback. There is concern that competing areas of emphasis may impact the objective to reduce volume of assessment in some areas.

The Committee discussed assessment tariffs as a mechanism for managing assessment. It was highlighted that if the tariff is presented as guidance, those who are already working in line with University guidance will continue to do so. There is a risk that those areas which are not meeting the guidance will not be required to adapt. It was noted that if the tariff were to set out the expected effort hours of assessment, it may help to address volume of assessment and clustering deadlines at the end of semesters.

In response to the discussion, the Dean of CAHSS confirmed that the College Assessment Group would continue to work on these areas of focus, and take a holistic approach to the design of assessment that makes pedagogical sense within the College.

With regard to the actions requested of the University by CAHSS, the following items were agreed:

- Exceptional Circumstances – the ongoing trial work within CAHSS will inform the action to be taken.
- Curriculum Transformation – feedback from the college will be shared with the CT project team and UIPB.

- Generative AI and assessment – the need for ongoing support will be shared with the AI task group, and will feed into the Senate discussion of Generative AI in its upcoming December meeting.

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine (CMVM)

The Dean of Quality, CMVM presented the College report and highlighted reflections from the past year. There is a notable risk concerning staff morale and burnout as staff members often work beyond their hours without a formal Workload Allocation Model (WAM) and there are concerns around job security. Despite these challenges, Schools and Deaneries have continued to impress with their good practice. It is felt that it would be valuable to bring back an institution-wide event to showcase examples of best practice.

The Committee were informed that quality assurance was a factor in investment and resource within the College and progress has been made in addressing potential QA issues. The College has been focussed on developing quality objectives around the PGR experience with the intention to feed these in to broader activity.

It was highlighted that the College is now into the third year of its modernisation plans, which have now been approved by University Court. The plans are due to be implemented in 2025/26. There is expected to be a fundamental change to how QA will operate within the College and it is recognised that this will also affect staff perspectives on how learning and teaching is managed.

For the year ahead, a priority for the College will be developing model of how programmes and teaching will map onto the new structure within the College. It was recognised that student voice will need to be strong in this, as there are concerns that consultation became disconnected from the student voice as modernisation plans progressed.

The College report also identified the need for a clearer timetable of prioritisation for institutional projects from the University. This will assist with appropriately allocating resource to various projects and plans. The Committee agreed that the UIPB should be asked to provide an overview of priorities and timelines to help Colleges with their planning.

The Committee noted the PGR provision working group had been unable to progress much this year, as they were impacted with the delay in recruiting a new PGR Dean and overall workload pressures. It is not expected that the group will progress much before the College-wide PGR IPR in March 2025. However, there will be the benefit that the review will provide specific recommendations for the new Dean to take forward.

External accreditation providers and the NHS were also highlighted as areas of ongoing focus. A working group is in consultation with the NHS, and updates and progress reports on external factors are expected through the IPR responses process, as all CMVM Deaneries and Schools have had an IPR within the last two academic years.

Metrics and student analytics were noted as a final point from the CMVM report. It is challenging to report overall PGR completion times as the method to do so does not take into account an Authorised Interruption of Study (AIS). Schools and Deaneries must check individual student records for this information. The Committee agreed that enabling the data systems to accurately reflect completion times, taking into account AIS information, should be a priority area of work. It was noted that improving the quality of data will require additional resource.

College of Science and Engineering (CSE)

The Dean of Quality and Enhancement CSE noted that the College report reflected themes and actions that have been highlighted and remitted through the School reports. The key themes in the College report highlighted the success of the feedback monitoring process, ongoing assessment rubrics work, challenges around resources and consistent use of data, and pressures due to staff turnover. The report also highlighted PGR community concerns; activities such as KingsFest were intended to make the Kings Buildings campus more attractive to students, but feedback received from PGR students through SSLCs was that the event felt more targeted to the UG community due to the time at which it fell.

CSE was impacted by reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) issues, and this has been identified as having negatively impacted the student experience. There is felt to be a lack of student community space for CSE students, as the intended space is being used for other purposes, due to the RAAC impact, and this is causing tension in the CSE community. It was recognised that it will take a significant amount of time to address the ongoing estates issues.

The College reported that every School QA report had highlighted the success of Student Advisors. This role was well received in CSE, although the Cohort Lead role has proven more difficult to successfully implement. The College Student Support Oversight Group is reviewing the role, and the College request the provision of more guidance from the central University on the Cohort Lead role.

Another area for development noted by the CSE report was training for staff on Generative AI. There are questions around which regulations need consideration in relation to Generative AI. The Committee were informed of a new training module in development by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) which will form part of the online, self-paced offer to staff and students on AI ethics and integrity. It is being designed in consultation with the AI task group.

The Convener noted thanks to the College Deans and respective teams for their work on their reports.

Action: Academic Quality and Standards to review formatting of report templates with the College Deans.

8. Short Online Courses Annual Update (SQAC 24/25 2E)

This paper provided an update on activities relating to Short Online Courses, formerly known as MOOCS. The University has built up a strong profile in this provision of these short courses, with

11 million learners having participated in a short course over the last 11 years. The upskilling courses developed with the School of GeoSciences were highlighted as examples of recent, successful activity.

The Committee were informed that the University has procured a platform to bring together all non-credit bearing courses. This academic year, a project is running to bring all Centre of Open Learning (COL) courses on to the new platform. The presenters emphasised that a key focus, and area of interest for SQAC, is the quality assurance of this platform, including the policies and processes relevant to non-credit bearing provision. There is also attention on the QA of getting courses onto the platform and continuous enhancement of the courses and the learning experience.

It was confirmed that the courses can be available on two platforms, and this helps the University in reaching a wider audience. It is of strategic importance to the University to maximise the reach of this provision, to provide an offering that can have a wider social impact and provide a pathway to Masters level study for some learners. The Committee were supportive of these objectives, and noted interest in future reporting which would measure the social impact and reach of these courses.

Discussion considered the value of KPIs for this project and the conversion rate from enrolment to certificate for learners, which is around 5%. The short courses team noted that the conversion rate is considered as good, although this is not the primary motivation for investing in the provision. It was also noted that tracking learners from short courses to further study can be challenging, as individuals may go on to partner institutions or use different details (i.e. email address) at different stages. The Governance and Strategic planning team are helping the short courses team with data matching activity to better track learner journeys.

The Committee discussed the alignment between the short courses portfolio and Masters programmes. It is for course teams to strategically consider their short course offering and postgraduate programmes. However, a short course proposal does have to demonstrate how it aligns with University Strategy. Proposals can rise out of research proposals and can be delivered as part of a research plan for impact. The dashboards from the short courses are shared with course teams and include useful feedback from students which can inform future iterations.

The process for approving a short course was clarified; proposals are considered through a process including School committees, the EDI committee, the sustainability committee, the short courses strategy group and the relevant Board of Studies. This level of oversight is intended to ensure that due consideration is given to strategy and resource for each proposal. The Committee stressed the importance of the role of the Boards of Studies being properly understood and communicated across the University.

9. Learn Ultra Evaluation (SQAC 24/25 2F)

The Assistant Principal and Director of Learning, Teaching and Web was in attendance to present this item. The Committee were informed that the Learn Ultra Project has been subject to several evaluation activities since implementation. There was in-project evaluation, evaluation by

Internal Audit and an external evaluator. There is a drive to understand what can be learnt from this large project to implement Learn Ultra, and a drive to increase the awareness of the evaluation reports to share learnings and practice across the University.

It was noted that wider Senate had asked questions of the oversight of internal platforms and systems and the evaluation of projects, and this report responds to this. The Convener invited the Committee to consider where to direct focus in relation to the priority requested by Senate around internal systems and whether a report such as the Learn Ultra evaluation addressed the QA questions around these types of projects.

It was agreed that this kind of review and evaluation addresses the ask from Senate. Comments from Senate members were shared with the Committee; many had a positive experience of the implementation but there are some colleagues who had a negative experience with the transition. There were reports of adjustments needed after the implementation, and functionality concerns after the shift to the new platform. Senate members are looking to understand how lessons are learned from projects, and how both positive and negative experiences feed into the lessons learned to reflect the full range of experiences.

The Committee discussed the workload allocation that is relevant to a change project. When a new course is developed, there is a tariff in the workload allocation. However, migrating an existing course to new platform is not covered by the workload allocation model. It was also noted that colleagues would have found an “important changes” document to be a valuable tool in the transition.

The presenter responded to the points raised by the Committee. Communication around the project indicated from the start that functionality would change in the new version of Learn. The platform belongs to the vendor and it is not within the control of the University to change the functionality. The project team sought to emphasise the importance of training for the new model, which would require colleagues to learn the differences between the platform. It was felt that lots of detail had been shared around the differences between the two.

Lack of engagement with training and the transition was cited as a reason for the difficulties experienced in some areas of the University. It was felt that Schools which did not have a learning technologist in place had a more difficult transition to Learn Ultra, as well as those School which had opted out of Learn foundations. Those who had opted in could make more use of the automations available to them.

The Committee recognised the importance of the role of learning technologists, and highlighted that this role requires professional development and competitive conditions. Contracts for learning technologists can be short and support levels in Schools can vary. The Committee also recognised the importance of training for colleagues in all roles using Learn Ultra, and the need for training to be available after implementation for those Schools who are late adopters with new systems.

Due to time constraints, it was agreed that this item would be considered by e-business.

11. Committee Priorities 2024-25 (SQAC 24/25 2H)

The Committee were informed that Senate approved additional priorities for the standing committees in its October meeting and therefore the priorities paper has been updated.

Due to time constraints, it was agreed that this item would be circulated by e-business for any further comments by the Committee.

12. Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses (SQAC 24/25 XXX)

Due to time constraints, it was agreed that this item would be considered by e-business.

13. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 20th February 2024, 2-5pm.

The University of Edinburgh

Senate Quality Assurance Committee e-business
9th – 16th December 2024 5pm

Note of e-business

	Items for information	
1.	Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP) For information.	SQAC 24/25 2G
	<p>This item was presented to the Committee for information. One member requested sight of this report at an earlier stage going forward. Another member requested that this item be carried forward on the agenda for the next meeting.</p> <p>This item will return to the agenda for the February meeting of the Committee.</p>	
2.	Committee Priorities 2024/25 Revised draft – for information.	SQAC 24/25 2H
	The revised draft of Committee Priorities was shared with members for information. There were no further comments received from Committee members.	
3.	Internal Periodic Review: Reports and Responses	SQAC 24/25 2I
	<p>The Committee is invited to approve the IPR Final Reports and Responses published on the Committee SharePoint.</p> <p>The College Deans of Quality reviewed the IPR reports and responses and continue to work with Academic Quality and Standards to address IPR recommendations which require further progress or support.</p> <p>In relation to the SPS 14-week response, the CAHSS Dean of Quality requested that the Committee discuss the position on whether assessment deadlines can fall within the Easter break which is not a University closure period.</p>	
	Date of next meeting Thursday 20 th February 2025 2-5pm, Hybrid meeting: Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House and Microsoft Teams	

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

20 February 2025

Report on the 2023/24 Student Services Annual Review

Description of paper

1. This paper report on the Student Support Service Annual Review (SSSAR) for 2023/24. The paper highlights areas of good practice and key themes arising from the service reports.
2. Fit with remit:

Quality Assurance Committee	Y/N
Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.	Y
In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University's quality framework.	Y
Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice.	Y
Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business.	Y
Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.	Y
Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

3. To discuss areas of good practice (appendix 1, section 2) and consider whether any further actions are required in relation to the themes (appendix 1, section 3).

Background and context

4. The SSSAR reporting process is part of the University's quality assurance framework. Services report on student-facing activity and its impact on student experience. Seventeen reports were submitted this year.

Discussion

5. The paper, attached as Appendix 1, reports on the 2023/24 review process, highlighting areas of good practice identified in each report and key themes arising from the service reports.

Resource implications

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

Risk management

7. No risk assessment is included in the paper. Service areas undertake risk assessment on areas for development.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

8. Some content within the paper aligns to SDG 8 in relation to promoting employment and decent work for all.

Equality & diversity

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

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

10. The Committee should consider communication, implementation and evaluation of any actions resulting from the paper. This includes how best to share the findings, recommendations and best practice beyond the sub-committee and SQAC.

Author

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Brian Connolly
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Presenter

Professor Tina Harrison
Convener, SSSAR Sub-Committee

February 2025

Freedom of Information: Open

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Report on the 2023/24 Student Services Annual Review

1. Reporting Process

1.1 Annual Reporting Process 2023-24

Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC), at its meeting in May 2023, agreed to reinstate the regular Student Support Services Annual Review (SSSAR) process, as set out in the Student Support Services Review Policy. The 2023-24 review process encompassed the following stages:

- Reader/reviewer stage;
- Readers' meeting;
- Full sub-committee meeting;
- Final report to SQAC.

Service reports were reviewed by readers and peer reviewers over October and November 2024. The readers' meeting was subsequently held on 12 December 2024 and the full sub-committee meeting took place on 4 February 2025.

1.2 Service Reports

Service Heads were invited to complete a reporting template reflecting on activities over the past academic year specifically relating to student use of the service. The template required responses on the following:

- summary of the impact of activities from the previous academic year on the student experience and how these contribute to University Strategy;
- reflection on user engagement and feedback, service use, partnership working and externality;
- staff development activity and its impact on the student experience;
- reflection on service changes, new ways of working and efficiencies;
- summary of the top 3-5 key priorities for the coming academic year and how these will be taken forward;
- risk analysis, indicating any specific risks to achieving the service's core activities, and the approach to mitigating risks.

1.3 Reader/Reviewer Stage

Each report was allocated to one 'reader' (an academic, external or student representative on the sub-committee) and one 'reviewer' (a service head representative on the sub-committee). The readers/reviewers were invited to comment on their allocated reports (using a feedback template) and identify areas of good practice for sharing across the services and areas for further development. For reference, all readers and reviewers had access to reports via the [SSSAR Sub-Committee SharePoint](#). On completion of this stage, Academic Quality and Standards produced a composite report on areas of good practice and areas for development identified by the readers and reviewers. Service heads were also provided with anonymised versions of the reader and reviewer feedback on their report prior to the full sub-committee meeting.

1.4 Readers' Meeting

The Readers' Meeting (academic and student representatives of the sub-committee) was held online on 12 December 2024 and convened by Professor Tina Harrison, Deputy Vice Principal Students (Enhancement). The readers discussed the composite report of the reader/reviewer stage and identified the following themes for discussion at the meeting of the full sub-committee:

- Commitment to staff development and strategic management of staff resources
- Student finances and employment opportunities
- The use of data and feedback in KPIs
- Collaborative working and effective partnerships

It was agreed that Academic Quality and Standards would identify and invite speakers to share good practice at the sub-committee meeting based on the themes noted above.

1.5 SSSAR Sub-Committee

The meeting of the Student Support Service Annual Review sub-committee was held in-person on 4 February 2025, convened by Professor Tina Harrison, Deputy Vice Principal Students (Enhancement). The sub-committee discussed the themes identified by the readers in the light of the following examples of good practice:

- Dr Shane Collins, Director of Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA), discussed SRA's approach to training and developing staff and shared examples of recent activity around the strategic management of staff resources in alignment with SRA's priorities.
- Jo Craiglee, Head of Knowledge Management & Planning in the Information Services Group (ISG), provided examples of student internship opportunities within ISG and their associated benefits.
- Kerry Richardson, Service Assurance Manager in Finance Operations, highlighted the service's feedback mechanisms and how resulting data helps shape KPIs.
- Ronnie Millar, Director of Student Counselling Services (SCS), shared examples of SCS's collaborative partnerships, both internally with teams across the University and with external organisations.

The Convenor welcomed Dr Andrew Struan (Director of Academic Services, University of Glasgow) and thanked him for his input into this year's SSSAR process as this is his first year as the appointed external member of the sub-committee.

2. Good Practice

Readers and reviewers identified much to commend across the reports and key commendations and good practice are highlighted below.

2.1 Accommodation Catering and Events (ACE)

Accommodation, Catering and Events was particularly commended on its success in gaining external recognition and awards, as well as its commitment to the Real Living Wage, which is extended to regular contractors as well as employees. Career

enhancement opportunities via benchmarking training and visiting international comparators demonstrated a clear commitment to staff development. The use of international development events and training were also highlighted as having a positive impact on staff retention. ACE evidenced a number of strong examples of collaboration with local campus and School communities with regard to holding events. Establishing a collaboration with the Students' Association and the Advice Place has demonstrated innovation in creating a combined University approach to the challenges students face within the context of the student accommodation shortages.

2.2 The Advice Place

The Advice Place was commended on its substantial use of quantitative data and data-driven smart metrics, as well as the use of varying feedback mechanisms and tracking capabilities. The service was also commended on ensuring that all staff have access to regular training and specialist sessions on a range of topics. Delivery of training has kept advice caseworkers skilled and knowledgeable regarding the topics that the area provides advice on. Similarly, student volunteers were reintroduced to the service on a more regular basis, with training and ongoing adviser support provided. This supported volunteers in assisting with straightforward frontline enquiries, as well as providing a positive development opportunity for students.

2.3 Careers Service

The Careers Service was commended on its involvement in a wide range of activities and its successful engagement with students, employers and the Curriculum Transformation Programme. The ongoing work with delivering Employ.ed was noted as an area of excellent practice. On-campus employment and undergraduate summer internships via Employ.ed continue to deliver notable value to students. Feedback from Employ.ed interns has indicated that their experience has a profound impact in terms of their personal development and connectedness to the University.

2.4 Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy was commended on its strong teamwork and its commitment to retain delivery of core services despite limitations in staff resource. The successful delivery of these services, which support large numbers of students and staff, despite challenges around staff resources was commended as an area of strong practice. Response time remains within same-day in most cases, and administrative staff workload has been improved via streamlining Listening Service appointments. Strategic decisions such as ceasing or reducing certain activities has enabled the Chaplaincy to sustain its high standards across key priority areas.

2.5 Disability and Learning Support Service (DLSS)

The Disability and Learning Support Service was particularly commended on its student satisfaction rates and its success in the EUSA Teaching Awards / Advance HE Fellowship. DLSS's seamless integration with other services such as accommodation, the exams team and the Student Counselling Service, as well as student support teams across the University was noted as an area of very strong practice. DLSS have also partnered with the Edinburgh Cares team to support care-

experienced students, as well as collaborating with the career service to support autistic students transition to employment. Establishing strong internal partnerships ensures a coordinated support network for students which is crucial for holistic disability service provision.

2.6 Equally Safe Team

The Equally Safe Team was commended on its provision of training across the University around sexual violence and how Schools can best advise students on this subject matter, as well as the impressive production of reporting guides which has been replicated by other HEIs. The Team was commended on its active participation in relevant GBV networks and strong relationships with external bodies. The Team's Manager maintains a high profile of external partnership working across relevant GBV networks in Edinburgh, such as the Equally Safe in Edinburgh Committee, who have agreed performance measures and national benchmarking targets.

2.7 Estates

The Estates Department was commended on its well evidenced and meaningful involvement of students within departmental activity, as well as its formalised commitment to EDI. Student interns have been working with the Development Team to capture condition data in relation to centrally managed teaching rooms across the University estate. This is assisting in informing and prioritising the work undertaken annually in refurbishing and maintaining the teaching estate, directly influencing spend and impact to learning spaces. This involvement of student interns in this work was noted as commendable good practice.

2.8 Finance

Finance Operations was commended on their detailed reflections against each of their actions from the previous year, their well-defined outcomes, and how the service was strategic in their agenda-setting for the year ahead. The level of consideration and depth of planning, as well as how their outcomes have impacted student experience, were noted as examples of strong practice. The service's work to consistently embed KPI reporting across areas as a route to assure service level agreements and enhance experience for users was also commended. The service's commitment and approach to staff development, the approach of staff receiving monthly 1:1's, staff training opportunities, and annual reviews being linked to University strategy were all regarded very positively.

2.9 Information Services Group (ISG)

Student employment opportunities within Information Services Group were noted as an example of excellent ongoing practice. 334 separate assignments were filled by students, including 54 full-time summer internship roles. These figures were highly commended, as was the positive impact on the student experience. ISG also demonstrate excellent student experience feedback, with 97% of student workers rating their employment experience as either 'excellent' or 'good'. In terms of peer-to-peer support, Finance Helpline staff are primarily composed of student employees, providing valuable peer-to-peer support that resonates with the student body.

2.10 Institute for Academic Development (IAD)

The Institute for Academic Development was commended on its impressive breadth of work and demonstrable positive impact, providing clear contributions to the University's strategic priorities in meaningful and practical ways. The IAD's use of staff/student engagement rates alongside annual evaluative monitoring and enhancement provision to measure impact was noted as an area of good practice. IAD staff actively engage with external networks, professional bodies, and work with external experts to help bring expert knowledge and sectoral best practice into their offer wherever possible.

2.11 Registry Services

Registry Services was to be particularly commended on its highly impressive scale of activity, as well as its openness to new ways of working in response to emerging challenges, while continuing to work at scale. The strong collaborations and review mechanisms in place within Registry Services, especially those involving student representation groups, were noted as examples of excellent practice.

2.12 Report and Support

Report and Support was commended on its co-ordination and collaborative approach, which supports its commitment to swift turnarounds and being responsive to students. Commendable work has been undertaken in managing a large number of cases, reflecting dedication and efficiency, despite limited staff resources. The service's collaborative working, both internally and externally, was noted as an area of very strong practice which supports the service in staying informed on best practices and raising awareness of the service to students. The service holds regular awareness sessions for student societies and sports clubs, facilitated in collaboration with EUSA and EUSU, fostering a proactive outreach to help ensure student awareness of the Report and Support platform. Report and Support's external collaborations enable the service to stay informed on best practices, address evolving student concerns, and update platform language and resources effectively.

2.13 Sport and Exercise

Sport and Exercise was commended on its on its strategic partnerships, which have helped optimise processes and enhance services. Sports and Exercise clearly demonstrated their connectedness with other teams and it was particularly positive to note the impact of these connections through learning from, and acting on, benchmarking activities and outcomes. Despite growing demand for services, the service area has managed to deliver within their existing resources by optimising processes and leveraging new partnerships. Staff development via a number of excellent initiatives was also noted as an area of good practice which actively seek to address skills gaps. The commitment, innovation and depth in supporting staff development was commended.

2.14 Student Counselling Service (SCS)

The Student Counselling Service was particularly commended on its effective collaborative working, both internally with Schools, Colleges and other central service areas across the University. This was evident via staff involvement in case

conferences, Support for Study panels, continuous personal development of professional services staff involved in the new Student Support Model and co-delivery of Student Mental Health training for academic and student support staff. The Service's external collaborations, such as those with NHS Lothian and other HEIs, as well as its involvement in national / international networks to help facilitate benchmarking activity was also commended. Collaboration with four universities via the Reducing Digital Distraction project further demonstrated SCS's proactive approach to engaging externally in order to ensure that the University is involved in future developments across the sector. While SCS has experienced some turnover in counselling staff, creating some disruption in staff resource, it was commended in successfully mitigating against any resulting negative impact to students.

2.15 Student Recruitment and Admissions (SRA)

Student, Recruitment and Admissions was particularly commended on its strong ongoing commitment to, and sustained delivery of, training opportunities and complementary developmental activity for staff and student ambassadors. Capacity and capability for training provision has been significantly enhanced via targeted recruitment of roles tasked with implementing the training plan. This has seen improvement in the delivery of training to staff and student ambassadors, all of which aligns to the objective of enhancing student experience. SRA was commended on introducing adaptations to allow focus on priorities, such as re-routing resource away from UK PGT face-to-face recruitment in order to protect resource focussed on widening participation (WP) and international recruitment intakes. Work relating to the diversification of an on-campus student community to define market aims for recruitment, against a clear and measurable KPI was commended as inherently good practice, both for the student experience and for economic reasons to reduce reliance on a given dominant domicile.

2.16 Student Wellbeing Service

The Student Wellbeing Service was commended on its excellent student feedback and the successful integration of the new case management system was noted as an example of good practice which other service areas could learn from. SWS operates an effective triage system and all KPIs for triaging referrals, allocating cases and making initial contact with students within set timescales were met fully. This achievement was also commended.

2.17 Study and Work Away Service (SWAY)

The Study and Work Away Service was commended on its very high rate of feedback from students. SWAY's work post-Erasmus was commended, as was the recruitment, via Employ.ed, of a campus-based student intern to work on new projects such as creating a new sustainability guide for inbound visiting students and to provide a central resource in supporting new international students make more sustainable choices.

3. Themes arising from service reports

3.1 Commitment to staff development and strategic management of staff resources

The key theme across the reports was the current financial context, with Service Heads noting the challenges and constraints this has created in relation to staff resources and the subsequent need to manage this strategically. At the sub-committee meeting Service Heads and representatives discussed how adjustments could be made to ways of working while continuing to ensure the quality and consistency of service provision. A key concern was how to effectively manage student and staff expectations in the current financial context. It was noted that a University-wide, strategic approach to prioritising resources would be required in order to avoid ad hoc displacement of provision and services. Furthermore, any strategic decisions prioritising particular resources or services must be clearly and transparently communicated across the whole institution.

3.2 Student finances and employment opportunities

The review highlighted various examples of student employment opportunities provided by services that are helping to offset the ongoing financial challenges students currently face. At the sub-committee meeting Service Heads and representatives discussed how to identify and target opportunities for student employment, particularly for less financially privileged student groups such as carers and widening participation students. The intrinsic benefits to the services themselves was also noted, such as the fresh perspectives that staff gained on their work and student needs and the greater understanding that students gained of the context and pressures faced by the service. As noted above, the current financial climate poses a key challenge for services providing student employment opportunities given the increasing pressures on staff resource and time. However, increasing student employment opportunities was recognised as a key element for enhancing a sense of belonging and community.

3.3 The use of data and feedback in KPIs

Innovative approaches to using data and user feedback to embed and measure KPIs was evidenced in a number of reports evidenced. At the sub-committee meeting Service Heads and representatives discussed the user feedback that services should be seeking to help inform student-facing KPIs aimed at enhancing the student experience. A key challenge to gathering user feedback was the prevailing feeling that students are being over-surveyed which may be a key contributing factor to low response rates.

3.4 Collaborative working and effective partnerships

Strong practice around collaborative working and effective partnerships was evidenced in a number of reports evidenced, both internally with other areas across the University and external to the University. At the sub-committee meeting Service Heads and representatives discussed the intrinsic value of collaboration between services and academic areas to ensure a joined-up approach to the wider student experience. However, again as noted above, the current financial context means that there is limited capacity within services to initiate collaborative activities in a proactive manner with other services or local academic areas.

The University of Edinburgh
Senate Quality Assurance Committee

20 February 2025

**Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting:
Reporting Templates 2024/25**

Description of paper

1. Seeks approval of changes to the Programme, School, and College annual reporting templates for 2024/25.
2. Seeks agreement on the appropriate level of transparency/publication for School level reports.
3. Fit with remit:

Quality Assurance Committee	Y/N
Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.	Y
In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University's quality framework.	Y
Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice.	Y
Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business.	Y
Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.	Y
Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

4. To discuss/approve the proposed changes to the reporting templates and the appropriate level of transparency for the final reports.

Background and context

5. At the September 2024 meeting, the report of the annual monitoring sub group noted that the 2023/24 themed template had allowed for a more standardised approach to reporting while allowing Schools and Deaneries the scope to expand on specific local issues and activities.
6. Some specific areas for enhancement were identified:

- **Action Levels:** The templates should provide clearer guidance on identifying challenges at College and University level which can be amplified through SQAC.
- **Student voice feedback loop:** The templates should prompt Schools/Deaneries to update on actions taken in response to student feedback and approaches to closing the feedback loop.
- **Programme Level Monitoring:** The templates should require confirmation that programme-level monitoring has taken place and informed the School-level reports (to encourage a more standardised approach to programme reports and clustering).
- **Head of School Sign-off:** The templates should require Head of School/Deanery approval and sign-off before submission to Academic Quality and Standards.

Discussion

7. Following the suggested enhancements from the Committee discussion in September, the templates (see appendix – changes highlighted in red) include these proposed changes for the 2024/25 annual monitoring cycle:
8. **Programme template:**
 - Additional prompt included in section 3 to ask for detail of actions taken in response to issues identified from student feedback.
9. **School template:**
 - Additional box included on first page to ask Schools to confirm that programme level monitoring has taken place and informed the School-level report.
 - Additional box included on the first page to ask for confirmation that the Head of School has approved the report ahead of submission.
 - Additional prompt included in section 3 to ask for detail of actions taken in response to issues identified from student feedback.
 - Action levels – guidance in section 9 updated to emphasise requested action at College/University level which can be supported by SQAC.
10. **College template:**
 - No proposed changes.
11. **Institutional Priorities:**

It is proposed that the following institutional priority reporting boxes are maintained for 2024-25: **Assessment and Feedback; Student Voice; Student Support.**
12. **Industrial Action** (reporting on the impact) has been included in the templates as an institutional priority in recent years. However, the majority of reports in

2023/24 reported little to no impact and therefore it is proposed that this should not be included as a specific reporting box in the templates for 2024-25.

13. **Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)** was noted as a specific challenge across the 2023-24 annual monitoring reports and therefore it is proposed that it should be included as a specific institutional priority reporting box in the 2024-25 templates.

14. **Transparency/Publication**

Academic Quality and Standards (AQS) has received a number of requests for School level annual quality reports to be made available to staff and students across the University. In part, these requests seem to have been driven by an increasing demand to use GenAI to conduct bespoke analysis of QA data. This aligns with a long-term aim of AQS to make the rich repository of data produced by the University's QA processes more widely available and thereby demonstrate their intrinsic value. It also aligns with the underlying ethos of the new TQEF which aims to encourage greater transparency. To allow this to happen we need to be clear with the authors at the outset that their reports will be public documents. However, a move towards greater transparency may result in more cautious and less candid or insightful reports.

SQAC is invited to discuss the issue and agree a position ahead of the commencement of the 2024-25 annual monitoring process.

Resource implications

15. The changes are relatively minor and focused on supporting colleagues completing the current reporting templates and making greater use of the data contained within the reports.

Risk management

16. There are risks associated with ineffective monitoring, review and reporting. There are also risks associated with making the data within the reports more widely available.

Equality & diversity

17. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the normal process. The templates encourage reflection on key institutional reporting priorities and demographic data is available on these in PowerBI.

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

18. Academic Quality and Standards will work with College Deans of Quality and College quality contacts to continue to communicate with colleagues in key roles at appropriate times. The 2024-25 annual monitoring process (including the templates) will be a key item on the agenda (along with the new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework) at the next meeting of the Directors of Quality Network on Thursday 3 April 2025.

Authors

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Academic Quality and Standards

Presenter

Brian Connolly and Sinead Docherty
Academic Quality and Standards

February 2025

Freedom of Information

Open

Programme/Programme Cluster Annual Report 2024/25

All programmes, **taught** and **research**, must be monitored annually and reports provided to the School Director of Quality in time to inform the preparation of the School Annual Quality Report (due in late August each year).¹

Scope: Your School/Deanery will decide on the optimum clustering of programmes to enable effective reflection whilst avoiding duplication of effort. Your report should cover all credit-bearing provision, including collaborative and credit-bearing continuing professional development (CPD) provision (where applicable).

Length: Your report should be brief (see word count guidance in each reporting box) and use bullet points where possible.

Data: Your report should include reflection on relevant data available via the following links (also see data guidance in each reporting box):

- [Data to Support Annual Quality Processes](#)
- [Data Insights Hub](#)
- [Data Help Videos](#)
- [Student Analytics, Insights & Modelling](#)

Please note that reports should not contain information which identifies any individual – [Data Protection Policy](#)

Deadline: To be determined by your School/Deanery.

Programme(s):	
Report written by (include contributors):	
Date of report:	

1. Actions from the previous year.

Please report on progress with the actions you identified in last year's report and planned to take in 2024-25.

Guidance for UG/PGT/PGR:

Your answer should refer to last year's report. If there are no actions on which to report, please explain why.

(100-200 words)

¹ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/annualmonrevreppolicy.pdf>

2. Institutional Priority: Assessment and Feedback

Please report on activities to align existing practice with the [Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities](#).

Guidance for UG/PGT:

You should include evidence of how you have taken action to ensure that the [Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities](#) are fully implemented, and that feedback turnaround times and quality are monitored effectively. Answers to the following questions should be included:

- What changes have you made to assessments to bring them in line with the Principles and Priorities? What changes are still needed and what is the timeframe for these?
- What is your rate of return within the three-week turnaround for semester 2, 2024-25, and what steps are you taking to improve this in 2025-26?
- What strategies do you have to ensure quality of feedback? How do students rate your feedback?
- What steps have you taken to address assessment challenges (e.g. over-assessment)? What changes are still needed and what is the timeframe for these?

Your answer could include reference to Subject-Area Learning and Teaching meetings, including Programme- or Subject Area-level review and development of assessment and feedback practices. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data.

(150-250 words)

Guidance for PGR:

Not applicable.

3. Institutional Priority: Student Voice

Please report on the approach and effectiveness of student voice activities in line with the [Student Voice Policy](#).

Guidance for UG/PGT:

You should include answers to the following questions:

- What opportunities do you provide to your students to enable them to feed in to the learning and teaching process and how have you made students aware of these opportunities?
- What methods do you use to close the feedback loop to your students (e.g. 'you asked, we did')?

Your answer should include analysis of data from student surveys ([NSS](#), [PTES](#)), SSLC meeting minutes and course feedback. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data. **Please also include details of actions taken in response to issues identified from student feedback.**

(150-250 words)

Guidance for PGR:

Your answer should include analysis of data from student surveys ([PRES](#)) and SSLC meeting minutes. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data. **Please also include details of actions taken in response to issues identified from student feedback.**

(150-250 words)

4. Institutional Priority: Student Support

Please report on the effectiveness of student support arrangements.

Guidance for UG/PGT:

Your answer should include evidence of how your programme(s) aligned with the University's new Student Support model from September 2023, in terms of academic guidance and student support.

Your answer should include analysis of data from student surveys ([NSS](#), [PTES](#)), SSLC meeting minutes, and course feedback. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data.

(150-250 words)

Guidance for PGR:

Your answer should include evidence of the effectiveness of academic PGR student support arrangements (such as supervisor training, induction and training for annual reviews and vivas, support with career development/employability) and the approach to the wider PGR student experience (specifically in relation to community building, student satisfaction and possible differences between on-campus and online students).

Your answer should include analysis of data from student surveys ([PRES](#)) and SSLC meeting minutes. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data.

(150-250 words)

5. Institutional Priority: Industrial Action

~~Has the industrial action impacted the quality of provision and student experience, and, if so, how this has been mitigated?~~

Guidance for UG/PGT/PGR:

~~Your answer should include analysis of data from student surveys ([NSS](#), [PTES](#), [PRES](#)), SSLC meeting minutes, course feedback, external examiner reports, and progression/performance data or annual progress reviews/vivas.~~

~~*(100-200 words)*~~

5. Institutional Priority: Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Please report on any activities or initiatives focused on integrating or adapting to GenAI in learning, teaching, and assessment.

Guidance for UG/PGT/PGR:

Your answer should include activities to align existing practice with the University's Generative AI Guidance for [Staff](#) and [Students](#). Please highlight any innovations in learning, teaching and assessment as a result of GenAI, or changes to practice as a result.

(100-200 words)

6. Student Outcomes

Please report on student assessment, progression and performance data for your programme(s).

Guidance for UG/PGT:

Your answer should include analysis of assessment, progression and degree outcomes on your programme(s) and factors that might have impacted on them either positively or negatively (other than Industrial Action – see question 5).

Your answer should include specific analysis of any differences in attainment for different student demographic groups on your programme(s). Where data sets are small, and therefore individuals could be identified (see [Data Protection Policy](#)), please conduct analysis at subject or school level as appropriate.

Your answer should include analysis of [progression/performance data](#) as well as student surveys ([NSS](#), [PTES](#)), SSLC meeting minutes and course feedback. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data.

(100-200 words)

Guidance for PGR:

Your answer should include analysis of outcomes of annual reviews (e.g., what % have repeat reviews or are downgraded), time to completion, completion rates and degree outcomes on your programme(s) and factors that might have impacted on them either positively or negatively (other than Industrial Action – see question 5).

Your answer should include specific analysis of any differences in attainment for different student demographic groups on your programme(s).

Your answer should analysis of data on annual reviews and completion as well as student surveys ([PRES](#)) and SSLC meeting minutes. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data.

(100-200 words)

7. What has worked well this past year?

Please give specific examples of good practice for sharing across your School/Deanery and beyond.

Guidance for UG/PGT/PGR:

Your answer should highlight particularly innovative or creative practice within your programme(s).

(100-200 words)

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8. What could have worked better/requires further development?

Please identify any areas for improvement as well as any challenges or barriers.

Guidance for UG/PGT/PGR:

Your answer could include areas for further development within your programme(s) or at School, College or University level.

(100-200 words)

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9. Please use this free text space if there is anything you would like to reflect on or highlight that has not been addressed elsewhere in the report.

(100-200 words)

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10. Actions for the coming year.

Please identify actions you intend to take during the next year (up to 5 bullet points).

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School/Deanery Annual Report 2024/25

The University is responsible for its academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. The School/Deanery Annual Report is a key part of the University's commitment to reflecting on and systematically reviewing its provision and taking action to enhance it.¹

Scope: Your report should cover all credit-bearing provision, including collaborative and credit-bearing continuing professional development (CPD) provision (where applicable).

Length: Your report should be brief (see word count guidance in each reporting box) and use bullet points where possible.

Contributors: Your report should include input and contributions from colleagues across your School/Deanery.

Data: Your report should include reflection on relevant data available via the following links (also see data guidance in each reporting box):

- [Data to Support Annual Quality Processes](#)
- [Data Insights Hub](#)
- [Data Help Videos](#)
- [Student Analytics, Insights & Modelling](#)

Please note that reports should not contain information which identifies any individual – [Data Protection Policy](#)

Deadline: Monday 18 August 2025

School/Deanery:	
Report written by (include contributors):	
Confirmation that programme level monitoring has taken place and has informed the School/Deanery report:	
Confirmation that the Head of School/Deanery has approved the report:	
Date of report:	

¹ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/annualmonrevreppolicy.pdf>

1. Actions from the previous year.

Please report on progress with the actions you identified in last year's report and planned to take in 2024-25.

Guidance:

Your answer should make reference to last year's report (see Aide Memoire from Academic Services). If there are no actions on which to report, please explain why.

(100-200 words)

2. Institutional Priority: Assessment and Feedback

Please report on activities to align existing practice with the [Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities](#).

Guidance:

You should include evidence of how you have taken action to ensure that the [Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities](#) are fully implemented, and that feedback turnaround times and quality are monitored effectively. Answers to the following questions should be included:

- What changes have you made to assessments to bring them in line with the Principles and Priorities? What changes are still needed and what is the timeframe for these?
- What is your rate of return within the three-week turnaround for semester 2, 2024-25, and what steps are you taking to improve this in 2025-26?
- What strategies do you have as a School/Deanery to ensure quality of feedback? How do students rate feedback in your school?
- What steps have you taken to address assessment challenges (e.g. over-assessment)? What changes are still needed and what is the timeframe for these?

Your answer should include analysis of data from student surveys ([NSS](#), [PTES](#)), School/Deanery Education Committee and Board of Studies minutes and annual programme reviews. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data.

(150-250 words)

3. Institutional Priority: Student Voice

Please report on the approach and effectiveness of student voice activities in line with the [Student Voice Policy](#).

Guidance:

Answers to the following questions should be included:

- What opportunities do you provide to your students to enable them to feed in to the learning and teaching process and how have you made students aware of these opportunities?
- What methods do you use to close the feedback loop to your students (e.g. 'you asked, we did')?

Your answer should include analysis of data from student surveys ([NSS](#), [PTES](#), [PRES](#)), School/Deanery annual programme reviews, course feedback and SSLC meeting minutes. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data. **Please also include details of actions taken in response to issues identified from student feedback.**

(150-250 words)

4. Institutional Priority: Student Support

Please report on the effectiveness of student support arrangements.

Guidance:

Your answer should include evidence of how your School/Deanery implemented the University's new Student Support Model from September 2023, in terms of academic guidance and student support.

Your answer should include analysis of data from student surveys ([NSS](#), [PTES](#)), School/Deanery annual programme reviews, course feedback and SSLC meeting minutes. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data.

(150-250 words)

5. Institutional Priority: Industrial Action

Has the industrial action impacted the quality of provision and student experience, and, if so, how this has been mitigated?

Guidance:

Your answer should include analysis of data from student surveys (NSS, PTES, PRES), School/Deanery annual programme reviews, course feedback, SSLC meeting minutes, external examiner reports, and progression/performance data or annual progress reviews/vivas.

(100-200 words)

5. Institutional Priority: Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Please report on any activities or initiatives focused on integrating or adapting to GenAI in learning, teaching, and assessment.

Guidance:

Your answer should include activities to align existing practice with the University's Generative AI Guidance for Staff and Students. Please highlight any innovations in learning, teaching and assessment as a result of GenAI, or changes to practice as a result.

(100-200 words)

6. Student Outcomes

Please reflect on student assessment, progression and performance data for your School/Deanery.

Guidance:

Your answer should include analysis of assessment, progression and degree outcomes on your programme(s) and factors that might have impacted on them either positively or negatively (other than Industrial Action – see question 5).

Your answer should include specific analysis of any differences in attainment for different student demographic groups on your programme(s).

Your answer should include analysis of [progression/performance data](#) as well as student surveys ([NSS](#), [PTES](#)), SSLC meeting minutes and course feedback. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data.

For PGR Student Outcomes please see Question 7.

(100-200 words)

7. Postgraduate research (PGR) provision

Please report on the effectiveness of your arrangements for supporting PGR students.

Guidance:

You should include answers to the following questions:

- What is the average time to completion and the completion rates in your School/Deanery? What percentage of students have repeat reviews or are downgraded? What factors might have impacted student outcomes either positively or negatively (other than Industrial Action – see question 5)? Your answer should include specific reflection on any differences in attainment for different student demographic groups on your programme(s).
- **What percentage of the postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach in your School/Deanery have been trained before engaging in teaching activities? What system does the School/Deanery have in place to monitor this training and what changes are still needed to ensure that all PGRs who teach are systematically trained and fully supported?**
- What support does your School/Deanery have in place for PGR students (such as supervisor training, induction and training for annual reviews and vivas, support with career development/employability)?
- What approach does your School/Deanery take to the wider PGR student experience specifically in relation to community building, student satisfaction (including contributing factors such as resources/facilities), and possible differences between on-campus and online students?

Your answers should include analysis of data from student surveys ([PRES](#)), School/Deanery annual programme reviews, course feedback, SSLC meeting minutes, annual progress reviews/vivas and completion rates. Where possible, compare this year's data with previous years' data.

(150-250 words)

8. What has worked well this past year?

Please give specific examples of good practice for sharing across the University.

Guidance:

Your answer should highlight particularly innovative or creative practice within your School/Deanery.

(100-200 words)

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9. What could have worked better/requires further development?

Please identify any areas for improvement as well as any challenges or barriers.

Guidance:

~~Your answer could include areas for further development within your School/Deanery or at College or University level.~~

Your answer should specify the particular level of the University where you think further development is required:

- School/Deanery level
- College level
- University level

(100-200 words)

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10. Please use this free text space if there is anything you would like to reflect on or highlight that has not been addressed elsewhere in the report.

(100-200 words)

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11. Actions for the coming year.

Please identify actions for your School/Deanery during the next year (up to 5 bullet points).

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College Annual Report 2024/25

The University is responsible for its academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. The College Annual Report is a key part of the University's commitment to reflecting on and systematically reviewing its provision and taking action to enhance it.¹

Scope: Your report should cover all credit-bearing provision, including collaborative and credit-bearing continuing professional development (CPD) provision (where applicable).

Length: Your report should be brief (see word count guidance in each reporting box) and use bullet points where possible.

Contributors: Your report should include input and contributions from colleagues across your College.

Data: Your report should include reflection on relevant data available via the following links:

- [Data to Support Annual Quality Processes](#)
- [Data Insights Hub](#)
- [Data Help Videos](#)
- [Student Analytics, Insights & Modelling](#)

Please note that reports should not contain information which identifies any individual – [Data Protection Policy](#)

Deadline: Monday 24 November 2025

School/Deanery:	
Report written by (include contributors):	
Date of report:	

1. Actions from the previous year.

Please report on progress with the actions you identified in last year's report and planned to take in 2024-25.

¹ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/annualmonrevreppolicy.pdf>

2. Please use this free text space as an opportunity for general reflection on the past year.

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3. Actions for the coming year.

Please identify actions or areas for improvement for the College and at University level during the next year (up to 5 bullet points each).

Actions identified for the College:

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Actions requested of the University:

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Senate Quality Assurance Committee

20 February 2025

Internal Periodic Review: University Standard Remit

Description of paper

1. Proposes updates to the University's standard remit for internal periodic reviews to align with the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework. The paper does not specifically contribute to Strategy 2030 outcomes as it is fulfilling an external regulatory requirement.

Fit with remit

Quality Assurance Committee	Y/N
Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.	Y
Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. For discussion and approval of proposed changes.

Background and context

3. The University is required to undertake institution led reviews (Internal Periodic Review) by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education as set out in the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework](#) (referred to as 'the Framework' in this paper). A report on internal review activity is included each year in the annual report to the SFC. The Framework came into effect in 2024/25 and Academic Quality and Standards has reviewed the Internal Periodic Review process to ensure alignment.

Discussion

4. The University has a well-established process for internal quality reviews which is currently well aligned with the Framework. However, the introduction of the new Framework presents an opportunity to refocus and enhance the University remit for reviews to include more emphasis on how data is used as evidence to support change, and student partnership activity, features of the Framework which are new or are more prominent than was previously the case.
5. The Principles that underpin the Framework are: Excellence in Learning and Teaching; Supporting student success; Enhancement and quality culture, Student engagement and partnership; with Externality, and data and evidence spanning the Principles.
6. **Key proposed changes:**
The proposed changes do not significantly alter the content of the University standard remit for internal periodic reviews, nor what reviews will cover. Rather

there is a slight shift in emphasis, particularly in relation to the change from student voice to student partnership. This also reflects the developing approach across the University towards student partnership and co-creation which is broader than “listening and responding to the student voice”.

- Introduction paragraph 2:
Reworded to reflect that the Framework covers all credit and non-credit bearing provision within the scope of the review (with specific non-credit provision listed in the remit).

Additional bullet point of postgraduate supervision under scope of reviews. This has always been an element of internal review but the addition clarifies the expectations as set out in the Framework.

- Introduction paragraph 3:
Addition of use of data to align with the Framework emphasis on this aspect of internal review. Data use as evidence supporting decision-making and in choosing subject specific remit items is already a feature of the process and the proposed additional wording is intended to emphasise this aspect. Student partnership is also added here to align with this focus in the Framework.
- Section 1, Strategic Overview:
Additional bullet point of involving students as partners to better align with Framework emphasis on this aspect.
- Section 2:
Title updated to “Excellence in learning, teaching and assessment” to align with Framework principles.

Updated “Supporting students in their learning” to “Supporting student success” to align with Framework principles. This expands the focus beyond learning to include, for example, student wellbeing, inclusion and transitions among other topics outlined in the Framework. This does not alter what will be considered as part of internal reviews.

Additional sub-heading of “Student engagement and partnership” to align with Framework principles.

Addition of student partnership and co-creation to expand upon student voice. This aligns with the Framework focus on students as partners and with emerging activity across the University. The suggested change is intended to refocus this aspect of reviews on the more active engagement of students in their learning experience; more than simply a dialogue as

implied by 'Listening and responding to the student voice' in the previous iteration.

Updated bullet point from "Accessibility, Inclusion and Widening Participation" to "Equality, Diversity and Inclusion" to align with the Framework and current terminology in this area.

- Section 3:
Title updated to "Enhancement and quality culture" to align with Framework principles. This is a section title change and does not alter the content of this aspect of internal review.

New sub-heading "Externality" added to emphasise the Framework's focus on this aspect. This does not alter what will be considered as part of internal reviews.

7. The full remit document with changes highlighted is attached as Appendix 1.
8. Academic Quality and Standards will update the IPR Reflective Report template and guidance to include more detail on what should be included in each section of the Report once changes to the University remit are agreed by the Committee.

Resource implications

9. Implementation of the revised IPR standard remit will be taken forward as part of Academic Quality and Standards' core business.

Risk management

10. There is an institutional risk in relation to compliance if the University's processes are not aligned with external requirements. The University's Risk Management Policy and Risk Appetite states it is risk averse to compliance risks.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

11. The paper does not contribute to the climate emergency and sustainable development goals. It is fulfilling an external regulatory requirement.

Equality & diversity

12. Academic Quality and Standards has not identified any equality impacts in relation to the proposed changes. The updated wording of "Equality, diversity and inclusion" in Section 2 of the remit emphasises that these aspects are a standard part of the IPR process.

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

13. Academic Quality and Standards will communicate and implement any changes, and evaluate the impact of these as part of its annual review of internal periodic review processes.

Author

Susan Hunter, Academic Quality and Standards
February 2025

Presenter

Brian Connolly, Academic Quality and Standards

Freedom of Information: The paper is open.

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact academic.quality@ed.ac.uk or Academic Quality and Standards, Old College, South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH8 9YL.

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

University Remit

The University remit provides consistent coverage of key elements across all of the University's internal reviews (undergraduate and postgraduate).

It covers all credit and non-credit bearing provision within the scope of the review, including:

- Provision delivered in collaboration with others
- Transnational education
- Work-based provision and placements
- Online and distance learning
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Supervision of postgraduate research students
- Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD)
- Provision which provides only small volumes of credit
- Joint/Dual Degrees
- Massive Open Online Courses MOOCs ~~(even if non-credit bearing)~~

Under each of the headings, the Reflective Report should highlight data used as evidence for change/reflections/IPR remit item proposals, student engagement and any student partnership activity, areas of good practice as well as areas for further development and action planned.

1. Strategic overview

The strategic approach to:

- The management and resourcing of learning and teaching experience;
- The forward direction and the structures in place to support this;
- Developing business cases for new programmes and courses;
- Managing and reviewing its portfolio;
- Closing courses and programmes
- Involving students as partners;

2. ~~Enhancing the Student Experience~~Excellence in learning and teaching

The approach to and effectiveness of:

- Supporting ~~students in their learning~~student success
- Student engagement and partnership:
 - Involving students as partners/co-creation activity
 - Listening to and responding to the ~~s~~Student ~~v~~oice
- Learning and Teaching
- Assessment and Feedback
- ~~Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation~~Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Learning environment (physical and virtual)
- Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes
- Supporting and developing staff

3. ~~Assurance and Enhancement of provision and quality culture~~

The approach to and effectiveness of maintaining and enhancing academic standards and quality of provision in alignment with the University Quality Framework:

- Admissions and Recruitment
- Assessment, Progression and Achievement

- Programme and Course approval
- Annual Monitoring, Review and Reporting
- Operation of Boards of Studies, Exam Boards, Exceptional Circumstances
- **Externality:**
 - External Examining, themes and actions taken
 - Alignment with SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) level, relevant benchmark statements, UK Quality Code
 - Accreditation and Collaborative activity and relationship with Professional/Accrediting bodies (if applicable)

September 2024 February 2025

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

20th February 2025

Committee Priorities – Mid-Year Reflection

Description of paper

1. The paper asks the Committee to reflect mid-year on progress with committee priorities. The outcomes of the discussion will be included in the next update on standing committee business to Senate and will inform the Committee’s work on the priorities for the remainder of the academic year.

Fit with remit:

Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University’s quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.	Y
In partnership with Edinburgh University Students’ Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University’s quality framework.	Y
Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice.	Y
Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University’s activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business.	Y
Support the University’s engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.	Y
Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee’s work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

2. The Committee is asked to **comment** on progress with the committee priorities for 2024/25 in order to inform area(s) of focus and/or actions/outcomes for the remainder of the academic year as appropriate.

Background and context

3. The Committee identified its priorities for the next academic year in May 2025 and these were presented to Senate in May, June and October 2024 as part of the Annual Report of the Senate Standing Committees.

Committee priorities 2025/26

4. A paper will be presented for discussion at the April meeting of the Committee in order to agree the priorities for 2025/26. The following will be taken into consideration when proposing priorities across the Standing Committees:
- Committee remit
 - Feedback from Senate and other Standing Committees
 - University strategic priorities
 - External and regulatory requirements
 - Outcomes of quality processes, including external review

Discussion

5. Responding to 2023 Quality Enhancement & Standards Review (QESR)

The recommendations of the [QESR](#) require institutional focus and progress in several areas. In response, there has been a range of activities to drive progress throughout the University against the recommendations:

- i) Assessment & Feedback (turnaround times and quality of feedback)
- ii) Implementation of the Tutors & Demonstrators training policy
- iii) Promotion of academic staff based on teaching
- iv) Learning & Teaching Strategy
- v) Attainment gap monitoring
- vi) Pace of change: make progress on recommendations from external reviews which can be evidenced in the next academic year.

Through the annual monitoring process (School quality reports were considered by the Committee in **September 2024**), Schools were asked to report on their activities to implement and align with the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities. This included providing data to evidence their rate of return within the three-week turnaround timeframe. The Assessment & Feedback Strategy Group, which reports to both Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) and Senate Education Committee (SEC), is overseeing this priority area of work.

In their reflections on postgraduate research (PGR) provision and experience, Schools were also asked to report on their provision of training to PGR students who teach, and their mechanisms for monitoring this training. These responses were collated and shared with the University PGR lead, who is overseeing work in relation to training.

For 2023/24, the annual quality report template included reference to student outcomes and progression, and as a result there was greater focus in the responses provided by Schools. Many Schools used the available data to reflect on their students' outcomes, and some areas identified awarding gaps. This area of work is being taken forward by the Student Data Monitoring Task Group, which is a subgroup of SQAC. More detail is provided in the relevant section below.

Drafting and consultation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy has been managed through SEC over the last year. In November 2024, SEC were presented with a revised draft of the strategy following consultation with Heads of Schools and other

key areas who fed in to the creation of the strategy. An implementation plan was provided alongside the strategy in order to communicate how the strategy should be embedded and who is responsible at different levels. The Learning and Teaching Strategy will be presented to SQAC for information once it has been approved by SEC.

6. *Responding to the outcome of the Scottish Funding Council's Tertiary Quality Review*

Following the introduction of Scotland's [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#), a new institutional annual quality reporting process to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has been implemented from 2024/25, the Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP). The SEAP replaces both the previous annual quality reporting process and the learning and quality aspects of the Outcome Agreement process. The SEAP is intended to be a live document that can be revisited and updated throughout the academic year. A key aim of the process is to demonstrate to staff and students how their contribution to the activities that impact the quality assurance and enhancement of learning, teaching and the student experience are collated and used to document and drive strategic enhancement within the institution.

The University's 2024-25 SEAP has been produced in accordance with the SFC [Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities 2024-25 to 2030-31](#) which outlines the key elements of the TQEF. The SFC has stipulated that a new approval and sign-off process must be implemented for the SEAP to ensure that the Accountable Officer is sighted on, and has ownership of, the quality of the student experience, academic standards and academic integrity. Only once the Accountable Officer is satisfied with the thoroughness and effectiveness of the evaluation and action-plan should it be submitted to SFC. As student partnership is a key aspect of the TQEF, we also included a Statement of Partnership (not a SFC requirement) to demonstrate that the SEAP has been produced in partnership with the Students' Association and reflects the interests and priorities of students. The SEAP was co-signed by the Principal and Vice President Education and before it was submitted to the SFC on 2 December 2024. It was also shared with SQAC for information at the **December 2024** meeting.

While it is not a requirement that the SEAP be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body prior to submission, the SEAP should be shared with the Governing Body to support their oversight of quality assurance and enhancement. To this end, the SEAP will be presented to University Court for information at the meeting held on 24 February 2025.

The SEAP will be used as part of the evidence base for the new institutional quality review process, the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review \(TQER\)](#), and to monitor institutional progress with the outcomes of the TQER and support the annual institutional liaison meetings with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). In a verbal update at the **December 2024** meeting, the Committee was informed that the new

TQER schedule has been confirmed by the SFC and that the University will be reviewed in 2027/28.

[Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme \(STEP\)](#), the new national enhancement programme for Scotland's colleges and universities, is another key element of the TQEF. STEP is a sector-owned programme of activity supporting enhancement across the tertiary sector in Scotland. The programme is jointly managed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and College Development Network (CDN) with each college and university in Scotland receiving £3000 of funding to support engagement with STEP. The current STEP topic is 'Supporting Diverse Learner Journeys' and representatives of the University (SQAC members) have participated in the first two STEP Network events (held in Stirling in December and Inverness in January). Two further Network events (in Glasgow and Dundee) are due to be held in the 2024-25 during this 'Discovery' phase of STEP, which will see the establishment of collaborative partnerships and projects that will form the core of the programme.

Existing quality processes, including Internal Periodic Reviews and Annual Monitoring, remain in place and in line with the requirements of the TQEF. At the **February 2025** meeting SQAC will be invited to discuss and approve minor changes to the University standard remit for IPRs to reflect a slight shift in emphasis and terminology required by the TQEF, particularly in relation to the change from 'student voice' to 'student partnership'. Further minor changes to the University's QA guidance and policy documents will be considered at the April 2025 meeting.

7. Evaluation and monitoring of the implementation and effectiveness of the new student support model (SSM)

In **September 2024**, SQAC reviewed the themes arising from student support responses provided by Schools in their annual quality reports. The reports indicated that the Student Advisor role was highly valued within Schools and these colleagues had made a significant impact in the success of the Student Support model. The responses indicated that students value reliability and consistency as key aspects of student support provision and staff appreciated the professional support that was available to students.

In relation to the Cohort Lead role, the reports highlighted demand for enhanced central guidance on how to deploy the role and design events to best engage with students. There were student support challenges reported for students on joint programmes, with Schools concerned about gaps or inconsistency in the student experience.

This School level insight, along with examples of particular good practice, were referred to the Student Support Continuous Improvement Group (SSCIG) for response to SQAC at the end of academic year 2024/25.

8. Student Data Monitoring

A Student Data Monitoring task group has been set up under SQAC with a remit to explore methodological options and make recommendations to SQAC for a more systematic approach to monitoring student data at University level. The group comprises members of SQAC and colleagues with specific expertise drawn from across the University.

Through its oversight of established quality processes, SQAC has identified priority areas of focus for the group. In a verbal update at the **December 2024** meeting, the Committee was updated on the first two meetings of the Group and the workstreams underdevelopment: one focussed on data collection and systems and the other focussed on sector activity and approaches to closing gaps.

9. Additional priority accepted by Senate via the amendment process in October 2024:

Enhance Senate understanding of arrangements and effectiveness for quality assurance regarding internal systems and change processes

In **December 2024**, the Committee were presented with the Learn Ultra Evaluation report and asked to review the summary and consider how the recommendations for future change projects can be most usefully embedded. Discussion of this item addressed the importance of engagement and consultation throughout large change projects and the value of evaluation work informing the approach to other University projects. Training and local support were identified as areas that are crucial in large change projects.

10. Additional priorities for all standing committees accepted by Senate via the amendment process in October 2024

Senate notes that committees currently undertake a combination of operational and governance activities, and sets the following supplemental priorities for all committees:

- i. With the Task and Finish group, identify opportunities to clarify the relationship between operations and governance so that Senate committees are ultimately supporting Senate's governance role with operations led by appropriate role-holders and executive or management committees. This should include working toward a draft delegation schedule for Senate approval.***
- ii. Build capacity in Senate to understand and to scrutinise academic policy, strategy, and external compliance activities related to the committee's remit.***

These priorities align with work underway as part of the response to recommendations and suggestions from the external review of Senate. The Task and Finish Group have received a discussion paper in November 24 and an update

in January 25. Senate received an update in December 24 and will receive an options paper for discussion in February 25.

Senate tasks SEC, SQAC, and APRC to evaluate from their respective remits the current situation and proposed alternatives for regulations and approaches for examination formats, with particular attention to resit examinations, and to bring any proposals for policy or strategy revisions to examinations and resits for the full Senate's consideration and approval.

At October Senate, the Vice-Principal Students explained that analysis of institutional data on assessment and of sectoral benchmarking was underway. A paper would be produced for initial consideration by the Senate standing committees, and that the final paper and any recommendations arising would be presented to Senate for consideration and approval.

Resource implications

11. This paper does not propose any actions. The resource implications of any actions which arise from the discussion would need to be outlined and considered.

Risk management

12. Progress against priorities is vital to the Committee fulfilling its remit. Failure to fulfil its remit raises potential risks associated with the University's framework of academic policy and regulations, the student experience and external quality requirements.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

13. This paper does not respond to the climate emergency or contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Equality & diversity

14. This paper does not propose any actions. The equality and diversity implications any actions which arise from the discussion would need to be outlined and considered.

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

15. The outcomes of the discussion will be reported to Senate in May 2025 as part of the update on standing committee business. Additionally, the Senate Committees' Newsletter provides information on standing committee business.

Author

Academic Quality and Standards

Presenter

Brian Connolly and Tina Harrison

Freedom of Information Open

Senate Quality Assurance Committee

20 February 2024

Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP)

Description of paper

The University's annual report to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on activities to effectively manage quality assurance and deliver on enhancement.

The report is a regulatory requirement.

Fit with remit

Quality Assurance Committee	Y/N
Oversee the delivery and enhancement of the University's quality assurance framework, ensuring that it meets external requirements.	Y
In partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure effective student engagement and representation of student voices in the University's quality framework.	Y
Maintain oversight of the outcomes of the quality assurance framework, ensuring that actions are addressed, and support the sharing of good practice. Promote the quality assurance framework as an important part of the University's activities and ensure that the outcomes inform relevant University business.	Y
Support the University's engagement with external quality requirements and activities, including: Enhancement-Led Institutional Review, the UK Quality Code, and responses to consultations and initiatives.	Y
Identify areas for innovation and enhancement of the student experience and ensure that these inform Senate Education Committee's policy development.	Y
Consider the implications of the Committee's work and its decisions in the context of external initiatives and compliance and legal frameworks, particularly in relation to equality and diversity.	Y
In relation to academic collaborations with partner institutions: maintain oversight of development, approval, monitoring and review / renewal processes; receive annual reports on activity and identify any areas where action is required to maintain academic standards and the quality of the student experience.	Y

Action requested / recommendation

1. For information.

Background and context

2. A new institutional annual quality reporting process to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has been implemented from 2024/25, the Self-Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP). The SEAP replaces both the previous annual quality reporting process and the learning and quality aspects of the Outcome Agreement process.
3. The SEAP has been produced in accordance with the SFC [Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities 2024-25 to 2030-31](#) which outlines the key elements of Scotland's new [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#). It will be used as part of the evidence base for the new institutional quality review process, the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review \(TQER\)](#), and to monitor institutional progress with the outcomes of the TQER and support the annual institutional liaison meetings with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).
4. The report is divided into two sections: Self-Evaluation 2023-24 (reflecting on annual institutional quality assurance and enhancement activities and outcomes, including progress made since the last external review) and Action Plan 2024 - 2025 (a consolidation of the planned institution level enhancement activities arising from the self-evaluation). It is a concise, high-level summary of themes discussed and associated actions taken by various groups and committees across the institution, and as such is drawn from existing reports and papers and updates from relevant stakeholders.
5. The SEAP is intended to be a live document that can be revisited and updated throughout the academic year. A key aim of the process is to demonstrate to staff and students how their contribution to the activities that impact the quality assurance and enhancement of learning, teaching and the student experience are collated and used to document and drive strategic enhancement within the institution.
6. The SFC has stipulated that a new approval and sign-off process must be implemented for the SEAP to ensure that the Accountable Officer is sighted on, and has ownership of, the quality of the student experience, academic standards and academic integrity. Only once the Accountable Officer is satisfied with the thoroughness and effectiveness of the evaluation and action-plan should it be submitted to SFC. It is not a requirement that the SEAP be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body prior to submission, however the SEAP should be shared with the Governing Body to support their oversight of quality assurance and enhancement.

7. Student partnership is a key aspect of the TQEF, and therefore we have included a Statement of Partnership (not a SFC requirement) which the Vice President Education co-sign in order to demonstrate that the SEAP has been produced in partnership with the Students' Association and reflects the interests and priorities of students. We will continue to work together with the Students' Association to engage students as partners on an ongoing basis in the preparation of the annual SEAP and in the monitoring of the implementation of the actions.
8. The SEAP was co-signed by the Principal and Vice President Education before it was submitted to the SFC on 2 December 2024.
9. The SEAP was presented to the December meeting of SQAC but was not discussed in the meeting due to time constraints. It has been carried over to be on the agenda of this February meeting.

Discussion

10. The report is relevant to the Committee's responsibility for the quality assurance framework and is attached.

Resource implications

11. There are no specific resource implications associated with the report.

Risk management

12. The provision of a high quality student experience is a high level risk on the University's Strategic Risk Register, and is overseen by the Risk Management Committee reporting to Audit & Risk Committee and Court. Additionally, failure in effectiveness of the quality assurance framework, including aligning review activity with external expectations and taking action on findings, constitutes an institutional risk.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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

Equality & diversity

14. Quality assurance policies and processes are subject to Equality Impact Assessment.

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

15. The SEAP will be submitted to University Court for information at the meeting on 24 February 2025.

Authors

Professor Tina Harrison (Convener)

Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement)

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Presenter

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Freedom of Information

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Self-Evaluation and Action Plan

University of Edinburgh

Self-Evaluation 2023-24

1. Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Curriculum Transformation Programme

This is a major long-term initiative for the University, closely aligned with the University Strategy 2030, to review the shape, design and delivery of our curriculum to ensure it develops with the needs of our future students. Significant progress has been made during Academic Year (AY) 2023/24. A Full Business Case for the Taught Postgraduate element of Curriculum Transformation has been approved for the next four years. This covers a two-year transitional phase where work will be undertaken to prepare the necessary regulatory, process and system enablers ready for the roll out of a new Taught Postgraduate Curriculum Framework in AY 2026/27 and a secondary roll out in AY 2027/28. The framework has been designed to be adaptable and responsive, able to accommodate a diverse range of provision and the requirements of a different educational contexts and purposes, domestic and international demand for postgraduate study and lifelong learning, including stand-alone courses, collections of courses, Certificates, Diplomas and Masters programmes through multiple and flexible modes of study (on-campus, online; full time, part time, stackable). An Outline Business Case has been approved for the Undergraduate element of Curriculum Transformation. This will enable the completion of work on the design and approval of a new Undergraduate Curriculum Framework and in-depth analysis and testing of associated regulatory, process and system changes. The Outline Business Case includes funding for the development and piloting of new elective cross-University experiential learning and Challenge Courses linked to our institutional research priorities

and values. A Full Business Case for the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework is due to be submitted in the second half of AY 2024/25. Further information (including a selection of briefing papers and other resources) is available from the programme website.¹

Annual monitoring and Institution-Led Quality Review (ILQR) – 2023/24²

The following themes of positive practice for sharing at University level were identified in our annual quality reports 2023-24 and Internal Periodic Reviews (IPRs, our ILQR process) held in AY 2023-24:

- **Student Support** - the new student support model was fully implemented across the University in AY 2023-24 and reports indicate that it has been generally well received by staff and students across the University, with improvements noted in the consistency of support provided to students, particularly through the new Student Adviser roles.
- **Student Voice** – Schools continue to make significant efforts to create opportunities for students to share feedback on their experience through locally organised student voice mechanisms. Students recognise the opportunities available to provide feedback.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)** – there were a number of initiatives highlighted by Schools and Deaneries in support of promoting an inclusive learning environment.
- **Learning and Teaching Enhancements** – academic and professional services staff have made considerable efforts to do things in new and inventive ways in order to enhance the student experience.

At the same time, our annual quality reports and IPRs highlighted the following areas for further development at the University level:

- **Student Support** – reports suggested a need for greater clarity around academic support roles (particularly in relation to the Cohort Lead role) and support for students on joint programmes.

¹ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/teaching-matters/curriculum-transformation-programme>

² <https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting>

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- **Assessment and Feedback** – recognising the increasing opportunities and challenges of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly in relation to academic integrity and the need for greater guidance on approaches to assessment.
 - **Student Voice** – the issue of low response rates was raised in a number of reports, with concerns regarding the utility of feedback derived from low levels of student engagement. Feedback from students suggests the need to address closing feedback loops as clear communication on what has been acted upon may increase confidence in participation and encourage more students to take part in subsequent surveys.
 - **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)** – our updated reporting template included a section on student outcomes which resulted in more detailed reflections on awarding gaps, with black and minority ethnic (BAME) and widening participation (WP) students experiencing the biggest awarding gaps.
 - **Postgraduate Research Student Experience** - a number of reports noted concerns over the increasing time taken to complete PhDs, with average timeframes stretching to 4 years and beyond, and suggested that the current standard model may need to be reviewed.

Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) has approved actions at University level in response to issues identified above and will consider progress updates later in the academic year before feeding back to reporting areas. The reports identifying themes of positive practice for sharing at University level are passed to the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to identify content for Teaching Matters³ and the Learning and Teaching Conference. Examples of Teaching Matters blog posts that have been identified through quality processes are tagged⁴.

Student Retention, Progression and Outcomes

SQAC considers a report on degree classification outcomes annually. Any subject areas judged to have diverged substantially from either the University average or comparators in their discipline are then asked specifically to reflect on the issue, and any proposed remediation, in their School annual quality

³ <https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/teaching-matters>

⁴ <https://www.teaching-matters-blog.ed.ac.uk/tag/quality-enhancement-report-examples/>

report. This approach ensures systematic University oversight whilst also encouraging Schools to engage with the specific data on awards, reflect on the issues and context, and then seek appropriate local solutions.

In May 2024 SQAC considered the annual analysis of degrees awarded by the University in the AY 2022/23⁵, including data on awarding gaps for key student groups. In general, student outcomes appear to be returning to pre-pandemic levels with over 89% of students at the University being awarded a high classification degree (a first or upper second-class degree) in 2022/23 (a 1.8% decrease from the previous year and a 0.5% decrease across a five-year period). Within this, the number of first-class degrees awarded in 2022/23 has decreased (by 3.2% from the previous year), however there has been an overall increase of 5.3% across a five-year period.

In 2022/23, for the first time in a five-year period, a higher proportion of male students were awarded a first-class degree than female students (34.9% vs 33.5%). However, a higher proportion of female students were awarded a high classification than male students (90.6% vs 86.8%). Students with a disclosed disability continue to be less likely to be awarded a first-class or high classification degree than students with no disclosed disability. The awarding gap for first-class degrees increased from 1.7% in 2021/22 to 1.9% in 2022/23, while the gap for high classification degrees decreased from 2.4% to 1.7% over the same period.

The most significant awarding gap is between black and minority ethnic (BAME) students and white students. While the awarding gap for first-class degrees reduced from 13.1% in 2021/22 to 11.6% in 2022/23, the gap for high classification degrees increased from 4.7% to 7.3% during the same period. A similar trend is seen across widening participation students, with a narrowing of the gap for first-class awards from 10.3% in 2021/22 to 7.5% in 2022/23, against an increasing gap for high classification degrees from 6.7% to 8.9% over the same period.

Retention and progression data is embedded in our ILQR processes and our Insights Hub provides a searchable directory of analysis and insights to support these ILQR activities. In order to enhance these processes SQAC established a Data Task Group in February 2020 to examine data set and methodological

⁵ <https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/16%20May%202024%20-%20Agenda%20and%20Papers.pdf> (Paper D)

options for a new approach to monitoring retention, progression, and awarding data. However, the pandemic delayed progress, with the maintenance of core requirements the primary focus of activities across the University.

As we emerged from the pandemic, SQAC sought to align with work already being undertaken by the University's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC) and the Governance and Strategic Planning (GaSP) area to develop improved data capture and analytical tools. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data Report 2023 was published by the EDIC in May 2023⁶. This coincided with the completion of the first phase of work to develop internal data dashboards, making more detailed EDI data readily available across our institution. The key focus for this first phase has been to ensure the integrity, accuracy and confidence of the data, as well as to ensure that data definitions used are suitable for the required range of purposes.

SQAC has established a new Student Data Monitoring Task Group⁷ now that more detailed EDI data has been made available. In the short term the Group is exploring ways to use this data to develop a more systematic oversight of retention, progression and awards at University level. In the longer term the Group will seek to work with the EDIC and GaSP to generate and use robust quantitative and qualitative data in support of the University's QA processes (see 'Awarding Gaps' below).

Assessment and feedback

From the start of AY 2022/23, we implemented a set of Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities in response to persistent student dissatisfaction with areas of assessment and feedback from regular student feedback and student survey results over a number of year, and the recommendation from [Enhancement-led Institutional Review \(ELIR\) 4](#) (see section 3 below) to develop an institution-wide approach to assessment and feedback. The Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities include an agreed expected standard for feedback turnaround times of three weeks in response to National Student Survey (NSS) scores, our comparative position in the sector, and analysis of what seems to be effective in those Schools that perform well in the NSS. Ensuring that we consistently meet this standard and can demonstrate that we do, alongside the quality of feedback, continues to be a priority for the

⁶ <https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/governance-and-compliance/edi-strategy-and-equality-outcomes/equality-outcomes-2021-2025-and>

⁷ <https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/16%20May%202024%20-%20Agenda%20and%20Papers.pdf> (Paper D)

University. The Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities also set an expectation of a shared understanding of marking criteria between teaching staff, markers and students. The Students' Association will be supporting this through the School reps who will work with Schools on this.

Throughout AY 2023/24, significant action has been taken to address this priority led by the Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group and the Student Experience Delivery and Monitoring Oversight Board. We have reviewed College actions for the implementation of the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities (initially focused on the timely return of feedback to students) and developed a framework for gathering and monitoring feedback turnaround times (including the development of data dashboards) as a means of understanding current and ongoing performance. We are using the data to identify and celebrate good practice, understand challenges and support areas struggling to meet turnaround times. We will continue to monitor turnaround times in AY 2024/25 via a standardised template and publish data via the dashboards.

We are also in the process of developing a framework for an ongoing programme of feedback quality audits (building on a successful model developed in one of our Schools) with the aim of identifying exemplars of good practice and improving information given to students on assessments such as rubrics and marking criteria.

The National Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2024 results show an improvement in assessment and feedback: a 8.6% increase in returning prompt feedback to 66.8% and a 5.1% increase in supervisors providing feedback on the dissertation/project to 83.5%.

External Examiners

An analysis of data from the External Examiner Reporting System (EERS) is considered by SQAC annually, with any University-level actions agreed and assigned to specific areas as appropriate. At the meeting held on 25 April 2024 SQAC considered the analysis of AY 2022/23 undergraduate and taught postgraduate⁸ external examiners' reports showing that there continues to be a high number of commendations and a low number of issues across the University. The main theme commended in undergraduate reports across all three Colleges was the assessment process, with the sub-theme of good practice and innovation (in the programme development theme) most commented on. The main theme commended in taught postgraduate reports was

⁸ <https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/25%20April%202024%20-%20Agenda%20and%20Papers.pdf> (Paper E)

also the assessment process, with the sub-theme of student feedback most commented on. A small number of issues raised by external examiners related to the (often timely) provision of information to examiners. No University-level action was required.

The positive comments from external examiners on our assessment process and feedback may seem at odds with the NSS feedback, where we are scored lower on assessment and feedback. The difference may be explained in that External Examiner's comments speak to academic standards and quality and provide assurance that our assessment processes are robust. The NSS reflects the student experience and, in particular, dissatisfaction with the timeliness of feedback and the clarity of assessment expectations. Our NSS scores are not where we want them to be which is why both timeliness of feedback and clarity of assessment criteria are key priorities within our assessment and feedback principles and priorities.

2. Supporting Student Success

Student Support

The start of AY 2023/24 marked the full implementation of a new approach to taught student support across the University, following a phased introduction that began in AY 2022/23, mainly for new incoming students. The introduction of the new student support approach was our response to the need to improve student support across the University (responding to student and staff feedback that the existing model wasn't working) whilst also recognising the need for holistic support for academic and pastoral needs whilst creating a sense of belonging. This was a shift from the model which had existed before in the form of a single point of contact in the Personal Tutor.

The new approach is based on an ecosystem of student support comprising Student Advisers, Wellbeing Advisers, Cohort Leads, academic teaching teams, wider University services, and Peer Support. It is an ambitious and sector-leading approach to student support that has attracted much interest from other universities. Each student is assigned a Student Adviser who is their main point of contact, providing administrative and academic support. In addition, Wellbeing Advisers in each School provide advice on wellbeing-related matters and act as a key connection point to other specialist services, such as the Student Counselling Service or Disability and Learning Support Service. Academic support and building a sense of belonging is provided via Cohort Leads who have academic leadership responsibility for cohorts of students with the purpose of creating a sense of community within programmes and providing relevant academic-related support that fits the needs of the programmes and learners. Academic advice remains core to student support, with teaching teams providing academic support at the subject/course level as previously. Peer Support activities are student-led and staff-supported and provide an opportunity for students to support other students. A Director of Students role has been introduced in each School supported by the College Dean of Students to have oversight of the academic roles within the model.

An example of the evidenced success of the new model is that the IPR of the Deanery of Biomedical Sciences (UG and PGT) commended the Student Advisers for the positive impact they have had on the student experience, and their overall commitment to making the transition to the new student support model as smooth as possible. Furthermore, the national annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey 2024 results reveal increased awareness of

and satisfaction with student support - 4% increase on 2023 on the question – “My School/Deanery has provided advice and guidance on how to access support where needed”.

To coincide with the introduction of the new student support approach we also launched a new Student Wellbeing Service in September 2022 (note the reference to Wellbeing Advisers as part of the ecosystem). The Service is located in the University Student Experience Services directorate. Wellbeing Advisers work with all Schools and Colleges providing a layer of support between the School-based Student Advisers and the central specialist counselling and disability services. This service supports all students: UG, PGT and PGR. This is a transformational investment in mental health services for our students, involving recruitment of new staff and providing proactive and reactive wellbeing support. The recent NSS survey (2024) showed a 4.4% increase in student satisfaction with wellbeing support.

The implementation of the new Student Support model has been a partnership approach with a central project team supporting College implementation groups, overseen by the Project Board, including representation from the Students’ Association. Throughout we undertook assessment and monitoring through surveys and focus groups with students and staff to allow us to evaluate the impact of the new model, and make improvements, as required. With the conclusion of the implementation phase of the project in July 2024 our focus is now on monitoring and evaluating provision on a continuous basis to ensure envisaged benefits of the model are being realised. Senior Academic colleagues within the university who have expertise in the longitudinal evaluation of societal models have supported and advised on the approach to the longer-term evaluation.

To ensure consistency and fidelity of the new model is maintained, a Student Support Framework has been approved by Senate Education Committee⁹ (with a review due in one year) and a new University level oversight group established, the Student Support Continuous Improvement Group (SSCIG), which will work with new College level groups in a coordinating role. The Students’ Association Vice President Education has been appointed as the Deputy Chair to ensure the student voice is heard when planning improvement work. An additional quality assurance process will be introduced to ensure cyclical

⁹ <https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/7%20March%202024%20-%20Agenda%20and%20Papers.pdf> (Paper D)

reporting and oversight of the new model of student support at institutional level. This reporting will be governed by the Student Lifecycle Management Group (SLMG), with cyclical reporting to SQAC and SEC, and will focus on outcomes across key indicators and supplementary contextual data sources.

Once fully embedded, evaluation of student support provision will align with existing quality assurance processes (such as annual monitoring and ILQR) overseen by SQAC. Colleges, Schools and Professional Services will be asked to provide updates on the effectiveness of their student support provision via the annual QA monitoring processes. Each area will be required to use data to evidence the effectiveness of their provision, aligned to the Student Support Framework, and to reflect on their partnership working across the institutional ecosystem of student support. In AY 2024/25 SSCIG will continue to work with SQAC to develop these monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in order to ensure consistency of experience for all students across the University.

Widening Access

In January 2024 we unveiled our ambitious University wide [Widening Participation Strategy 2030](#), building on our commitment to support students who encounter barriers to higher education. Our refreshed priorities aim to create a nurturing and inclusive academic environment that appreciates the varied backgrounds and needs of our students. Following the launch of the Strategy we have established new governance arrangements to enable us to more effectively coordinate our activity and build on our evidence base. This includes a strategic committee that reports directly to our University Executive, an implementation group and a research and evidence forum to support all groups. We are focussing on actions across the whole student lifecycle and have institutional leads to drive this activity.

In AY 2023/24 we welcomed 241 new SIMD20 entrants to the University of Edinburgh. We continue to see over 10% of our undergraduate students coming from SIMD20 backgrounds and all of our ongoing outreach projects maintain a strong focus on prospective applicants from SIMD20 backgrounds. In 2024, the majority of young people on our [YourEd+ programme](#) were from SIMD20 postcodes and they successfully completed an SCQF level 7 assignment for the YourEd+ programme. This meant they were awarded the equivalent of B at Higher, developing their confidence, skills and supporting their application to the University.

We continue to build our community of care-experienced students, and in AY 2023/24 we had a total of 159 verified care-experienced students on programme at the University. 50 of our students were supported by 50 staff mentors in our innovative mentoring programme offering mentors to care-experienced and estranged students throughout their studies at the University. We also provided 50 start out kits for our Edinburgh Cares students to help support them setting up in new accommodation. We were also very proud to celebrate our care-experienced and estranged students successfully graduating from the University in 2024; we ensure they can experience this fully by offering fully-funded photo and gown packages for the students.

We continued our commitment to staff development and inclusive learning by providing training for staff to support students from widening participation backgrounds. In the AY 2023/24 we delivered over 25 hours of staff training. We have also contributed to the newly developed SCAPP (Scotland's

Community of Access & Participation Practitioners) online training module – An Introduction to WP in Scotland – and are currently developing guidance regarding accent discrimination.

In terms of our growing college partnerships, we have two new articulation routes currently in place with three new routes in the pipeline. The new routes offer advanced standing with entry to year two of our MA (Hons) Learning in Communities from HNC Social Services at Edinburgh College and from HNC Social Sciences at West Lothian College and Edinburgh College. Overall, we have built our portfolio of HNC/HND progression routes with over 100 of our degree programmes accepting progression or advanced progression into year 1 or 2.

New for 2024, we are working in partnership with IntoUniversity and the University of Glasgow on designing and delivering a pilot Adult and Family Learning Project. This aims to increase outcomes for children in IntoUniversity Centres in Glasgow and Edinburgh through closer engagement and support for their parents, carers and wider families.

Awarding Gaps

We have taken several actions to support ongoing work to address the awarding gaps identified by our Thematic Review¹⁰, annual monitoring and ILQR¹¹ processes.

Throughout AY 2023/24, the University appointed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer (a secondee to the Curriculum Transformation Project) to coordinate work underway across the University to address awarding gaps. The initial focus has been on identifying a range of good practice exemplars and resources to be shared at events.

¹⁰ <https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/student-support-thematic>

¹¹ <https://registryservices.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/16%20May%202024%20-%20Agenda%20and%20Papers.pdf> (Paper H)

As noted above, SQAC has established a new Student Data Monitoring Group to explore and recommend a systematic approach to monitoring student data at University level, taking a student lifecycle perspective including: recruitment and admissions; retention and progression; and awarding. This builds on the work of the Progression and Attainment (ProAttain) Working Group in the College of Science and Engineering and is being implemented during AY 2024/25.

The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) has created an online toolkit¹². This includes guidance on universal design to help our staff anticipate our students' needs and improve the overall learning experience in an inclusive and accessible way that benefits all our students, and guidance on decolonisation in the curriculum, which includes nine recommendations for positive change to narrow the awarding gap and also to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for every student.

3. Enhancement and Quality Culture

Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)

In 2021, the University received ten recommendations from [Enhancement-led Institutional Review \(ELIR\) 4](#) . The ELIR Action Plan, setting out the University's response to the review recommendations, was approved by Senate in October 2021 and an ELIR Oversight Group established to provide direction and oversight of the actions.

The ELIR Action Plan took a themed approach to the implementation of the recommendations in order to ensure alignment with existing learning and teaching priorities and senior leadership responsibility. Actions were grouped as follows:

- **Assessment and Feedback** (improving feedback turnaround times and feedback quality);
- **Student Support** (the personal tutor system);

¹² <https://institute-academic-development.ed.ac.uk/learning-teaching/staff/accessible>

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- **Strategy, Growth and Planning** (encompassing the oversight and planning for growth of student numbers, and the strategic approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching);
 - **Change Management** (and the pace of change);
 - **Monitoring consistency of implementation of strategy, policy and practice** (encompassing oversight and implementation of policy and practice, and specifically training for postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach);
 - **Developing and promoting teaching excellence** (encompassing the recognition and support for academic staff development, and promotion of academic staff based on teaching);
 - **Attainment gap monitoring** (including sharing good practice in addressing awarding gaps).

Two of the recommendations, relating to assessment and feedback and student support, were prioritised for action over the course of the academic year following the ELIR. We have made significant progress in relation to these two recommendations which included developing University-wide agreed principles and priorities for assessment and feedback and rolling out a completely new student support approach.

Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR)

Our QESR took place on 16 November 2023 and the review team was confident that the University is making effective progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its provision to enable effective arrangements to be in place for managing academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience. The QESR team commended the University's Institute for Academic Development in establishing a network of secondees and associates embedded within the schools to support developments in learning and teaching.

The QESR team considered four of the ELIR recommendations to be fully addressed, recognised the action taken to date towards the remaining six recommendations, and helpfully made the following further recommendations for action based on, and in addition to, the ELIR 4 recommendations:

- **Pace of change** - the University should make progress on and accelerate its actions in response to the recommendations from the previous ELIR, ensuring effective and consistent implementation by all Schools, and monitor the outcomes, in order to evidence significant progress within the next academic year.
- **Learning and Teaching Strategy** - the University should expedite the final drafting, approval and implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy to help staff and students understand how major strategic projects work together and provide clarity on the strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching.

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- **Assessment and Feedback** - the University should take immediate action, within the current academic year, to ensure that the new Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities (developed in response to ELIR 4) are fully implemented in all Schools, that feedback turn-round times and quality are monitored effectively, and that prompt action is taken to address any shortcomings.
 - **Training for postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach** - the University should take prompt action, within the current academic year, to consistently implement its updated policy and to ensure that training for PGRs who teach is required at the University and School level, and that this action is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that all PGRs are fully supported in undertaking their teaching duties.
 - **Promotion of academic staff based on teaching** - the University should clearly and accurately record data on promotion routes based on teaching excellence so it can effectively evidence the implementation of its goal to achieve parity between teaching and research and take action to ensure this aim is met.
 - **Attainment gap monitoring** – the University should pay particular attention to sharing good practice and supporting staff in understanding the causes of attainments gaps and taking effective action.

The [final report](#) of the QESR was received on 18 January 2024 and an External Quality Review Oversight Group was established to take the recommendations forward. The University's external quality review [Action Plan](#) in response to the recommendations of the QESR was submitted to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in July 2024. Feedback from the QAA was positive with just one additional request to confirm that training for all postgraduate research students who teach will be in place (and uptake monitored) for the start of AY 2024/25. Data on training was gathered during the summer (as part of the annual monitoring process) and Colleges are working with Schools to ensure that this training is in place and monitored on an ongoing basis.

UK Quality Code Mapping

We last reviewed the mappings of our policies and practices to the Quality Code in September/October 2022: [Quality Code Mapping](#). Since 2022 we have been actively engaged in the UK sector-wide conversation about the future scope and structure of the Quality Code. There are minor updates required to the mapping, for example, to reflect the full move to the new student support model. We are considering the approach we will take to the new Quality Code and the relevant mappings will be reviewed by the Quality team in due course.

Enhancement Themes

Throughout the last Enhancement Theme, Resilient Learning Communities, the University has focussed on community building, responding to student feedback. Enhancement work continued through AY 2023/24 to pilot 'community champions' in five schools as part of the Sense of Belonging Continuous Improvement Group.

Enhancement of Academic Practice

The QESR team (as noted above) commended our Institute for Academic Development (IAD) on the provision of staff development activities in support of learning and teaching. These include the annual Learning and Teaching Conference (with over 100 staff and students presenting and between 500-900 in attendance), a newly accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, and the Edinburgh Teaching Award with recognition of fellowships at all four categories of the Professional Standards Framework. The IAD also provides programme and course design support for staff through a PgCAP course, through a range of workshops, and advice and through new programme and course design webpages that draw together all the programme and course design information from across the University to make this information easier for colleagues to access.

Tutors and demonstrators play a really important part in our teaching. In 2023/24 IAD made changes to the modality of our basic introduction to teaching for tutors and demonstrators, in recognition that workshops had been over-subscribed, and created a new self-paced, online 'Fundamentals of Teaching Course' open to all tutors and demonstrators. Since September 2024, more people have completed the course than would have been able to attend workshops over the year. IAD continue to run a range of workshops for tutors and demonstrators alongside the online course. Feedback on the new course has been extremely positive from tutors and from staff in Schools.

4. Student Engagement and Partnership

Student Voice

The University and Students' Association continue to work in partnership to deliver and enhance systems and processes which amplify the student voice.

In AY 2023/24, over 1300 part-time, volunteer student representatives were recruited, inducted, and supported by the Students' Association's Student Voice team, as well as staff across and at all levels of the University. All Programme and Elected Representatives continue to receive a two-part induction and training package, consisting of an asynchronous and introductory self-study module, followed by a live and interactive role-specific session.

Training completion remains high - with 95% of Elected Representatives and 85.5% of Programme Representatives completing both elements. 89.1% of student representatives described their experience as a student representative as excellent or good, with representatives reporting positively on the support they had received from the Students' Association and relevant University staff, their ability to create positive change for the students they represent, and their ability to develop personally and professionally in their role.

All student representatives have access to on-going development opportunities, through the workshop calendar for volunteer student leaders, as well as access to multiple reward and recognition schemes, from Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) recognition to the Edinburgh Award for Student Leadership, and the nationally-recognised Saltire Award for volunteering. At the end of their term, all student representatives are invited to complete a handover form, reflecting on their experience and sharing insights with their successors.

Student voice has been identified as a strategic priority by the University's Senior Leadership Team, driven in large part by continued disappointing performance in the student voice section of the National Student Survey, particularly the questions regarding students' confidence that their feedback is valued and acted upon by staff. In AY 2023/24, the existing Student Voice Task and Finish Group, which had coordinated a series of focus groups with students and staff to identify areas of key concern, was replaced by the Student Voice Continuous Improvement User Group, under the Student Lifecycle Management Group. The Students' Association partnered with Graduate Offices across the University and the Doctoral College to enhance the integration of Postgraduate Research students into existing student voice structures, work which is continuing in AY 2024/25.

In AY 2024/25, the University and Students' Association will work in partnership to:

- Baseline School approaches to student voice, through analysis of data available from existing Quality processes, such as Internal Period Reviews, and consultation with Schools.
- Address inconsistencies in the implementation of existing student voice policies, such as the Student-Staff Liaison Committee Policy, across Schools and Colleges.
- Explore alternative methods of collecting feedback, addressing student feedback regarding survey-fatigue, and create resources highlighting best practice for use by staff.

Student Feedback

In AY 2023/24, we introduced a new institutional survey, the Student Life Survey, to replace the Pulse Surveys which were introduced during the pandemic. The survey was informed by the student voice focus groups highlighted above, and developed in partnership with the Students' Association, with academic expertise, and in listening and responding to how students want to participate in surveys (i.e. short surveys that take less than a minute to complete). It was designed to understand more about student experiences across different aspects of their journey, as well as to align with strategic priorities for student experience, ensuring the collection of data to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of on-going and future enhancements in relation to student experience. The survey ran as a pilot in AY 2023/24 to taught students who were not participating in sector surveys, such as the National Students Survey (NSS) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).

Across the year, work was undertaken to improve communication to student about feedback opportunities. This included an introductory communication to all students outlining how they can feedback, and then a follow up email at the end of each semester outlining feedback which had been gathered, and actions in response to it. Further work has been identified for AY 2024/25 to ensure communications are landing more effectively, including greater collaboration with Schools to tailor communications, and a focus on developing more engaging communications.

Student Partnership

We have a University Student Partnership Agreement with 19 funded projects last year (and 18 projects in 2024-25), focused on building community, enhancing teaching, learning and curriculum and EDI. We continue to run the Edinburgh Network: Growing Approaches to Genuine Engagement (engage network) for staff and students, with regular monthly events showcasing student engagement and partnership work from the University and beyond; the two most recent events attracted approx. 85 staff and students. The PgCAP programme for staff starts with a course entitled 'Becoming an Engaging Teacher', where we encourage colleagues to adopt evidence-based approaches to more relational teaching, active learning, student engagement and co-creation.

Action Plan 2024 -2025

The plan should link directly to the institutional evaluation of the Principles and should prioritise strategic actions arising from the narrative. In addition, the actions arising from commendations or recommendations identified through external review, should also be embedded into this action plan to ensure alignment with overall institutional priorities and to streamline reporting processes. This action plan should be a live document utilised by the institution to focus on strategic quality assurance and enhancement activities on an ongoing basis. The timeline for the completion of actions should be suited to the nature of the activity and the context of the institution.

Principle and Area for enhancement or development	Action(s) and planned impact/ outcomes	Milestone (s/ target date(s), continuing/ carried forward (c/f)	Responsible/ Lead
Enhancement and Quality Culture: Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) & Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR)	Continue to progress with the ELIR and QESR recommendations, in particular prioritising actions over the course of the year in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment and feedback • the training of postgraduate research students who teach. • Learning and Teaching Strategy 	Detailed actions and target dates in the University’s external quality review Action Plan	External Quality Review Oversight Group
Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment:	Prepare for introduction of new PGT Curriculum Framework from AY2026/27	A 2-year Transitional Phase followed by the main roll out in AY2026/27.	Curriculum Transformation Board/ Senate Education Committee

Curriculum Transformation		Work on regulatory and policy changes is being taken forward through Senate Academic Policy & Regulations Committee during AY2024/25 & AY2025/26.	
Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment: Curriculum Transformation	Complete UG Curriculum Framework design work (including development and piloting of elective University Challenge Courses and cross-University Experiential Learning Courses in AY 2024/25 & 2025/26)	UG Curriculum Framework Design work and undertake in-depth analysis and design of the associated System, Process & Regulatory changes during AY24/25. Development and piloting of elective University Challenge Courses and cross-University Experiential Learning Courses in AY 2024/25 & 25/26.	Curriculum Transformation Board/ Senate Education Committee
Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment: Assessment and Feedback	Continue to embed the Assessment and Feedback Principles and Priorities	Ongoing, with a focus on feedback return times and feedback quality (including assessment rubrics) as priority areas in AY 2024/25	Assessment and Feedback Strategy Group, reporting to Senate Education Committee
Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment: Learning and Teaching Strategy	Implementation of the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2030.	Strategy approved in Semester 1 AY 2024/25 with roll-out and implementation from Semester 2	Senate Education Committee

Enhancement and Quality Culture: Sector enhancement activity	Engage with the new national enhancement programme: Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)	ongoing	Senate Quality Assurance Committee
Student Engagement and Partnership: Student voice	Continue work of the Student Voice Continuous Improvement Group, review the implementation of various student voice policies and develop a shared vision for student voice.	ongoing	Deputy Secretary Students/Senate Quality Assurance Committee/Students' Association
Supporting Student Success Student Support	Continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of the new student support approach	ongoing	Deputy Secretary Students
Supporting Student Success: Awarding Gaps	Continue work to understand the causes of and how to narrow awarding gaps, supporting Schools by sharing good practice.	ongoing	Senate Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC)

Statement of Assurance

Statement of Assurance: *As the Accountable Officer for the University of Edinburgh, I confirm that I have considered the institution's arrangements for the management of academic standards and the quality of the learning experience for AY 2023-24, including the scope and impact of these. I further confirm that I am satisfied that the institution has adequate and effective arrangements to maintain standards and to assure and enhance the quality of its provision. I can therefore provide assurance to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) that the academic standards and the quality of the learning provision at this institution continue to meet the requirements set by SFC.*

Signature: 

Accountable Officer (Name): Professor Sir Peter Mathieson, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Edinburgh

Date: 29 November 2024

Statement of Partnership: *As the Vice President Education of Edinburgh University Students' Association, I confirm that this report and action plan have been produced in partnership with the Students' Association and reflect the interests and priorities of students. I further confirm that the University and the Students' Association will work together in partnership to implement the actions outlined.*

Signature: 

Students' Association representative (Name): Dylan Walch, Vice President Education, Edinburgh University Students' Association

Date: 29 November 2024