

Enhancement-led Institutional Review of University of Abertay Dundee

Technical Report

April 2016

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About the Enhancement-led Institutional Review method

A dedicated page of the QAA website explains the method for [Enhancement-led Institutional Review](#) of higher education institutions in Scotland and has links to the ELIR handbook and other informative documents.¹ You can also find more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.²

Further details about the enhancement-led approach can be found in an accompanying [ELIR information document](#),³ including an overview of the review method, definitions of the judgement categories, and explanations of follow-up action. It also contains information on the Scottish Funding Council's response to ELIR judgements.

About this review

This is the Technical Report of the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the University of Abertay Dundee (the University/Abertay). The review took place as follows: Part 1 visit on 8 to 10 March 2016 and Part 2 visit on 18 to 22 April 2016. The review was conducted by a team of six reviewers:

- Professor Hilary Grainger (Academic Reviewer)
- Emeritus Professor Marianne Howarth (Academic Reviewer)
- Emeritus Professor Ian Pirie (Academic Reviewer)
- Dr Tess Goodliffe (International Reviewer)
- Mr Mark Charters (Student Reviewer)
- Dr Pamela Sinclair (Coordinating Reviewer).

In advance of the review visits, the University submitted a self-evaluative document (the Reflective Analysis) and an advance information set, comprising a range of materials about the institution's arrangements for managing quality and academic standards. In addition, the University submitted three case studies: the Development of Abertay's new Teaching and Learning Enhancement Strategy; Student Partnership Enhancement Activity; and Raising the Status of Teaching.

About this report

In this report, the ELIR team:

- delivers an overarching judgement on the current and likely future effectiveness of the institution's arrangements for managing academic standards and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience.

The overarching judgement can be found on page 3, followed by the detailed findings of the review given in numbered paragraphs.

¹ Further information about the ELIR method:

www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education/enhancement-led-institutional-review.

² Further information about QAA: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus.

³ ELIR information document: www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=61.

ELIR Technical Reports are intended primarily for the institution which hosted the review, and to provide an information base for the production of thematic reports that identify findings across several institutions.

Technical Reports set out the ELIR team's view under each of the report headings. Shorter Outcome Reports are provided that set out the main findings of the ELIR for a wider audience. The [Outcome Report](#) for this review is on the QAA website.⁴

⁴ [Outcome Report: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/provider?UKPRN=10007849](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/provider?UKPRN=10007849)

Overarching judgement about the University of Abertay Dundee

The University of Abertay Dundee has **effective** arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. These arrangements are likely to continue to be effective in the future.

This is a positive judgement, which means the University has robust arrangements for securing academic standards and for enhancing the quality of the student experience.

1 Institutional context and strategic framework

1.1 Key features of the institution's context and mission

1 The University of Abertay Dundee, with its history dating back to 1888 as the Dundee Technical Institute, describes itself as having a reputation for developing innovative, exciting programmes often with a vocational focus. The University offers a diverse range of programmes and is known internationally in areas such as computer games, technology and art, urban water technology and cybersecurity.

2 In session 2015-16 the University had a total student population of 6,116 (head count). This total comprised 3,664 undergraduate students, 233 postgraduate taught students and 128 postgraduate research students studying at the University's campus in Dundee. In 2015-16, 2,091 undergraduate students were studying at the University's partner institutions (paragraph 29).

3 The University defines its purpose as being: 'to offer transformational opportunities to everyone who has the ability to benefit from Abertay's approach to university education; to inspire and enable our staff, students and graduates to achieve their full potential; to use our knowledge and expertise to have a positive impact on the world around us'. It defines a number of principles that underpin its decisions, actions and development plans including 'choosing our own path; recognising and developing potential expanding horizons; working in partnership and making our knowledge accessible'.

4 Since the QAA 2012 ELIR, the University has engaged in what it described as a significant degree of transformational change involving changes in governance, academic provision and pedagogical approach, administrative and other supporting structures and staffing. Substantial changes to the University's Senior Management Group (SMG) include the key external appointments of a new Principal, a new Vice-Principal (University Services), Director of Teaching and Learning Enhancement (TLE), Director of Strategic Planning, Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development and a new Registrar.

5 The University Executive is led by the Principal, who has three direct reports, the Vice-Principal (Academic), the Vice-Principal (University Services) and the University Secretary, and is responsible for delivering the strategic objectives agreed by the University Court.

6 The Senior Management Group (SMG) comprises the Executive, the five heads of academic schools and the 10 heads of service. SMG meets regularly to discuss operational matters. The Vice-Principal (Academic) line manages the heads of school and the Director of Teaching and Learning Enhancement, who collectively comprise the Academic Leadership Group (ALG). This Group meets fortnightly primarily to discuss academic matters and to advise the Executive on policy. The Vice-Principal (University Services) line manages the

heads of service and they also meet regularly to discuss operational matters from the perspective of support services.

7 The creation of the Director of Teaching and Learning Enhancement post in 2013, with equivalent seniority to a head of school, signalled the University's recognition of the importance of teaching and learning in delivering an improved student experience. One of the heads of school is designated 'Intellectual Lead for Enhancement', providing additional strategic academic leadership and support for the Vice-Principal (Academic). Currently fulfilled by the Head of the School of Social and Health Sciences, it was evident to the ELIR team that both of these roles had been successful in driving the enhancement agenda.

8 There are five academic schools: the Dundee Business School (DBS); the School of Arts, Media and Computer Games (AMG); the School of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET); the School of Social and Health Sciences (SHS) and the Abertay Graduate School. All heads of school have taken up their posts since the 2012 ELIR and play a strategic role in linking each school to the Executive.

9 In 2015-16, a new divisional structure was established within schools and two new academic leadership positions were created, head of division (HoD) and academic curriculum manager (ACM). Each school has two to four HoDs, replacing the former divisional leader role. The new HoD role is subject-facing with line management responsibilities and a more focused and explicit academic leadership remit. Each school has one ACM who manages the school's academic portfolio and facilitates cross-university academic delivery.

10 Staff who met the ELIR team identified the ACM as a 'pivotal role', with oversight of school portfolios, working with the Registrar and Director of TLE to ensure there is consistency across the University in the management of curriculum. ACMs have a role in leading enhancement, managing change and promoting activities aimed at sharing good practice, such as through school away days. Additionally, ACMs support the management of quality assurance and enhancement activities, organise annual monitoring, ensure the accuracy of the key information set (KIS) data and offer academic leadership and mentoring to others. They lead on the teaching and learning aspects of the student experience and take responsibility for the pastoral care of students in their respective schools.

11 Given the importance of the ACM and HoD roles, which cover operational, strategic and academic leadership and enhancement within each school, a targeted Academic Leadership Programme has been put in place to support the development of each post holder. Staff who met the ELIR team showed a clear understanding of the roles of head of school, HoD and ACM and their inter-relationship.

12 The ELIR team learned that the new divisional structure is intended to ensure there is a more effective alignment between organisational structure and the University's new subject-based academic curriculum. A reformed curriculum, was partially implemented for postgraduate students in September 2015. The implementation of this reformed curriculum will be introduced across the undergraduate provision and the remainder of the postgraduate provision in September 2016.

13 In 2013-14, a new Senate committee structure was brought into effect which was designed to streamline decision-making to free time for debate and development. Five former Senate committees were reduced to two: the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) and the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC), with each having two sub-committees (Research Degrees, Research Ethics, Collaborative Provision and Student Experience) and the ability to establish working groups as necessary.

14 As part of the committee structure review, the decision was taken to disband the Student Experience and Collaborative Provision Sub-Committees, which had previously reported to TLC. Initially, student representatives on Senate raised concerns that this would potentially result in a loss of the student voice. Senate responded by adding four student members to TLC and establishing the Student Life Network (SLN) (paragraph 47). At the same time, the heads of school, who were members of the former TLC, were replaced by the 11 HoDs. In discussions with the ELIR team, staff endorsed the effectiveness of HoDs on TLC, given their responsibilities for implementing strategy. The team heard from staff that the new committee arrangements are time-efficient while allowing opportunity for academic debate, which is positive.

15 During 2014, the academic administration of the University was reviewed and reorganised, which prompted a review of school committee remits, membership and operation. New school academic committees (SACs) were established to act as 'School Senates' providing a formal linking role in the teaching and learning governance framework.

16 The Reflective Analysis (RA) for the current ELIR referred to the value of the 2012 ELIR in informing strategic thinking and institutional change. In discussion with the ELIR team, senior staff indicated that the University regarded the current ELIR as an opportunity to seek recognition and validation of its changes, together with the opportunity for critical dialogue and feedback. The team noted that the University had adopted a strategic and systematic approach to addressing the actions from the 2012 ELIR.

1.2 Strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching

17 The Strategic Plan (2015-20), which articulates the University's global, national and local ambitions, was developed in partnership with students, staff, and members of Senate and the University Court. The Plan was informed by discussions around key supporting strategies including: the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Strategy, the Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy, the Estates Strategy, the Employability Strategy (where employability is supported by the Abertay Attributes) and the Internationalisation Strategy. The ELIR team learned from discussions with senior staff that, following the appointment of a new Director of Strategic Planning, the Strategic Plan was more integrated with the planning process. In 2015-16, a new planning framework was introduced to clarify the University's decision-making processes. The Strategic Plan included 20 university-level key performance indicators (KPIs) and the University is committed to identifying specific targets at the school level during 2016.

18 As part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the University's strategic approach, it provided the University Court with a baseline position from the beginning of the planning period for the Strategic Plan (2015-20). Institution-level KPIs and updates are provided twice yearly. The SACs and school executives monitor the effectiveness of the school operational plans, with an institutional view of school activity being provided through the annual planning and reporting processes.

19 The Teaching and Learning Enhancement (TLE) Strategy was approved by the Senate in 2013 and, although it pre-dates the Strategic Plan (2015-20), the Strategy heavily influenced the teaching and learning-related elements of the Plan, with care taken to ensure congruence between the two strategic documents to avoid potential conflicts in priorities and goals. The TLE Strategy was developed and implemented by the Director of Teaching and Learning Enhancement working with the Vice-Principal (Academic). The ELIR team noted that the University deliberately places 'teaching' before 'learning' to emphasise the strong institutional view that excellent teaching engenders good student learning.

20 In producing the TLE Strategy, a set of 10 key principles were developed which the University believes should underpin any new strategy development. These were distilled into three strategic priorities for the TLE Strategy: reform the curriculum and redesign programmes to advance students' knowledge and support their preparedness for post-graduation and the world of work; incentivise students' performance through an integrated approach to all aspects of assessment, the use of joint honours, Grade Point Average (GPA) degree classification and implementation of the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR); and to raise the status of teaching within the institution in terms of leadership, professional recognition, reward and development through staff-centred and flexible CPD. The University has ensured there is a clear link between these principles and priorities and the new Strategic Plan. The TLE Strategy also links to the University's strategies for internationalisation, employability and the equality and diversity plan. School annual plans reflect these institutional strategies and detail each school's contribution to the achievement of the key objectives and identified priorities.

21 In spring 2016, the University developed the TLE Strategy Evaluation Framework which was presented to the Teaching and Learning Committee in March 2016. The ELIR team learned that the University intended to integrate the Evaluation Framework with its annual monitoring processes, and planned to align the Framework with its strategic planning and KPI reporting to support ongoing evaluation across the University's academic provision.

22 The University described its approach to implementing strategy as evidence-based and characterised by the '3Ps': the Purpose provides the University with the rationale or justification for change; the Principles provide the foundation set of values that underlie what the University is trying to introduce and the Practice demonstrates the ways in which this will be achieved, including the introduction of new or revised regulations to achieve the objectives. The ELIR team heard from staff that the '3Ps' have been very useful in providing them with the context of any initiatives by means of clear communication of their purpose, ensuring information is communicated in a succinct way to a range of audiences. The University highlighted that evidence-based practice is key for successful change.

23 In spring 2014, the TLC commissioned the Curriculum Reform Steering Group (CRSG) to develop principles within the parameters of the Strategic Plan (2015-20) to guide policy and practice to support curriculum reform. Curriculum reform was undertaken by the University to create a distinctive student learning experience, increase student choice and flexibility while maintaining a balance of depth and breadth. Curriculum reform focuses on improving teaching and associated practices, with students actively engaging in their own learning and supporting others as peers or mentors. The University achieved these objectives through a variety of means including: a move from programme to subject-based curriculum development; the offer of seven new accelerated degree programmes, allowing students to complete a four-year honours degree in just over three years; the introduction of new interdisciplinary electives for stage one and stage two undergraduate students and module unit size increased from 15 to 20 credits. The University thinks of its undergraduate programme stages as being broadly aligned to the four years of a full-time undergraduate degree.

24 The Academic Leadership Group (ALG) reviewed the existing undergraduate programmes, using an evaluation framework devised by CRSG. The University Executive decided to withdraw a small number of programmes to new entrants from September 2015, with provision in place to support the students already studying on the discontinued programmes. The rest of the undergraduate portfolio was re-specified and subject to reapproval (paragraphs 114 and 115). The University's postgraduate programmes were also reviewed using the same approach applied to the undergraduate provision, but with the additional objective that all postgraduate taught (PGT) modules would be discrete to allow flexibility of delivery and multiple student entry points. Two new cross-school master's level

modules have been introduced and have been well received by the students. Staff were encouraged to develop new programmes, particularly at postgraduate level to support the University's strategic ambitions.

25 The ELIR team heard that the six-month development period for curriculum reform had presented challenges but, to help support staff to effectively engage with the changes, the Teaching, Learning and Enhancement (TLE) unit had provided guidelines, clear timescales and a wide range of enhancement activities, for example the undergraduate curriculum reform briefings and the monthly lunchtime TLE seminars. Staff indicated that these had been useful opportunities to comment on and influence the proposed changes and they recognised the advantages the changes had brought.

26 Curriculum reform had been accompanied by a new pedagogical approach which involved: the introduction of a new academic calendar comprising three 15-week terms and a structured feedback week; a clearer, more student-focused set of academic regulations; changes to assessment and feedback practices including the introduction of a literal grading scheme and grade point average (GPA) for calculating final degree classifications, the introduction of a ten-day turnaround time for marking and providing feedback and the introduction of an electronic management of assessment (EMA) system; and a flexible continuing professional development (CPD) programme for staff, accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Institution-wide curriculum reform will be completed with the changes to the undergraduate provision being introduced in 2016-17. There are early indications that these pedagogical changes have had a positive impact on the student experience, for example, changes to feedback on assessment practice have been accompanied by improved results in the National Student Survey (NSS).

1.3 Effectiveness of the approach to implementing strategies

27 Overall, the University has an effective, collegiate and inclusive approach to implementing its strategies. The University emphasised that, without this approach, it could not have achieved the significant changes that have been introduced. It was evident to the ELIR team that the University has established an open and responsive academic community, which welcomes and takes account of the views of academic staff, professional and service staff and students. The University draws from a combination of internal and external data including information from academic literature, practice from other institutions and from across the UK higher education sector, as evidenced in the RA submitted for the current ELIR.

28 The University acknowledged the significance, volume and pace of change which remains ongoing, and recognised the need to embed and evaluate these changes. The ELIR team recognised the positive work the University has undertaken and would now encourage it to continue with developing a systematic evaluation mechanism to consider the impact and effectiveness of the strategic change it has introduced.

2 Enhancing the student learning experience

2.1 Composition and key trends in the student population, including typical routes into and through the institution

29 In 2015-16 the University had a total student population of 6,116 (head count) students, comprising 3,664 undergraduates, 233 postgraduate taught students and 128 postgraduate research students studying at the Dundee campus. In the same year, there were 2,091 (head count) undergraduates studying at partner institutions: 185 based at Fife College, 1,863 at the Systematic Educational Group International (SEGi) University and

Colleges in Malaysia and 43 at the Ecole Supérieure de Conduite de Travaux (ESCT) in Paris.

30 Scottish-domiciled students account for 82 per cent of the University's students. Over the past four years, the University has taken purposeful action to realign its student population, reducing the total number of Scottish and EU domiciled students to bring these into line with funding changes from the Scottish Funding Council. Additionally, there has been a 40 per cent decrease in the number of students attending the University from the rest of the UK (rUK) and a 50 per cent decrease in international student numbers, resulting in around a 17 per cent decrease in undergraduate students numbers based at the Dundee campus and around a 30 per cent reduction in postgraduate taught student numbers. The University attributes these changes to a planned strategy to bring its SFC-funded (home and EU students) undergraduate population into line with the number of funded student places it receives from SFC, and, in the case of international and rUK students, to increased competition.

31 Postgraduate research student numbers have increased by around 7 per cent and there has been an expansion in student numbers studying at partner institutions of around 70 per cent between 2012-13 and 2015-16. Future strategic developments will include the expansion of international (non EU) student recruitment and postgraduate provision, with the University setting ambitious plans to double its international undergraduate population by 2020, as set out in both the Strategic Plan and the International Strategy.

32 The age distribution of students at the University has not changed significantly since the 2012 ELIR, with around 8 per cent of the student population being under 18, 52 per cent being between the ages of 18 to 20 and 39 per cent of students being 21 and over. Students studying at the Dundee campus are predominantly from a white ethnicity profile, reflecting local demographics. Around 14 per cent of the student population self-identify as having a disability.

33 As a strategic priority, the University aims to increase the proportion of undergraduate entrants from widening participation backgrounds, such as SIMD 20 and 40, and to ensure that at least 27 per cent of Scottish-domiciled students articulate into the University with advanced standing. In 2015-16, students entering the University from SIMD 40 made up 35 per cent of the Scottish-domiciled student population and 34 per cent of the Scottish-domiciled students entered the institution with advanced standing. These figures exceeded the targets identified in the University's SFC Outcome Agreement.

34 The University has operated a contextualised admissions process since 2014-15 and has strong links with the Tayside and Fife Articulation Hub with further enhancements to increase the diversity of the student population being considered, including how local barriers to entry can be overcome for students from under-represented groups. Published retention rates have improved over the past five years and the University has targets in place to maintain these. Retention of SIMD 20 students has increased markedly over the past two years with an 11 per cent increase, accompanied by improvements in retention for other SIMD categories (SIMD 40 and 60).

35 The last four years have seen annual improvements in student attainment with the proportion of students achieving a first or upper second class degree rising from 59.5 per cent to 71.3 per cent. The University attributes this increase to the purposeful enhancements it has made to the assessment processes (see paragraphs 97, 98 and 99).

36 Data in relation to student retention and progression, award outcomes and student satisfaction is considered through the University's committee structures and its quality assurance and enhancement processes such as annual monitoring and periodic review.

The management of information was an area highlighted for development in the 2012 ELIR and, as part of its response, the University has undertaken a significant re-development of its Corporate Information System (CIS) which was ongoing at the time of the current ELIR (see paragraph 111).

2.2 Supporting equality and diversity in the student population

37 The University has an effective approach to supporting equality and diversity having actively engaged in a number of initiatives. These are outlined in the Equality Action Plan which is overseen by the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee. The Equality Action Plan is reflected in the Strategic Plan (2105-2020) and the schools are required to consider equality and diversity specifically in their action plans and annual reports. The Equality Action Plan is reviewed annually and the ELIR team learned it will be revised as part of an application the University intends to submit in summer 2016 for the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) Race Equality Charter Mark.

38 At institution level, the University has achieved the Athena SWAN bronze award, and is currently working towards silver. It has actively engaged with the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education Aurora Programme which supports aspiring women leaders in science, engineering, maths and medicine. Key successes towards gender balance in senior roles were identified, with women currently occupying around 40 per cent of heads of school, professional service directors and members of the University Court roles.

Students with a disability

39 Around 14 per cent of undergraduate students studying at the University have a declared disability. The University monitors the academic achievement of disabled students engaging with departments/schools where a differential has been identified. Student Services, through the Disability Support Team, provide practical support including needs assessment in relation to teaching and assessment and offer support to students experiencing mental health difficulties. The Disability Support Team supports academic and professional service staff through training seminars and workshops. The Disability Team is part of Student Services.

Equality and diversity in the curriculum

40 During curriculum reform all programmes were expected to consider equality and diversity in relation to curriculum design and the student experience. Through meetings with staff and students the ELIR team heard about effective and specific examples of equality and diversity being embedded in the curriculum through an applied approach to design and delivery, with students citing particular examples of how the significance of cultural diversity, gender, age and disability was considered within the curriculum, in the context of both subject and professional practice. The work to embed race equality in the curriculum is supporting a key University action associated with its application for the ECU Race Equality Charter Mark.

41 The gender balance of students is 57 per cent female to 43 percent male. The University has recognised gender imbalances in some of its programmes and has set key targets relating to gender balance within its Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Outcome Agreement. It is taking a number of steps to address gender imbalance, including participating in initiatives such as the Dundee Women in Science Festival and the International Games Developers Association Diversity in the Creative Industries Panel. The University is also engaging in outreach activities in schools as well as reviewing its promotional materials to feature role models from the respective under-represented gender.

42 All staff are required to undertake online training in equality and diversity and the TLE unit offers seminars and CPD opportunities. Equality and diversity is also explored with staff undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching.

2.3 Engaging and supporting students in their learning

Student representation and feedback from students

43 The University has an effective approach to student representation with a strong and constructive relationship fostered between the Students' Association, student body and the University. A review of the Students' Association was undertaken in 2014, in partnership with the National Union of Students, and resulted in a restructure and a refocusing of the Association's work in representing the student population and enhancing the student experience. The enhancement of the class representation system, identified in the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA), has been a key product of this review.

44 In response to recommendations from the 2012 ELIR, the University and the Students' Association have developed a more effective strategic partnership, with a new SPA signed in June 2014. The SPA outlines a number of areas of work covering four main themes: assessment and feedback; student representation and engagement; student personal development; and learning resources and the environment. The SPA links to the Strategic Plan (2015-20) and these areas are reviewed jointly and considered in the schools' and professional services' action plans.

45 The ELIR team heard from the University and Students' Association that the SPA had not yet been an effective mechanism for driving significant enhancement work because it lacked visibility. The team therefore encourages the University and Students' Association to reflect on the ways in which they could optimise the value of having an SPA.

46 Students are represented on the University Senate by the Students' Association elected sabbatical officers. A new approach to programme representation, jointly owned by the Students' Association and the University has been introduced with a class representative elected for each stage per programme, who then becomes a member of the Student Representative Council (SRC) and their school's programme committee (SPC). The SRC is a forum for all class representatives and members of the Students' Association Executive to debate policy. A school's programme committee provides a forum for class representatives, and members of the programme team to meet and discuss student feedback on current performance and upcoming changes to the programme. Students are elected from the SRC to be members of the TLC and the SACs. Students who are members of TLC receive a full induction to the Committee, which students highlighted to the ELIR team as valuable in supporting them in their role. The team formed the view that the direct relationship between the student body, the schools and the Students' Association has been significantly strengthened through the connections between class representatives and the SRC.

47 Following changes to the University's committee structure, the Student Experience Subcommittee was discontinued (paragraphs 13 and 14). As part of the response to student representatives' concerns that this decision removed an important formal forum with a strong student voice, the University and Students' Association established the Student Life Network (SLN) in October 2015. The SLN is open to all students and relevant staff (invited dependent on agenda items) to discuss issues identified by the students as being important to their experience at the University. The ELIR team learned that there was a lack of awareness of the SLN among the student population. While the majority of students who met with the team were unaware of its role, those students who had experience of the SLN did acknowledge its

potential as a forum for addressing student concerns. The University and Students' Association have recognised this lack of visibility and engagement with the SLN and are currently reviewing how best to use the Network to provide a forum for discussing the wider student experience.

48 Prior to elections, the Students' Association informs all students of the role of class representatives and newly elected representatives are offered training, which has recently been reviewed by the Students' Association in collaboration with Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs). Students who met the ELIR team described the training as effective, indicating that it had supported them in fulfilling their role. Class representatives are acknowledged for their role and their achievement is recorded on their Higher Education Achievement Record.

49 The ELIR team learned of some variability in student attendance at SACs and that in a minority of situations class representatives did not fulfil their role. Given the progress that has been made by the University and the Students' Association in strengthening student engagement, there would be value in identifying this as a focus for future collaborative working.

50 The ELIR team heard from students and staff that student engagement had been significantly strengthened at both University and subject levels, with student representation now formalised across the institution. The team recognised that the University has established a culture of encouraging and welcoming student feedback, and students who met the team confirmed that their feedback was responded to by the University.

Student feedback surveys

51 The University uses a range of internal and external surveys to capture student opinion including mid-module and annual programme surveys and the NSS. In 2014-15, the University introduced a mid-term module survey to allow students to provide feedback prior to the completion of a module. This approach has allowed staff to instigate changes while students are studying on a module, and students who met the ELIR team indicated that they viewed this as a positive opportunity. An annual programme survey is used to gain feedback from students on their programme in years 1 to 3 and for taught postgraduates, with the questions used being modelled on those in the NSS. The University highlighted this survey as key in providing a holistic view of the programme at the end of each year and for gathering feedback relating to modules undertaken within year.

52 The ELIR team learned that the annual programme survey is not generally recognised by students, who raised concerns around a lack of opportunity to feed back directly at the end of each module on important activities such as Feedback Week and feedback on assessment. In discussions with the team, the University acknowledged that survey completion rates were low and students were experiencing survey fatigue. The University indicated that it planned to review the use of surveys and to consider them more strategically as a vehicle for gathering feedback across the academic session, and the team would support this plan.

Assessment submission and feedback to students

53 Since the 2012 ELIR, the University has developed and implemented a new Assessment Policy and introduced the electronic submission and return of assessment. This decision was taken following analysis of NSS data which identified the promptness of feedback return as a significant issue. The Assessment Policy indicates that students must be given feedback on their assessed work within 10 working days of submission up to week 13 and within 15 working days for work submitted during weeks 14 and 15.

54 The EMA system requires all assessed work to be submitted electronically and feedback to be returned to students electronically. This system enables the University to monitor and track student progress and levels of attainment. It also enables data to be provided more easily for subsequent analysis, evaluation and enhancement. Students who met the ELIR team were very positive about the timeliness and quality of the feedback they had received, adding that academic staff could always be approached for further information or clarification, if necessary.

55 Staff were supported during the introduction of the Assessment Policy to reflect on their assessment and feedback practice through TLE seminars, school away days and direct support from the TLE team. Significant investment was made in the appropriate technology to enable staff to deliver their feedback electronically. The University highlighted that this change in policy has had a positive impact on its NSS scores.

56 The Assessment Policy, changes to the turnaround time for feedback on assessment and the introduction of the Literal Grading Scale (LGS) (see paragraphs 97-99) have had a positive impact on the design of assessments and have encouraged staff to reflect on their assessment practices. Staff who met the ELIR team all indicated that the new approaches to the management of assessment encouraged greater creativity and variety in assessment. The team considered a sample of external examiner reports which included favourable comments on the variety of assessment used. While staff and students were, on the whole, very positive about the changes to assessment policy, acknowledging they had been beneficial in supporting student learning, the University recognised that there have been challenges for staff in consistently meeting the feedback return deadline. Schools have been asked to address, monitor and report their progress on this matter.

57 In session 2014-15, the University changed its academic calendar to introduce a 'Structured Feedback Week'. The Principles of Assessment and Assessment Policy state that activities undertaken in this week should be designed to provide students with opportunities to make sense of their learning in a holistic manner and to receive feedback and feed-forward to support their progress and achievement. Initial implementation occurred at programme level, with variable success. Within the current academic session (2015-16) activities related to this initiative have been refocused at the module level, with the University providing guidance to staff and students on the purpose and function of the week.

58 The ELIR team heard a very wide range of views from students on the effectiveness of Feedback Week, ranging from the very negative to the more positive. Students who found the initiative positive reported that they had experienced activities directly related to assessment tasks or which supported them in their transition to the next stage of their study, for example mock exams or essays, feedback on a draft assignment, or 'speed dating' to find a dissertation supervisor. Students who did not find the initiative a positive learning experience noted the lack of clear purpose, lack of alignment of activities to their modules, assessments, or to their level and stage of learning. The team heard that Feedback Week was being reviewed at institutional level and the University is encouraged to include a discipline focus as well as discussion with students in this review, to ensure the week takes account of differing pedagogical approaches and students' stages of study (paragraph 76).

Postgraduate students

59 In response to the 2012 ELIR, the University established the Graduate School as a central hub and dedicated space, offering a flexible working environment for all postgraduate students and staff to meet and study. Its successful establishment has enabled the University to provide a consistent level and quality of support for all postgraduate students. The supervisory arrangements, formal training and monitoring for postgraduate research students is now managed through an online e-portfolio system and enables the University

to maintain oversight of progress and quality of supervision, while providing the institution with the ability to identify any issues should they arise.

60 The Graduate School offers a comprehensive induction and training programme for staff and students including seminars, workshops, and programmes to support students who teach and/or supervise, retreats and more formal opportunities, such as the online Research Skills Masters Programme and Supervising Doctoral Studies programme. Postgraduate research students and academic staff are able to apply for dedicated University funds for researcher training and project funding with the explicit aim of promoting an integrated and collaborative research culture. Postgraduate students who met with the ELIR team reported on the positive impact of the Graduate School in fostering a sense of community, indicating that they appreciated the advantages of the support network offered.

Student support

61 The University has effective arrangements to support students and offers a range of integrated student support services covering pastoral and academic matters. In 2013-14, the University undertook a benchmarking project of all its business processes which involved taking a holistic overview of administrative processes across the phases of the student journey, known as the 'Baselining of the Student Journey' project (paragraph 110). Following on from this work, a number of improvement projects were identified and progressed under the University's Efficiency and Effectiveness programme, including the establishment of the Support Enquiry Zone (SEZ) as a one-stop service for all student enquiries, building on positive practice identified in the 2012 ELIR. SEZ is based within the Library offering a central physical location for all generic and non-academic, student-facing enquiries and support services. SEZ is highly responsive and clearly valued by students and staff for its accessibility, range of support, and its signposting to specialised services where those are required.

62 The University stated that, since its launch, SEZ has dealt directly with approximately 94 per cent of all student enquiries, with the remaining 6 per cent being referred to specialist services. SEZ operates extended hours, 7 days per week and offers online support through live chat and email contact. Students identified SEZ as their 'go to' service for support and guidance and, in meetings with the ELIR team, commented extremely positively on the service and support offered.

Support for student transitions

63 The University has a deliberate and sustainable strategy for providing effective support to students entering from its partner colleges. The University offers a range of activities and services specifically designed to aid the transition of non-traditional students including pre-transitional and post-transitional support for students and support for partner staff. The range of pre-transitional support includes: the Abertay Associate student scheme; the college-based degree adviser system; and two summer preparation programmes for students, known as the University Preparation (UP) Programme and the Abertay College Transition (ACT) Programme which are bridging programmes for students entering the University from college. Transition officers based in partner colleges provide direct support to students in preparing them for their transition into the University. Students commented positively on these arrangements in discussions with the ELIR team.

64 Once enrolled, ongoing post-transition support for articulating students is provided through SEZ. In-session support is offered to students whose first language is not English. Students were particularly positive about the support offered by academic staff in facilitating the transition into the University and supporting them through to further study and employment.

65 The University provides development opportunities for staff in partner colleges, including delivering briefings and awareness-raising sessions by senior Abertay staff and inviting partner college staff to attend TLE seminars held at Abertay.

Learning environment

66 The University has continued to enhance its learning environment since the 2012 ELIR. A range of technologies are employed to support and enhance teaching and learning, these include software and hardware solutions to support lecture capture, virtual classrooms, as well as EMA and plagiarism detection to support a virtual learning environment (VLE). E-portfolios have been used successfully within a number of programmes as a mechanism for capturing and planning for personal and professional development. Building on this successful engagement, the University recently used e-portfolios as a mechanism for postgraduate research student annual monitoring, (paragraph 59) and the institution is encouraged to continue to build on this positive practice. The University has made investments in learning resources with increases in digital subscriptions and e-books, and this has been viewed positively by students.

67 The University has invested in its IT infrastructure, focusing on four key strands: classroom AV equipment which was upgraded and standardised; network infrastructure which was expanded to cover the whole campus with wireless access being enhanced; storage and back-up facilities being improved; and desktops, laptops and printing facilities replaced. This programme of investment was managed through a series of project boards with students as full members. The University, reflecting on this approach to partnership working, indicated its intention to include students in future initiatives considering ongoing investment in the learning environment.

Communicating changes to students

68 As indicated (see paragraphs 4, 9, 13 and 23 to 26) the University has undergone a number of significant changes to structures, curriculum and processes aimed at enhancing the student experience. The University adopts a multi-channel approach to communicating change to staff and students. The ELIR team learned of examples of good practice, where change had been effectively communicated, including a change in policy relating to the non-submission of coursework where Registry staff had targeted those students who failed to submit coursework by the deadline, informing them of the consequences of non-submission. However, in discussions with the ELIR team, students commented that not all changes had been communicated effectively or timeously, with variability existing between schools and programmes. The students also emphasised that the volume of communication from the University limited their ability to identify important changes which would impact on their learning experience.

69 The University is asked to review its multi-channel communication approach, building on existing good practice, to ensure the mode of communication appropriately reflects the information being disseminated and to avoid important information becoming lost in the high volume of messaging.

2.4 Approaches to promoting the development of graduate attributes, including employability

70 The Abertay Attributes – employability and enterprise – are clearly embedded within the University's approach to delivering an applied curriculum. Students commented positively on the provision of work-related learning and placement activity within the curriculum, including assessment which supported reflection on professional development, as well as on the opportunities available to them through cocurricular and extracurricular activities offered by both the University and the Students' Association.

71 Updated Abertay Attributes were implemented in 2015-16, with programme teams asked to ensure that these were embedded in the design of programmes as part of the curriculum reform process. Students and staff demonstrated clear understanding of the Attributes within the curriculum, giving specific examples of how they had developed these in their programmes. The University also supported students to recognise these attributes as they approach the end of their studies. From its meetings with staff and students it was clear to the ELIR team that the Abertay Attributes had been fully embedded within the curriculum.

72 The Employability Strategy 2015-20 sets out the University's strategic intention for the professional development of students, setting expectations that all programmes should feature employer engagement in delivery and include work-related learning opportunities. The Principal's Award, supported by the Careers Service, is a year-long student development programme incorporating work experience, reflective exercises and professional development workshops. The award is assessed and recognised as part of the student's Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR). The Students' Association also supports cocurricular activities through a number of academic societies and student-led initiatives.

73 Enterprise education is a priority for the University, in both curricular and cocurricular activity. The Dundee Business School is currently running a pilot project to support students in developing their ideas for social enterprise/business. The University is also working on the development of a framework to support enterprise development within the curriculum.

74 The University has engaged fully with the HEAR, currently offering over 100 verifiable achievements to students. The University is, in addition, piloting open badges to recognise students' achievements. Students who met the ELIR team were positive about their experiences of the HEAR, indicating that they were able to track their progress and achievements on an annual basis.

2.5 Effectiveness of the approach to enhancing the student learning experience

75 The University has an effective approach to enhancing the student learning experience. Student representation and partnership working with the student body and Students' Association have been significantly strengthened since the 2012 ELIR. The University has fostered an open and responsive culture to encouraging student feedback, valuing this feedback and taking appropriate action to enhance the student learning experience. In continuing to enhance this approach it would be useful for the University and the Students' Association to reflect on the value more active use of the SPA might add in supporting strategic enhancement of the student experience.

76 Recent improvements to the University's assessment and feedback arrangements have further enhanced the student learning experience, with the EMA system and feedback

return policy being positively viewed by students. The introduction of Feedback Week has been acknowledged by both the University and the student body as having significant potential to enhance students' learning and attainment; however, implementation has been challenging. The ELIR team would encourage the University to progress its intended review of Feedback Week and to work in partnership with students at school level to ensure the Week takes account of differing pedagogical approaches and students' stage of study.

77 Arrangements for supporting students are effective and the establishment of the Support Enquiry Zone was regarded extremely positively by both staff and students in providing responsive and supportive services to students. Support for students entering the University from partner colleges is extensive and effective in ensuring smooth transitions. The introduction of the Graduate School, offering a range of training and professional development opportunities including induction training, seminars, a supervision training programme and support for students with teaching responsibilities, has led to the creation of a strong community and has facilitated the development of good relationships between postgraduate students and staff.

78 The Abertay Attributes are fully embedded in the curriculum and are closely linked to the University's strategic priorities. The Attributes are widely recognised by students and staff, and provide a focus for promoting and supporting the development of students' skills and experience inside and outside of the curriculum.

79 Over recent years the University has undergone significant changes to its structures, curriculum, policy and processes and it has been recognised that clear and effective communication with staff and students is key to the success of these changes. The University has acknowledged that there would be benefit in carrying out further work to ensure that formal information related to policy and regulatory matters is visible to the whole student population; the ELIR team would support this view.

3 Enhancement in learning and teaching

3.1 Approaches to identifying and sharing good practice

80 The University has effective arrangements in place to identify and share good practice at the programme, school, and institutional level. Schools are required to report on good practice through programme and school annual monitoring, with school teaching and learning annual reports (STLAR), reviewed and discussed at SACs and academic staff are encouraged to share practice across divisions and schools. The schools host regular seminars providing opportunities for staff to share research activities and teaching and learning practice. Staff are also encouraged to contribute to the teaching learning and enhancement seminars run by the TLE team which showcase and share positive practice within and across the University (see paragraphs 83 and 88).

81 The Academic Curriculum Managers (ACMs) play a key role at school level supporting the identification and sharing of good practice, working with programme teams directly and by facilitating school and divisional away days to discuss enhancement activities and positive practice. Staff who met the ELIR team were positive about the impact this new role has had in promoting the sharing of good practice.

82 The Abertay Teaching and Learning Fund (ATLEF) was established in 2013 as a competitive fund to support teaching and learning enhancement, and is aligned directly with strategic institutional priorities and the national Enhancement Themes. The fund is open to both academic and professional support staff with a key condition of funding being the requirement to ensure effective dissemination from the project, such as presentation at

internal TLE seminars, internal and external learning and teaching conferences and through the creation of shared resources within the University community. Student engagement in the ATLEF projects has developed over time, with students funded to undertake research and work as active members of project teams. At the time of the current ELIR, a call was being developed for student-led pedagogic projects which were to be supported by the Students' Association. The ELIR team noted that staff were very aware of ATLEF projects and recognised key benefits developing from them.

83 The University hosts a range of practice sharing and development events, such as regular TLE seminars and a bi-annual conference which welcomes colleagues from the wider higher education sector. TLE seminars are focused on sharing practice in relation to institutional priorities as well as to support policy development and implementation. Staff spoke positively about the TLE seminars and conference and saw them as valuable for professional development, considering pedagogical innovation and engaging in discussion on policy development. The University has also used its strategic change activities to share good practice, for example the University's new Assessment Policy provided opportunities to share practice between staff with different levels of experience in relation to assessment design, online assessment marking and feedback, and team marking.

84 In 2015-16, a revised peer observation of teaching scheme, Peer Support of Teaching (PSoT), was introduced which is developmentally focused, providing an opportunity for reflection. Oversight of the scheme is undertaken by the Heads of Division for their areas and all academic staff are expected to participate. Staff who met the ELIR team described the introduction of PSoT positively, believing it had encouraged them to reflect on their teaching practices and share areas of positive practice. The team recognised the introduction of PSoT as positive but learned that staff engagement was variable across the institution and would encourage the University to reflect on ways of promoting wider staff engagement.

85 The Students' Association has a student-led teaching awards scheme with the awards used to identify good practice at institutional level, through individuals presenting at TLE seminars and case studies being developed, and at school level with discussions of positive practice taking place within SACs.

3.2 Impact of the national Enhancement Themes and related activity

86 Building on its positive approach to engaging with the national Enhancement Themes highlighted in the 2012 ELIR, the University has continued to use the Themes in a strategic manner to support institutional activity. Funds from the Themes were integrated with institutional funding for ATLEF projects and calls for bids related to aspects of the Themes. Within the current Student Transitions Theme, the University, following established work on the 'Baselining the Student Experience' project (paragraph 110), established two working groups to examine Recognising Prior Learning and Academic Support and Guidance, as well as funding seven ATLEF projects around the Theme. It was clear to the ELIR team that there was institution-wide awareness of, and ongoing engagement with, the Enhancement Themes, in part facilitated through the ATLEF projects. During curriculum reform, the University engaged strategically with the outcomes of the previous Enhancement Theme, Developing and Supporting the Curriculum, to consider the development of the flexible curriculum and its impact on enhancing the student experience.

87 The University emphasised that it has demonstrated a commitment to engaging with the Enhancement Themes at a national level through active participation in the Theme Leaders' Group and in supporting staff and students to present at the international Enhancement Themes conference, as well as at other external conferences and events.

Through their annual reporting, schools are also encouraged to report on their engagement with the Themes and the impact this has had on their curriculum and enhancement plans.

3.3 Engaging and supporting staff

88 Since the 2012 ELIR, the University has established the TLE team which had a highly visible enhancement-focused leadership role and remit spanning teaching and learning, professional development, academic quality management and technology-enhanced learning. In 2013, the TLE Strategy was developed (paragraph 19), with a key priority to 'raise the status of teaching' through recognition and reward of excellence in teaching, developing a staff-centred, holistic approach to staff CPD and to develop communities of practice across the University. The Strategic Plan set an ambitious target for all staff involved in teaching and supporting learning to achieve appropriate national professional recognition by 2020. The University is making progress in this area, with around 60 per cent of staff holding some form of professional recognition.

89 The TLE team takes an active role in the professional development of academic and professional support staff who are engaged in teaching and learning. The University has now developed its own Going for Gold CPD recognition framework which incorporates the revised postgraduate certificate in higher education teaching (Pg Cert HET). New academic staff entering the University are required, as part of their probationary period, to complete the Pg Cert HET if they do not already hold an equivalent qualification or level of recognition. The Going for Gold framework, including the Pg Cert HET is open to all staff with a role in learning and teaching. The Going for Gold CPD framework is aligned with the four descriptors of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for teaching and supporting learning in higher education; the Pg Cert HET is aligned with Descriptors 1 and 2 of the UKPSF. The Going for Gold framework including the Pg Cert HET was accredited by the HEA in September 2015. The Going for Gold CPD framework is viewed as providing a positive professional development opportunity for mentors and mentees across the schools and is being shared as good practice with other institutions in the sector. The ELIR team learned this has been an important development, with positive feedback from staff who indicated that it has given them pride in their profession. The University has also established an Academic Leadership Development programme, offering development opportunities to role holders such as the Heads of Division and ACMs (see paragraphs 9, 10 and 11). Academic role descriptors have been updated to require progressive professional recognition in academic staff promotion.

90 Research development and supervisory support is available through the Graduate School. The University is prioritising the support and development of supervisory teams and has instigated a trial programme – Supervising Doctoral Studies – which it plans to implement across the institution over the next three to four years. From January 2016, the Graduate School will provide an annual PGR student supervision workshop as well as an annual Research Degrees Subcommittee training workshop, which are open to those interested in research degrees governance.

91 The University's staff appraisal system, Pathways, has been used by schools and line managers since 2009 to identify CPD needs, with close to 100 per cent completion rates achieved. The ELIR team learned that staff view this system as providing a real opportunity for discussion on career review in order to identify the support and professional development needs of staff.

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

92 Overall, the University has an effective approach to promoting good practice in learning and teaching. The TLE team fulfils a highly visible leadership role for learning and teaching enhancement activity at the University, including providing support to staff during the strategic change programme that is underway across the University. There is a clearly structured set of expectations and opportunities cited in support of staff engagement and development to enhance learning and teaching. Targets are in place to measure the numbers of staff gaining professional recognition. The University recognises that, because the changes to its teaching and learning approaches are still relatively new, the full impact of the changes is yet to be realised. The ELIR team heard from staff that there is a change of culture and ethos in terms of promoting good practice in teaching and learning. The TLE Strategy, and the TLE team, have been key drivers in this area and have made significant progress in the University's aim to raise the status of teaching. The 2015 Support Services review highlighted the TLE team working in partnership with stakeholders across the institution as one of the strengths in enhancing the student learning experience. A framework for evaluating progress against the Teaching and Learning Strategy has recently been developed (paragraph 21).

93 The University has effective, well-embedded approaches to sharing good practice through its annual reporting mechanisms, school seminars and away days, the role of the ACMs, and the regular TLE seminars which have proven to be effective in bringing staff together to promote new approaches and support professional development. The ATLEF projects have contributed to supporting teaching and learning enhancement and promoted engagement with the national Enhancement Themes.

4 Academic standards

4.1 Approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards

94 Charged by the University's Court, Senate has responsibility for the overall planning, coordination and development and supervision of the academic work of the University. The University's approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards is set out in the Teaching and Learning Governance Framework (September 2015), which aims 'to involve the University community in improving teaching and learning by providing a framework for the governance management and operation of these activities', and sets out clear responsibilities for the committees and groups central to this process.

95 Following the review of Senate's committee structure (paragraph 13), the setting, maintaining and reviewing of academic standards for taught provision is undertaken on behalf of Senate by the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC). TLC takes an integrated and holistic approach to considering academic standards, quality and the enhancement of the student learning experience, providing reassurance to Senate that the quality and standards of its awards are being maintained. School academic committees have the authority to approve school academic strategy and policy, have oversight of the implementation of University strategy and policy, and are accountable to TLC. In discussions with the ELIR team, staff indicated that the committee restructuring had strengthened two-way communication between these committees.

96 Similar arrangements are in place for research degrees, with the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee reporting to Senate on matters related to the University's Research Strategy. The Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee has two subcommittees considering research degrees and research ethics.

4.2 Management of assessment

The literal grading scale and grade point average

97 The University's approach to the management of assessment is set out in the Principles of Assessment and Assessment Policy documents (February 2016). The Principles of Assessment are informed by *Chapter B6* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and by SCQF Level Descriptors, and are viewed as reference points which provide a body of guidance for staff in designing appropriate assessments. The Assessment Policy is more prescriptive, setting out University expectations relating to feedback turnaround, number and types of assessment per module, feedback and revision weeks, moderation and the EMA system. The Policy is concise and expressed in clear language, making it a useful and informative reference tool for staff.

98 Since the 2012 ELIR, the University has taken many steps to enhance its approach to managing assessment including the introduction of a 10-point literal grading scale (LGS) and the grade point average (GPA). Introduced in 2014-15, the LGS with associated evaluative descriptors is used for units of assessment and for module assessments. It was designed to simplify the grading of assessments and, in response to comments from external examiners, to encourage staff to make use of the full marking scale. The ELIR team learned that feedback from staff and students on the LGS has generally been positive and in response to staff feedback, extra guidance has been provided for use of the LGS in the context of numeric-only assessment. The University has analysed the distribution of module grades for the first year of operation of the LGS in 2014-15, comparing these results with those for the undergraduate cohorts in 2012-13 and 2013-14. The analysis shows increases in the percentages of good grades at all levels of study, as well as a reduction in the proportion of marginal fails.

99 In parallel with the introduction of the LGS, the University has introduced a GPA system to calculate degree awards. Each point on the LGS is associated with a grade point and the average grade point from assessments at stages three and four is used to determine the honours classification. GPA will first be used to calculate honours classification for students graduating in 2015-16. Students who met the ELIR team gave very positive endorsement to the use of GPA, stating that it had helped them to understand their academic progress more clearly and to identify the action they needed to take to optimise their performance and attainment as well as being aware of its usefulness as an indicator of attainment in an international context.

Academic regulations, moderation policy and assessment boards

100 In the context of curriculum reform (paragraph 23), the University has undertaken a comprehensive review and revision of its Academic Regulations for taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and for its research degrees. The aims of the review of the Academic Regulations were to apply consistent practice across the University and produce substantially shorter regulations which were easier for students to engage with and understand. The Academic Regulations set out the University's minimum standards for an award and are supported by a set of policies relating, among other things, to academic appeals, admissions, and assessment, and by the external examiner webpages and the Research Degrees Student and Supervisor Handbook. The University indicated that taught academic regulations were also modified for implementation in 2015-16 to incentivise student engagement and performance. The new regulations ensure that students cannot pass a module without participating in every unit of assessment. A student who has failed to submit an assessment will not only receive a non-submission grade but also will fail the module outright and lose any reassessment opportunity. A student may be permitted to

repeat a failed module in the following academic year within the progression regulations. Module grade for stages three and four of programmes, including failed modules, contribute toward the calculation of a GPA which is used to determine classifications. While none of the students who met the ELIR team had actually accessed the Academic Regulations themselves, their understanding of the regulations as applied to their individual programme of study and contained in programme handbooks was clear.

101 Following consideration of other institutions' approaches, a new moderation policy has been adopted for implementation in 2015-16. The policy's focus is to ensure moderation at SCQF Levels 9, 10 and 11 is carried out effectively and within the 10-day feedback turnaround period. There is no longer a requirement for internal pre or post-moderation at SCQF Levels 7 and 8, unless otherwise stipulated by the relevant professional, regulatory and statutory body (PSRB). In discussion with the ELIR team, staff indicated that moderation at SCQF Levels 7 and 8 continues in many cases, partly to give staff extra reassurance, partly to obtain an overview across the programme and partly as a support for less experienced staff. In addition to the moderation policy, the University has produced internal moderation practice guidance for module teams which provides information in a clear and accessible form covering alignment with *Chapter 6* of the Quality Code, moderation practices, their use and who should be involved.

102 Following a review of assessment boards in the context of the development of the Academic Regulations for 2015-16, changes to the format and timing of assessment boards have been introduced. Assessment boards are now held after the end of each term and final decisions on module grades and any reassessment are taken at these boards. The aims of the changes have been to reduce the time students have to wait for results, to remove uncertainty over progression for students and to ensure consistency across the institution in applying the Academic Regulations. The Academic Regulations include clear progression rules, thus enabling Registry to compute a progression decision in the vast majority of cases. The four ACMs, supported by Registry, form the Student Progress Panel which meets to consider cases requiring an academic judgement.

4.3 Use of external reference points in managing academic standards

103 The University makes full and extensive use of a standard range of external reference points, including the Quality Code and Subject Benchmark Statements; SCQF level descriptors; external examiners' comments; and PSRB requirements.

104 Subject Benchmark Statements are seen as a key reference point for programme teams. As part of curriculum reform, programme teams were asked to indicate the relevant subject benchmark statements on revised programme specifications. From a sample considered during the review, the ELIR team noted that the programme specifications all referred to the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements. However, they do not specify in any further detail on how the programme learning outcomes cross-refer to the relevant sections of the statement concerned. There would be merit in the University giving consideration to strengthening the programme specifications by capturing this.

External examiners

105 The University places a high value on the contribution of external examiners to its systems for assuring academic standards and the quality of awards. External examiners are nominated by SACs and formally appointed by TLC on behalf of Senate. The University has reduced its total number of external examiners, partly as a consequence of the changes to provision arising from portfolio review, and partly to bring it more closely in line with sector norms. External examiners participate in assessment boards where module grades are confirmed and the academic standards and achievement of students are considered,

producing reports which are considered by the University centrally and at school and programme level.

106 SACs are responsible for responding to external examiners. The University recognises that feedback to external examiners regarding the matters raised in their reports has not been routinely monitored or collected centrally. From session 2015-16 external examiner reports on the preceding year will be published on the University's intranet alongside school annual reports which include school responses to external examiners and the University's response to matters of concern raised by external examiners. The ELIR team learned that, at the time of the current ELIR, the publication of external examiner reports for 2014-15 and school responses to academic matters raised remained a work in progress. The team heard that students had not had sight of external examiner reports, although they understood that they were available on the intranet. Students were not aware of changes to programmes or modules made in the light of external examiner comments. The University is encouraged to progress with its intention to make the external examiner reports and associated school and programme responses more visible to students.

107 External examiners are supported through webpages that provide detailed guidance and resources, including the University's expectations of the role and the support it makes available. To keep external examiners informed of the changes to provision and assessment policies resulting from curriculum reform, an external examiners' conference was held in October 2015. The ELIR team learned that the University intends to hold a biennial external examiners' conference.

Professional, regulatory and statutory body (PSRB) accreditation

108 A substantial number of the University's programmes have been accredited by external bodies, such as the British Psychological Society and the Law Society. It is clear from documentation and meetings with staff that the University has good working relations with all the PSRBs accrediting its programmes. PSRBs were supportive to the University, the schools and the programmes concerned during curriculum reform. They were engaged with the process and willing to give advice and guidance.

4.4 Effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic standards

109 Overall, the University has an effective approach to securing academic standards (paragraphs 112, 116 and 121). The ELIR team recognises the many and various ways in which the University's approach to the management of assessment has been enhanced since the 2012 ELIR, such that this now represents particularly positive practice. In particular, the introduction of the LGS and the GPA has helped to clarify student understanding of attainment and to incentivise student performance in line with the aims of the TLE strategy. The introduction of the EMA system and associated turnaround time requirements has not only improved the timeliness and quality of feedback to students but has also prompted ongoing reflection across subject teams on assessment practices and the promotion of good practice around assessment and feedback. The University makes effective use of external reference points in relation to academic standards. The approach is comprehensive, systematic and thorough, meeting sector norms and expectations.

5 Self-evaluation and management of information

5.1 Key features of the institution's approach

Streamlining business processes

110 Since the 2012 ELIR, the University has been engaged in a period of significant change, a key aspect of which has been the rationalisation and streamlining of business processes with the aims of reducing administrative costs, improving effectiveness and enabling the University to make greater use of business information. A significant benchmarking project called Baseline the Student Journey was conducted to provide a holistic analysis of administrative processes across the five phases of the student journey at the University and this identified a range of enhancements which were implemented. This systematic, self-critical and evaluative project has led to further improvement initiatives being taken forward within the University's Efficiency and Effectiveness programme including the review and rationalisation of the Senate committee structure; the creation of the Support Enquiry Zone (SEZ); the introduction of the EMA system; a significant review of Corporate Information Systems (CIS); a redesign of the University website, centralisation of the administrative support and closure of school offices; and a number of targeted reviews of processes and policies conducted using LEAN methodology to enhance policy and practice.

Use of information to enhance the student experience

111 The management of information was an area highlighted for development in the 2012 ELIR and, as part of its response, the University has undertaken a significant redevelopment of CIS which was ongoing at the time of the current ELIR. A pilot was undertaken to explore the development of management information 'dashboards', to provide a means of efficiently managing student recruitment, performance and progress. Learning analytics are also being explored as a means of viewing and analysing real-time data on student performance and progress. The intention is for this approach to enable early identification of any anomalies and patterns of performance related to particular cognate groups and the production of learner analytics for individual students. The ability to interrogate the management information data at school and programme level will become part of the annual monitoring, review and enhancement cycle. The University is aware that the implementation of the CIS project is taking longer than originally planned and recognises the importance that successful implementation has for its ability to deliver efficiencies and consistency in reporting.

Annual monitoring

112 The University has effective, structured and systematic processes in place for conducting annual monitoring, review and enhancement. Annual monitoring is founded on the production of programme annual reports which draw on a comprehensive set of student cohort, module and programme performance data along with external examiner reports. The sample of reports considered by the ELIR team were written in detail and made effective use of this performance data. The ELIR team explored with key staff, plans to conduct periodic review with a subject focus and the possible implications for current annual monitoring processes (paragraph 115).

113 The SACs are responsible for approving the school teaching and learning annual reports (STLARs) which draw on programme annual reports and supplementary data such as external examiner reports, PSRB reports and outcomes from NSS and DLHE, before onward submission to TLC for review and approval. The range of information provided as appendices to the STLAR and staff analysis of the data is comprehensive. The University

reviews its annual monitoring process in order to make enhancements, for example, to address the variability in the quality of STLARs, standard templates were introduced and enhancements made to the data sets and their timeliness. TLC also receives annual reports from the TLE unit, Student Services, Information Systems and Estates and Campus Services. In addition to their annual reports, schools produce operational plans that identify any issues, actions and intended enhancements along with associated responsibilities for their implementation.

Portfolio review and curriculum reform

114 Prior to curriculum reform, the University conducted a holistic review of its portfolio using a criterion-based evaluation framework. The University values this framework, using it to gauge the continuing health of its academic portfolio and intends to incorporate the framework into its annual monitoring process in future sessions. Linked to this, the University has agreed a more forward-looking approach to the process of Portfolio and Academic Planning which is integrated into the Strategic Planning process. From 2016-17 any proposed changes to the portfolio will be flagged by schools in their operational plans with an accompanying rationale. Changes to the portfolio will be subject to agreement at institutional level, and will normally be confirmed 18 months prior to the start of the session in which the changes will take effect.

115 Curriculum reform was accompanied by internal restructuring to allow the formation of cognate subject groups within schools. The ELIR team explored with staff the impact of this change in focus from programme to subject. Currently annual monitoring is conducted on a programme basis. In future, periodic review will have a subject focus. The University indicated that there will be considerable continuity with existing processes and that subject coherence will make it easier to review the new subject groups. While recognising this benefit, some staff also expressed a concern that a focus on the subject could result in a loss of information being captured in monitoring at the programme level. The University is encouraged to reflect on the design of its annual monitoring procedures to ensure that annual scrutiny continues to provide the best insight to the ongoing academic health of programmes and to ensure it provides a good fit with the revised periodic subject review arrangements.

Institution-led quality review

116 The 2012 ELIR positively endorsed the effectiveness of the University's quality review processes. The University distinguishes between periodic reviews for on-campus provision and partnership quality reviews for provision delivered with or by its partners, reviewing its entire subject and programme provision over a six-year period. The most recent round of reviews started in 2009-10 and concluded in 2013-14; that is within a five-year timeframe. In line with the University's six-year cycle, the next round of quality reviews and partnership quality reviews was due to commence in 2015-16. However, as reported by TLC in March 2015, a process for the next cycle of quality reviews and partnership quality reviews had yet to be agreed.

117 The team heard that, following curriculum reform, the University planned to introduce a three-year gap before beginning the next round of periodic reviews, with interim arrangements planned for the period 2015-16 to 2017-18 (paragraphs 121, 122 and 123). The University's rationale for this approach was to allow time to reflect on the experience gained from the last round of quality reviews and partnership quality reviews, as well as from the implementation of curriculum reform undertaken in 2014-15. The University also considered that the curriculum reform exercise demonstrated adherence to SFC guidance on institution-led review such that it could be used as a proxy for institution-led review of the institution's whole portfolio.

118 The ELIR team was keen to understand the University's position on this matter in more detail and engaged in extensive discussions with key staff as well as considering all of the available documentation relating to curriculum reform. The team recognised that the curriculum reform exercise was conducted with due rigour. The team saw evidence of engagement with the proposed changes to programme specifications and programme learning outcomes on the part of external colleagues both from within the University ('internal externals') and from outside, as well as programme teams responding to those comments. Guidelines for outlining the process and the main changes associated with curriculum reform were produced centrally, and narratives accompanying the revised programme documentation were generally of high quality. The available documentation and discussions with staff indicated that SACs largely discharged their responsibilities for approving revised programme documentation satisfactorily. Overall, the team concurred with the University's view that curriculum reform had created widespread opportunities for critical and creative reflection on the future shape of programmes, which programme teams had engaged with.

119 While the process had been well managed, the ELIR team identified limits in the extent to which curriculum reform could be considered to fully meet the expectations of periodic subject review as set out in the Quality Code and the SFC Guidance. In particular, the team was mindful that this reform had, on the whole, considered existing programmes, which had been revised to accommodate delivery using 20 credit modules, resulting in minor changes to the vast majority of the provision. This, given the University's criteria for major and minor changes, resulted in almost all programmes being re-approved at SAC level. While students were consulted about the proposed changes, the team heard that, in the main, the discussion had focused on the move to 20 credit modules and there were limited opportunities for students to interact with external reviewers. The team also heard from staff about a lack of opportunity to discuss subject development in more depth and more broadly with external colleagues or to reflect on the ideas for enhancement that often result from such opportunities. The team therefore took the view that curriculum reform was essentially programme focused in nature and did not explore the wider consideration of subject health which would have been part of a holistic institution-led review.

120 The ELIR team recognised the hard work involved in planning curriculum reform and defining its parameters but did not consider that this exercise provided adequate justification to defer the start of the next cycle of institution-led review for three years to 2017-18 (paragraph 135).

Interim arrangements following curriculum reform

121 The University currently intends to operate interim review arrangements over three academic sessions before returning to a six-year schedule of annual monitoring and quality and partnership quality reviews in 2018-19. The University produced a draft set of proposals for this interim period as well as an outline of annual monitoring and quality review activity planned thereafter. Under these proposals, annual monitoring would continue throughout the three-year period. The University had already completed a review of its support services in 2015-16, and indicated that it intends to review postgraduate research provision in 2016-17.

122 In session 2017-18, the last year of the interim review arrangements, the University planned to review the operation and impact of curriculum reform. By 2017-18, the revised curriculum will have been in place for all stages of study at undergraduate and taught postgraduate level for one academic year, and the timing of the review would permit any changes to be made for session 2018-19. The ELIR team learned that the University intends to convene panels with external membership which will meet with staff and students to consider the documentation and evidence bases during the development and implementation phases of curriculum reform. Reports will be written for each area reviewed and a separate panel of senior University stakeholders will review these to provide a

strategic overview report. This proposed interim review process, which was subject to Senate approval at the time of the current ELIR, would mark the formal end of curriculum reform and would permit a return to a regular cycle of quality reviews and partnership quality reviews for the period 2018-19 to 2023-24.

123 The ELIR team considered these proposals for review as robust and fit for the purpose of reviewing curriculum reform. However, given the lapse of time since the last full cycle quality reviews, the team considered that the University should ensure the exercise adheres to the SFC guidance for institutional-led review and should include the opportunity for 'face-to-face' dialogue with external subject specialists and appropriate engagement with students.

5.2 Commentary on the advance information set

124 The University provided a comprehensive advance information set, plus access to the University intranet and 'One Drive', as well as additional information during the review which allowed the ELIR team to develop a good understanding of the arrangements in place for quality assurance and enhancement. In preparation for the current ELIR, the University undertook a detailed mapping of its provision against the Quality Code, which identified areas of good practice, and highlighted a small number of areas for development. An action plan was devised to address the development points, which was monitored by the ELIR Steering Group, with all actions identified as complete or in progress at the time of the ELIR visit.

125 The ELIR team was aware that the significant change process that had taken place within the University since the 2012 ELIR had necessitated changes to committee structures, academic regulations and a range of business processes with a deliberate focus on rationalisation, streamlining and simplification. The team recognised that the University is in a transition phase but, from the sample of committee papers and reports it reviewed, also noted a number of ways in which documentation about key institutional decisions could be tightened; for example, there did not appear to be minutes for the Curriculum Reform Working Group with actions instead being located in a sequence of email correspondence and a number of annual monitoring reports were marked as unapproved or contained typographical errors. The ELIR team therefore encourages the University to review its arrangements for ensuring the accuracy and consistency of reporting to ensure that decisions are clearly recorded and reported in sufficient detail to support effective institutional oversight.

5.3 Use of external reference points in self-evaluation

126 The University makes use of a range of external reference points to inform its self-evaluative processes and its programme and curriculum development activities. These reference points include the Quality Code and SCQF level descriptors. External examiners play a key role in providing objective externality. The development of management information including 'dashboards' will support the University to more readily identify any patterns or trends in data, at institutional and school/programme levels.

127 The majority of the University's eligible programmes have PSRB accreditation, with programme specifications making reference to the relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, (paragraph 104). Staff are actively engaged in sector networks and external bodies, and recent developments are clearly informed by an evidence-base, current sector thinking and pedagogic research.

5.4 Management of public information

128 The University's arrangements for managing public information are effective and meet sector expectations. Much of the University's public information is made available through its website which is managed through a combination of delegated responsibility to schools and service departments, with approval required at senior level. The University stated that its public information on undergraduate and postgraduate course provision is centrally controlled by External Relations (Director of Recruitment) in conjunction with the Registrar. In light of institutional restructuring and change, the ELIR team considers there would be value in the University reaffirming where responsibility rests for ensuring the accuracy of public information.

129 The University Communications Centre is responsible for media relations, social media and video, and Registry has responsibility for the KIS data related to the academic portfolio in conjunction with the ACM in each school. The Registry is responsible for the accuracy of HEAR data on student transcripts and the Secretariat is responsible for all freedom of information requests. The University also promotes its 'Model Publication Scheme' externally on the website indicating what it makes publicly available and how this can be accessed. Relevant managers have responsibility for ensuring the University adheres to all legislation and duties relating to the publication of specific policies.

130 Specific guidance and approvals processes are in place to assure the accuracy of publicly available material relating to collaborative provision and are contained in the bespoke Partnerships Procedures Manual for each partnership.

131 The University has clear policies in place for staff on the use of social media as an integral part of the employee relations framework and students are made aware of the need to manage their 'digital footprint' in relation to research, ethical issues and in the context of developing their future employment profiles.

5.5 Effectiveness of the approach to self-evaluation and management of information

132 Overall, the University has an effective, well-established and structured approach to self-evaluation and the management of information. Since the 2012 ELIR, the University has embarked on a significant period of change focused on enhancing the overall quality of the student experience and in preparing the curriculum for the future. These developments were well-informed through internal evaluation and the use of external reference points, and involved significant engagement with staff and students, reflecting an open and responsive culture at the University (paragraph 27).

133 The self-critical and analytical approach undertaken to conduct the Baselineing the Student Journey project, and the focused enhancement projects which derived from it, are to be commended as representing particularly positive practice. The University is encouraged to continue adopting this type of approach for future work.

134 Linked to the strategic change and the review of Senate's committee structures, the University is asked to review and, where necessary, enhance arrangements for securing the accuracy and clarity of reporting and recording its decision-making, ensuring key University committees record their decisions in sufficient detail to continue to support effective institutional oversight.

135 In developing its plans for undertaking the evaluation of curriculum reform planned for session 2017-18, the ELIR team strongly urges the University to ensure that the scope of

this exercise is not confined to the development and implementation of curriculum reform but that it also meets all of the guidance for institution-led review including undertaking detailed and self-reflective scrutiny of all provision at subject level since the last quality review and ensures appropriate dialogue and engagement with external subject specialists and students. In addition, the University is asked to reflect on its existing annual monitoring procedures in light of curriculum reform and changes to organisational structures to ensure this annual scrutiny gives effective oversight of the academic health of programmes and subject areas, and fits with the revised periodic review arrangements.

6 Collaborative activity

6.1 Key features of the institution's strategic approach

136 One of the University's strategic principles of 'expanding horizons' places emphasis on internationalisation and encouraging student and staff mobility. The University's Internationalisation Strategy is focused on inward and outward mobility, that is, it aims to attract students and staff from overseas to Dundee and provide and promote opportunities to Abertay staff and students to participate in mobility programmes such as Erasmus plus, student exchange and study abroad, with the aim of enriching the cultural experience of local students, rather than seeking new delivery opportunities or expansion of existing partnerships. The Strategy indicates that any international collaborative activity is expected to support this.

137 The University is committed to addressing local needs, particularly through its widening participation activities, for which it has a good track record. These include partnerships with local further education colleges and close working relationships with local businesses. There are formal partnerships in place with Dundee and Angus College, Fife College, SRUC (Elmwood campus) and the Dundee and Angus Chamber of Commerce. Key international links are with SEGi University and Colleges, Malaysia, and the Ecole Supérieure de Conduite de Travaux (ESCT), Paris.

138 Following the University's portfolio review, the institution decided to rationalise its franchised provision, putting in place the necessary arrangements to support the running out of these programmes, while maintaining the quality of the student experience. The University is committed to supporting and developing articulation arrangements, as detailed in its SFC Outcome Agreement and is the lead institution in the Tayside and Fife Articulation Hub, which is funded until July 2016. Other Scottish partnership activity includes participation in the delivery of a joint MSc in Industrial Biotechnology where the award is made by the University of Strathclyde. In 2015-16, there were 2,091 (head count) undergraduate students studying at partner institutions, just over half of the number of students studying on the Dundee campus.

139 The key international collaborative activity is a long-standing partnership with SEGi University and Colleges in Malaysia, with the latest Memorandum of Agreement reviewed and signed in 2014. The Dundee Business School remained the largest contributor to the collaborative provision at SEGi University and Colleges. Started in 2015, revised double degrees have been introduced with students studying SEGi University and Colleges degrees in years 1 and 2 and articulating to the dual award for year 3. On successful completion, students receive degrees from both SEGi University and Colleges, and the University. In line with the strategic objective to increase the number of international students, SEGi University and College students are encouraged to complete their final year of study at the Dundee campus. The MSc Construction Management is delivered in collaboration with ESCT in Paris and is delivered jointly between the two institutions, taught in both French and English. It leads to a University of Abertay Dundee award.

6.2 Securing academic standards of collaborative provision

140 Overall, the University has effective arrangements in place for securing the academic standards of its collaborative provision. Following the University's committee restructuring, institutional oversight of collaborative activities is to be managed through a joint management forum whose membership includes the Director of Teaching and Learning Enhancement, the Academic Quality Manager, the Director of Student Services and a representative from the Registry and the International Office. Individual partnerships are supported through interactions between individual members of academic staff in the relevant schools and the partner institutions. The management of collaborative activity is supported by the Collaborative Procedures handbook, with each partnership also having its own detailed procedures manual.

141 The University Executive formally approves all partnerships and the International Office provides central monitoring of partnerships with school involvement through annual monitoring. The 2012 ELIR identified the University's Strategic Partnership Review (SPR) process, used with the then Adam Smith College, as positive practice. Since then, the University has applied this approach to reviewing all of its strategic partnerships. The SPR process links to the quality review processes adopted for the 'home' programmes.

142 The University confirmed that its collaborative activity is delivered in line with *Chapter B10* of the Quality Code. Key features of the quality arrangements include: a Memorandum of Agreement with each partner; the University Collaborative Procedures handbook; procedures manuals for each partnership; associate lectureships and associate student status being offered to those studying on an Abertay programme at a partner institution; annual monitoring visits and reporting; quality review of collaborative programmes being integrated within 'parent' programmes; staff contributing to the delivery of the University's programmes needing to be approved by the University; and college partner staff being encouraged to hold an appropriate teaching qualification.

143 Collaborative provision delivered with the University's local college partners and at ESCT use the University's academic regulations, and good working relationships between staff ensure the effective communication of changes associated with the development and delivery of the programmes. The procedures manual for the degrees delivered at SEGi University and Colleges sets out that this provision is delivered in accordance with SEGi regulations and quality assurance processes. The University indicated the decision to adopt SEGi University and Colleges' regulations and processes was taken in recognition of the long-standing partnership, level of trust and confidence in the communication and monitoring systems that have been built between the two institutions, as well as an acknowledgement of SEGi University and Colleges' growth and maturity as a university. External examiners are appointed by the University to provide externality to its collaborative provision, confirming that programmes are subject to the same oversight as those delivered in Dundee and that academic standards are comparable.

6.3 Enhancing the student learning experience on collaborative programmes

144 The University has effective arrangements in place for students studying on collaborative programmes, offering extensive transition support for students entering the institution, particularly for students entering with advanced standing from college partners. This is achieved through supporting partner staff and pre and post-transitional support for students (paragraphs 63 and 64). As associate lecturers of the University, staff employed by collaborative partners to deliver University programmes are encouraged to enrol on the Pg Cert HET. They can access online resources and a calendar of CPD events is run at partner institutions to foster sharing of practice and staff exchange. More locally-based partner staff are able to attend TLE seminars in Dundee and the ELIR team heard that staff from Fife College were actively involved in the curriculum reform changes.

145 The 2010 QAA report on transnational education provision in Malaysia recognised as positive practice the University's use of the VLE to promote a common learning experience between students based in Dundee and its partner SEGi University and Colleges. SEGi's adoption of the same VLE platform at the University at the end of 2015 will allow this work to be extended, providing an opportunity for cross-institutional student discussions and group work. There is also an intention to use the VLE to engage SEGi University and Colleges staff with CPD.

146 Through liaison with University school-based staff, SEGi University and Colleges' colleagues have been informed of new initiatives including curriculum reform. There are effective communication arrangements in place between Abertay and SEGi University and Colleges including: regular visits of staff between the two institutions, videoconferencing between Abertay and SEGi's staff and students, and workshops on enhancing teaching and learning during the visits to the Malaysian campus. Students in Abertay and Malaysia are being encouraged to set each other quizzes in order to develop an understanding of their different cultural and educational contexts.

147 There is a limited connection between the Students' Association and partner college Students' Associations, although SEGi University and Colleges' students are able to submit individual feedback to the University on their student experience. The SEGi University and Colleges partnership manual contains guidelines for establishing a staff student consultative committee and indicates that there should be an opportunity for students to have a forum where they feel their voices can be heard. The University should explore further ways of ensuring that student feedback from collaborative activity is gathered and acted upon.

6.4 Effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative activity

148 The University's processes for managing its collaborative provision are effective and meet sector expectations. Following curriculum reform, the University indicated that it intends to conduct a review of its collaborative provision in 2017-18, using the same panels to consider Dundee and partner-based provision. The University has recognised that recent restructuring has impacted on its ability to measure the effectiveness of its approach to managing collaborative activity. The establishment of the joint management forum should support the University's ambition to gain greater oversight of its collaborative activity and to ensure its approach to reviewing and enhancing this provision remains effective. The ELIR team would support this approach.

149 The ELIR team noted the deliberate and sustainable strategy for supporting students entering the University from its partner colleges, which represents positive practice. The international collaboration with SEGi University and Colleges is indicative of a successful approach to managing collaborative activity where the evolving nature of the collaboration reflects the implementation of the University's strategic approach in this area. The long-standing nature of the relationship with SEGi University and Colleges is based on mutual trust and understanding, and allows changes to be easily communicated.

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