Enhancement-led Institutional Review of Edinburgh Napier University

Technical Report

March 2015

Contents

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 Edinburgh Napier University. The review took place as follows: Part 1 visit on 10 to 12 February 2015 and Part 2 visit on 23 to 27 March 2015. The review was conducted by a team of six reviewers:

- Lesley Howie (Academic Reviewer)
- Chris McIntyre (Academic Reviewer)
- Professor John Sawkins (Academic Reviewer)
- Dr Roy Ferguson (International Reviewer)
- Anne-Marie Docherty (Student Reviewer)
- Dr Clare Parks (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 a case study: Enhancing the student experience and engagement through a strengthened and formalised partnership approach between the University and Napier Students' Association.

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.

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.

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

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]

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[4] Outcome Report: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/provider?UKPRN=10007772.

Overarching judgement about Edinburgh Napier University

Edinburgh Napier University 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 describes itself as an 'enterprising University' whose values are 'to be professional, ambitious, innovative and inclusive'. It has a broad portfolio of degrees with a professional focus that are linked to the workplace and to communities at home and abroad. It is committed to research that has impact; contributes to policy development and environmental, economic and social well-being; and is supportive of business innovation and growth. The University states that it is committed to widening access and to developing graduates who are highly valued by employers.

2   The University's programmes are based at three campuses in Edinburgh with partners in other locations including Hong Kong, Singapore, India and Sri Lanka. In 2013-14 the University had a total student population of 18,436 students, of whom 15,182 were undergraduate, 3,046 postgraduate taught and 208 were postgraduate research. There are 13,381 students based in Edinburgh and 5,005 in transnational educational partnerships.

3   Since 2006, the academic structure has been based on three faculties, each hosted on a different campus and containing at least two schools. At the time of preparing for the current ELIR, consultation on a possible move to a flatter school-based structure was underway. It was subsequently confirmed that a move to a six-school structure was approved and would take effect from 1 August 2015.

4   A Strategic Review was undertaken during 2013-14. This review was informed by analysis of the University's operating context, recent performance and reference to a wide range of external resources and policy documents, including the University's Outcome Agreement. A new Strategic Plan, Strategy 2020: Building Success, resulted from this review.

5   Strategy 2020 defines the University's strategic vision to be, 'an enterprising and innovative community renowned internationally, with an unrivalled student learning experience'. It also provides overarching strategic objectives relating to the growth of academic reputation; the delivery of an excellent, personalised student experience; the internationalisation of the University's work; and the intention to build innovation, enterprise and citizenship.

6   This overarching strategy is underpinned by seven corporate strategies, including academic and international. The Academic Strategy contains strands on learning, teaching and assessment; research and innovation; and student experience. The Internationalisation Strategy details the University's plans to grow transnational education (TNE). The Corporate Plan 2014-15 sets out the initial actions towards implementing Strategy 2020, including targets for growth and achievement. The Budget and Investment Plan 2014-15 was developed to ensure early investment in academic support and development, including academic staffing, online delivery, student enterprise and the partnership with the Napier Students' Association (NSA).

7   Development of Strategy 2020 followed changes to the University's leadership. A new Principal and Vice-Chancellor was appointed in 2013, and a new Vice-Principal Academic (now Deputy Vice-Chancellor) in 2012. The University has a commitment to be responsive to staff and student feedback through a transparent and timely approach to addressing concerns, and has taken advantage of the opportunity afforded by the leadership changes to facilitate different approaches to engagement with the University community (see paragraph 9).

8   Senior staff indicated that the current ELIR was taking place at a helpful time. Preparing the Reflective Analysis had enabled further reflection on how well the strategic objectives were becoming embedded into University culture, and consideration of the challenges that were being faced in working to meet the ambitious targets within Strategy 2020. Senior staff also indicated that they would welcome the ELIR team's view of the University's approach to delivering an excellent, personalised student experience, which was intended to inform the development of the institution's Student Experience Statement.

1.2   Strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching

9   The University demonstrated an effective approach towards strategic development and implementation. The ELIR team recognised that senior leaders were open and responsive to staff and student views during the period of significant transformation and change while Strategy 2020 was developed and first implemented. More widely, there has been a cultural shift in the way senior managers engage with staff and students, placing value in open communication and consultation through a range of approaches, including: the Principal's Campus Conversations; regular e-newsletters from the Principal, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Secretary's Office; and University conferences and professional development workshops that are aligned to the strategic objectives. These approaches have promoted the wider engagement of staff and students in the strategic planning process.

10   The Principal's Campus Conversations have been positively received. They provide an opportunity for staff to give feedback on areas of interest or even concern. The ELIR team learned that projects have been established in response to issues that have been raised through these meetings, including the Actions for Change project and Research Infrastructure Review. University staff and students welcomed the open nature of the new approach to communication and the variety of methods employed, the approachability of senior managers, and their openness to new ideas and possibilities. It was evident to the team that this open and facilitative culture is particularly important at a time of significant change for the University with its new strategy and imminent academic restructure.

11   Strategy 2020 sets demanding goals around four key strategic objectives; the University recognises that delivering these objectives will require agility, clear lines of internal decision making and communication, and optimal deployment of staff. In discussion with the ELIR team, staff and students highlighted opportunities to improve communication, remove barriers to collaboration, develop academic leadership, simplify processes, devolve decision-making and optimise the delivery of professional services. Related to the Strategy, a consultation was underway at the time of the current ELIR visit, inviting the University community to consider whether resources embedded in the faculties could be redeployed to strengthen the schools and academic leadership, resulting in a more streamlined corporate management structure.

12   The consultation was open to all staff. Staff and students had opportunities to contribute, and appreciated the open manner of communication adopted by the Leadership Team in the consultative process. The ELIR team heard from staff who suggested the new structure might not be very different for all parts of the University but conveyed a sense of opportunity around the change, indicating that they were using it to review practice, seeking

to devolve more functions to school offices while maintaining central institutional oversight. During this period of considerable potential change, it is clearly important that the University continues to operate its existing quality arrangements (see paragraphs 20, 83-87 and 103-108). The Academic Board is reviewing the existing committee structure in view of the planned move from three faculties to six schools as the primary academic units of the University. This review recognises the centrality and importance of committees in driving strategy.

13   The Academic Strategy sets the direction of learning and teaching practices, which were also informed by the previous national Enhancement Theme, Developing and Supporting the Curriculum. The Academic Strategy is a development of the previous Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2010-15. While the previous Strategy placed high value on employability and emphasised the development of students as global citizens, the University recognised that broader skills and employability are developed in the way students study, learn and are assessed, as well as by what they learn. The Academic Strategy establishes a pedagogic framework that places students at the centre of an active learning and conceptual change model. It focuses on shaping the student learning experience, rather than on content delivery.

14   The University has an effective approach to strengthening its partnership with the NSA. Partnership activities are linked to the University's strategic objectives and include: implementing the NSA's volunteering framework (VBase); establishing the Student Experience Committee; and seeking to form a clearer understanding of the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey results and enhancing the taught postgraduate student experience.

15   Since 2012, as part of implementing Strategy 2020, there has been an increased strategic focus on the role of the programme in delivering an enhanced student experience. This focus recognises the aim of engaging students in learning through the whole programme, rather than a more mechanistic acquisition of learning outcomes through individual modules. A working group was established in 2013-14 to develop programme design guidelines articulating the revised approach to programme delivery (see paragraph 90).

16   The Academic Board is the primary academic body with delegated authority from the University Court to oversee the overall planning, coordination, development and supervision of academic work. It has six subcommittees, each with responsibility for the implementation of elements of strategy. The Academic Board reports to the University Court on its effectiveness annually to ensure that it continues to meet its remits and duties. The University indicated that the committee structure would be reviewed for 2015-16. The Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee (ASEC) is responsible to the Academic Board for strategy and policy in relation to learning, teaching and assessment, and the strategic approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching activity is underpinned and informed by the quality assurance arrangements set out in the University's Quality Framework.

17   Implementation of strategy is also supported by the annual corporate planning and budgeting process, which operates on a three-year forward horizon. Strategy 2020 sets out ambitious targets, so the Corporate Plan has an important function in prioritising how strategy is implemented. Senior managers are responsible for ensuring that the deliverables of the Corporate Plan are met, and this is undertaken through departmental plans. The annual Professional Development Review process is aligned to these plans and is intended to engage all staff in helping to achieve the strategic objectives.

18   Effective implementation of Strategy 2020 depends on the continuing development of information management systems to inform analysis and planning. The University is investing in ongoing development and enhancement of information management systems to analyse and improve performance against targets and key performance indicators (KPIs). In 2011-12 the development of a new information management system was undertaken to improve the reporting of management information across students, staff, finance and estates. More recently, a suite of strategic dashboards and reports have been developed by the Planning and Business Intelligence Team to support both the measurement of the University's strategic KPIs and the provision of quantitative data to inform strategic decision making. The University acknowledges that it could further develop its use to inform strategic planning.

19   The University has taken a strategic approach to addressing areas for development highlighted in the 2011 ELIR: student partnership (see paragraphs 39-42), student staff liaison committees (see paragraph 38), student feedback (see paragraphs 36-38), communicating with students (see paragraphs 36-38), personal development tutors (PDTs) (see paragraph 50), student retention (see paragraph 24), research students (see paragraphs 46-49), links with partner colleges (see paragraphs 126-127) and quality enhancement (see paragraph 59). These areas are addressed throughout this report.

1.3   Effectiveness of the approach to implementing strategies

20   The ELIR team concluded that the University has developed a culture of critical self-evaluation. For example, in preparing for the current ELIR, the University evaluated its policies and practice, identifying actions that are likely to strengthen its approach to support the implementation of its key strategic priorities (see paragraphs 112-113). The University should continue to ensure that ongoing review processes during organisational restructure facilitate the effective embedding of previously faculty-based work within the schools.

21   The University demonstrates an effective approach towards strategy implementation. The development of Strategy 2020 demonstrates proactive leadership and an open and inclusive approach to engaging staff and students, particularly through the Principal's Campus Conversations. This open approach has been important during a period of transition and change. Strategy 2020 sets out the University's goals, and the Corporate Plan supports the implementation of the Strategy through clearly prioritising the actions and targets. The committee structure provides a formal deliberative mechanism for strategy implementation.

2   Enhancing the student learning experience

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

22   In 2013-14 the University had a student population of 18,436. This consisted of 15,182 undergraduate, 3,046 postgraduate taught and 208 postgraduate research students. UK-delivered provision comprised: 64.1 per cent students from Scotland, 10.6 per cent from the rest of the UK, 14.6 per cent from the rest of the EU and 10.7 per cent international outside the EU students.

23   The University has 240 formal articulation agreements with eight colleges in Scotland and 29 formal articulation routes with international partners from eight countries. In 2013 the Associate Student Scheme was established in collaboration with local colleges to strengthen the University's approach to articulation. The University is a member of the Edinburgh, Lothians, Fife and Borders Regional Articulation Hub (ELRAH). The ELRAH established a national articulation database and route finder search tool, which aims to

improve the statistical reporting of students entering through an articulation arrangement to provide a regional and national context. In 2013-14, 887 new undergraduate entrants joined the University from Scottish colleges and, in 2014-15, 565 students entered the University with advanced standing.

24   Twelve per cent of the Scottish-domiciled full-time undergraduate students come from an MD20 background and 28 per cent come from an MD40 background. Entrants from MD20 postcodes have risen from 10.3 per cent in 2013-14 to 11.5 per cent in 2014-15 in accordance with 2014-17 Outcome Agreement targets. The University expects to meet its retention target of 90.5 per cent of full-time Scottish-domiciled students returning in year 2 by 2015-16. The University's Student Retention Steering Group has responsibility for overseeing data and activity in this area.

25   The University has 6,403 overseas students making up one third of the total student population. These students study on programmes delivered predominately in Hong Kong, Singapore and India. In accordance with strategic objectives, TNE provision has increased significantly, with an additional 1,534 enrolments since 2010-11. The University aims to grow its international, non-EU, student population from 4,600 full-time equivalent (FTE) to 7,800 FTE by 2020 (see paragraph 122).

26   The University's management information system plays a key role in helping the University to understand its student community (see paragraph 18), making National Student Survey results more widely available and enabling staff to interrogate information, such as survey results, more effectively. Staff receive training on using the management information system's key data sets. These training sessions are also used to consult on system improvements, including: the potential to identify service use by students so that specific activities could be targeted at groups that were not taking up services; and identifying aspects that were working well so that good practice could be transferred to other areas and student groups. Student progression and achievement data is monitored by the Student Retention Steering Group.

27   The University has invested in the development of the management information system, but recognises that existing mechanisms for providing module and programme leaders with centrally produced quantitative data to inform monitoring activities require further development. Information is currently generated locally by programme teams using a bespoke platform designed to assist in monitoring students' progression and achievement. The University believes that information generated for academic standards purposes needs to be used consistently University-wide to better inform areas of good academic practice or where development is required to ensure standards remain secure. Consequently, the Planning and Business Intelligence Team is working with academic staff to develop module and programme dashboards within the management information system to realise this ambition.

2.2   Supporting equality and diversity in the student population

28   The University has a wide range of effective initiatives aimed at supporting equality and diversity across the student population. The Equality and Diversity Committee approves the University's Equality and Diversity Statement, and the Student Experience Committee is responsible for advising the ASEC on the development of policy in areas related to the wider student experience.

29   The University aims to integrate student support and development resources within the curriculum to ensure support is tailored to meet specific programme requirements. This approach embeds academic skills development, including library literacy, essay writing and exam preparation, and participation in Confident Futures workshops at programme

level. These workshops encourage students to take responsibility for their own personal and professional development, enhance their approach to learning and engage more deeply with their programme of study. The ELIR team heard examples of the way in which Confident Futures workshops are integrated in the curriculum, including the use of existing feedback as a feedforward mechanism through an action planning tool in immunology modules. At the time of the current ELIR, 66 per cent of academic skills development and 87 per cent of the Confident Futures activities had been integrated. Students told the ELIR team that support services are embedded at induction and that support services are well signposted and available through MyNapier, the University's intranet.

30   Students with additional learning needs are supported by the Disability and Inclusion Team. The University has invested in this resource to increase its capacity to support students. This investment enabled the creation of two Mental Health Adviser posts within the Student Counselling and Mental Well-being Team in response to an increase in the number of students presenting with mental health issues.

31   The University offers a range of pre-entry interventions to support students entering the University through a formal college articulation route, including drop-in lectures, team teaching with college staff, campus visits and the use of social media. A Coming from College resource can be accessed through the University's virtual learning environment (VLE) and is open for any student to self-enrol. This online support tool is designed to help college students negotiate the transition from college to university and provides additional signposting to relevant services, such as employer mentoring, study abroad, and study skills support.

32   Other widening participation initiatives include supporting care leavers, with the University holding the Buttle UK Quality Mark and the MD20 students two-week pre-entry scheme, Ask an Experienced Student e-mentor. A recent review of the University's Admissions Policy resulted in plans to implement a contextual admissions policy from 2016. This approach should ensure the context in which an applicant achieved their academic grades is taken into account when making admission decisions. Use of an interview, portfolio or equivalent will allow applicants to demonstrate potential and aptitude for the chosen subject. International students are supported in a number of ways, with English language provision offered to students whose first language is not English.

33   There has been an increase in student numbers on part-time and distance learning modes of study across all student groups. The University acknowledged challenges in offering distance learners and part-time students comparable opportunities to engage in employability activities and network with local businesses. The University is developing online services, such as virtual internship fairs, to reach these student groups. The University invested in 12 fee-waivered places on the Postgraduate Certificate in Blended and Online Learning programme, aimed at developing staff to better support students on distance learning programmes. The University has identified use of technology-enhanced learning as one way of delivering a comparable student experience. Online and face-to-face workshops are provided to support staff engagement with technology-enhanced learning. A dedicated Learning Technologist is embedded in each faculty to provide staff with hands-on support and one-to-one guidance. In light of the recent decision to disestablish the faculties and move to a school based structure, the ELIR team encourage the University to provide school level access to a Learning Technologist to support staff in their use of technology-enhanced learning to deliver an equitable and comparable experience for distance learners and part-time students.

2.3   Engaging and supporting students in their learning

34   The University has a range of mechanisms to ensure that it delivers an effective approach to engaging with students.

35   The direction of the development of learning and teaching practices has been underpinned by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2010-15. The new Academic Strategy builds upon and extends these objectives within its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strand. This strategic approach is being used to encourage active engagement and participatory learning, including student-centred approaches that provide intellectual challenge and engage all students as co-creators of transformational learning experiences. During discussion with the ELIR team, staff provided examples of student involvement in curriculum co-creation, including: determining assessment timing and format; moving from classroom-based lectures in two-hour slots to fieldtrip activities over a six-hour period; and agreeing the mode and timing of assessment feedback to students.

The student voice

36   The University aims to ensure that students are at the heart of its thinking and approach, and seeks to build on the strong record of working with the NSA to deliver strategic objectives. Student representatives sit on all major academic committees, are members of the University Court, and of committees at faculty, school and programme levels. Strong student engagement was demonstrated by the work of student representatives with the Strategic Review 2013-14 and the resulting student focus of the outcomes, now set out in Strategy 2020: Building Success.

37   The Student Survey Steering Group, a working group of the Student Experience Committee, has led to improvements in the use of surveys in monitoring and action planning throughout the University. In 2013-14 the University piloted a revised institution-wide internal student survey with students on undergraduate on-campus programmes. The survey will be introduced to Edinburgh-based, full-time taught postgraduate students in 2014-15. Students commented positively to the ELIR team on the revised survey and were particularly positive about the pace of information on student views being communicated to staff. Overseas students also mentioned the use of a hard copy survey being used in class. Students based in Hong Kong spoke about having an opportunity to provide feedback at the end of every module. The ELIR team would encourage the University to progress with its plan to include all students in the internal student survey.

38   Since the 2011 ELIR, a range of initiatives aimed at improving and enhancing the student representation structure have been implemented, including: encouraging student representatives to engage with quality systems; review of student staff liaison committees; and implementation of Facilitating Student Staff Liaison Guidelines. A new Student Partnership Agreement is also being developed and will be approved through the University committee structure in March 2015.

Partnership with Napier Students' Association

39   The ELIR team noted the University's commitment to work in partnership with the NSA across a wide range of strategic and operational developments to provide an excellent, personalised student experience. Examples of partnership working include, contributing to the development of Strategy 2020, establishing the volunteering service VBase, and developing a Student Partnership Agreement. The NSA successfully campaigned to persuade the University to free Wednesday afternoons from teaching to allow students to better engage in the wider student experience, including sporting and volunteering activities.

40   NSA sabbatical officers and student executive have committed to support and promote the inclusion of all students, by taking responsibility for specific groups that are traditionally underrepresented or hard to reach, including: disabled students, faith groups, and part-time and distance learners. The NSA was developing a Support Services Navigation Map in partnership with the University's Centre for Learning and Study Skills at the time of this ELIR visit. This is a web-based tool that will help students to identify and access support services available across the University and NSA.

41   NSA and the University have also worked in partnership to increase participation in the National Student Survey, which has an important role in contributing to the enhancement of academic excellence through active campaigning on campuses and use of social media, which has contributed to response rates increasing from 63 in 2012 to 77 per cent in 2014.

42   In the general context of a very positive partnership between the University and NSA, the ELIR team identified some areas in which the NSA could enhance its profile. In discussions with the team, it appeared that a number of students were not aware of the ways in which the NSA represented them or influenced the University's decision-making. Some students also indicated that class reps could vary in their effectiveness. The team recognised that, since 2014, the NSA and University have taken steps to increase the visibility of the NSA through the use of communications and marketing, including high profile signage. There would be benefit in the University and NSA continuing to reflect on the ways in which they can inform the wider student population about their important work and about the student representative structures more generally, both of which play a key part in enhancing the student experience.

Technology-enhanced learning

43   During this ELIR cycle, there has been further exploration of the use of current and emerging technologies in enhancing the student and staff experience, and developments in technology-enhanced learning. The University has endorsed a technology-enhanced learning standard in the form of a Benchmark for the Use of Technology in Modules and the underpinning 3E Framework and this is incorporated in the Academic Strategy. The Digital Futures Working Group was established in early 2013 to review and evaluate current activities, to identify short-term initiatives that can build on current good practice and develop recommendations for future developments and opportunities.

44   In June 2014, the student portal was relaunched as MyNapier to enhance student-facing communications. The ELIR team heard from students that a number of different platforms were used to convey information; the MyNapier dashboard provides student-specific information, including results and print quotas, while the VLE is course specific. Students considered the VLE to be user friendly but did not know if there was a baseline for module information in the VLE, as the information provided often varied at staff, programme or school level. Students also highlighted notable differences in the quality of supplementary information at module level.

45   The University is asked to build on the positive work carried out at programme level (see paragraph 15) to provide a comparable student experience of module delivery, and develop clear guidelines on threshold requirements for the information to be included on the VLE at the module level.

Research students

46   The University places strategic emphasis on enhancing the research student learning experience and on increasing staff capacity to act as research student supervisors. In 2014, following a disappointing rating in the 2013 Postgraduate Research Experience

Survey a working group was established to review the University's research infrastructure. The resulting Research Infrastructure Review report found that research students stated that they lacked a sense of peer community and didn't routinely have access to the range of support offered to undergraduate students. Nonetheless, in discussions with postgraduate research students, the ELIR team learned that the University had begun to address these issues and students reported positively on changes that had been introduced to date.

47   In November 2014, the University appointed a Director of Research and Innovation to provide clear strategic leadership and ensure the visibility of research and innovation within the University. During discussions with the ELIR team, students highlighted opportunities to engage in regular seminars and meetings with the Director of Research and Innovation. Students also emphasised that the University was encouraging and supporting them to develop a postgraduate research student society. The team heard about positive examples, such as in Computing, where a schedule of talks is in place for research students, with attendance growing.

48   The 2011 ELIR identified the need to strengthen research student supervision capacity. The University subsequently established a new Researcher Developer role within the Human Resources and Development department, developed a skills training programme for research students and an externally accredited supervisor development programme for new supervisors.

49   The University should continue to reflect on the ways in which it maintains oversight of the holistic research student experience, in the context of the planned growth in research student numbers. This should include arrangements for monitoring and enhancing the research student experience as well as ensuring there is enough capacity among academic staff to provide effective supervisory support for the planned increase in numbers.

Student support

50   ELIR 2011 highlighted a need to confirm and communicate a consistent University-wide entitlement for students in a clearly defined personal development tutor (PDT) system. In 2012-13, the ASEC commissioned a working group to explore the different approaches to PDT provision across schools and programmes. The working group produced refreshed guidance on the system for students and staff. The guidance was distributed widely in 2013-14 in both hard copy and online, and, from 2014-15, the information has also been made available online via MyNapier. The ELIR team was encouraged by the students' response regarding the PDT role, with students saying that they were contacted by email within a short time of starting their programme of study. They also indicated that the vast majority of students would know who their PDT was, and acknowledged their own responsibility in meeting with their PDT and maintaining the relationship. Staff also highlighted the continued development of the PDT role in order to further enhance the strategy of delivering the 'personalised student experience'.

Feedback on assessment

51   A Confident Futures developed workshop Making Feedback Work for You was developed through the Feedback for Learning campaign, which has been very successful and has been shared within the sector. Students also commented on the availability to run their assessments through online plagiarism detection software. Overseas and distance learning students also commented upon the use of a feedback form, which detailed areas for improvement and assessment results.

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

52   Strategy 2020 identifies the development of enterprise and innovation skills for students as a priority, and the University has committed resources to support students in developing entrepreneurial skills and graduate attributes relating to knowledge, learning, citizenship and the world of work.

53   The ELIR team noted that, while not all students were familiar with the term 'graduate attributes', they were familiar with the attributes themselves and demonstrated active engagement with opportunities to enhance their academic, employability and personal development skills through their courses and extracurricular activities.

54   Standout is the overarching brand used by the University to describe the programme of events, support and advice offered to students to support them in developing graduate attributes and employability skills. Findings from a Student Closeness focus group indicated a high level of awareness of Standout. This was also confirmed when the ELIR team met students.

55   The ELIR team learned of a number of mechanisms aimed at developing graduate attributes and employability skills. Bright Red Triangle, the University's 'one-stop shop for extracurricular student enterprise activities', aims to give students experience of real world business issues. Bright Red Triangle encapsulates a number of initiatives, including Bright Red Ventures and Bright Red IDEA, to coordinate student enterprise activities, create employment, generate economic growth and provide opportunities for enterprising students to work in partnership. The NSA's VBase initiative encourages student participation in volunteering activities and employs a part-time Employability and Volunteering Coach from the University's careers team. The University provided examples of programmes that explicitly support student reflection on graduate attributes, including work-based learning with Edinburgh TV and Personal Selling Skills modules.

56   Students who met with the ELIR team commented positively on the range of opportunities that were available to them to develop transferable skills, and indicated that they were able to discuss matters relating to employability, and other study and personal development skills with their personal tutors. Staff confirmed their awareness of how graduate attributes are embedded in the curriculum.

2.5 Effectiveness of the approach to enhancing the student learning experience

57   The University has a range of effective approaches to enhancing the student learning experience. The University is successful in supporting a diverse student population and is particularly effective in its approach to student engagement, the acquisition of graduate attributes and its strategic approach to supporting widening participation students. Students are very positive about their experience of the University, and there is an effective and dynamic relationship between the University and the NSA. As the University continues to develop its research community, it may also wish to consider extending opportunities similar to those offered to Graduate Teaching Assistants (such as training for teaching) to PhD research students as students numbers increase.

58   The University is meeting its strategic objective to provide an excellent personalised student experience. The PDT role is key to achieving this aim, and there is a strong partnership between academic and professional support staff. In addition to students being actively engaged in their learning experience across the University, there are some positive examples of students being engaged as co-creators of the curriculum.

3   Enhancement in learning and teaching

3.1   Approaches to identifying and sharing good practice

59   Identifying and sharing good practice is a key element of the University's quality enhancement culture as set out in the Quality Framework. There is clear staff commitment to developing professional skills and disseminating good practice, and the Academic Strategy 2020 identifies the enhancement of learning and teaching as a key institutional strength. To promote staff engagement with this strategic priority, the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Conference in June 2014 was themed around Strategy 2020.

60   The University deploys a range of mechanisms to identify and share good practice, including: annual staff conferences; engagement with national Enhancement Theme activities; activities of the Teaching Fellows community; institutional committee structures; monitoring and review activities; and integration of teaching teams through the Graduate Employability Project. The identification and sharing of good practice is also supported by use of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Resource Bank, a searchable online repository providing access to case studies, policy documents and useful links.

61   Schools operate learning, teaching and assessment sessions, for example in a 'lunch and learn' format to encourage participation, and these are open to staff from other schools. There is currently a pilot on electronic dissertation submission and the use of electronic grading software with the intention to share the experience through a learning, teaching and assessment session.

62   Staff involved with the new format for school review considered it a means of identifying and sharing good practice. Further confirmation of the role of formal monitoring and evaluation of modules and programmes in encouraging the sharing of good practice was provided. The Business School's approach to annual monitoring sees each subject area host an event to present and discuss their annual monitoring reports with colleagues, including representation from other schools. The ELIR team noted the intention to adopt this model, which also enhances engagement of staff with the annual monitoring process, more widely across the University.

63   Providing opportunities for sharing good practice in technology-enhanced learning assists in the engagement with, and development of, skills in technology-enhanced learning, teaching and assessment (see paragraphs 33 and 43). The VLE Academic Forum, which shares ideas and best practice on technology-enhanced learning, has one staff member from each school who then cascades information to colleagues.

64   The University encourages staff to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, and the Postgraduate Certificate in Blended and Online Education, which provides an additional route to sharing good practice, for example as a result of practical projects undertaken as part of these awards.

65   The University's Teaching Fellows community currently comprises 63 Teaching Fellows, appointed on a three-yearly, renewable basis. The Teaching Fellows community manage special interest groups, which are open to all staff. At the time of the current ELIR review 'international' and 'mentoring' special interest groups were active. A symposium on International Futures had been organised in December 2013. The annual Teaching Fellows Conference also provides an opportunity to share good practice, such as the use of role play in a year 3 law module, which could provide a template for other disciplines.

66   The Teaching Fellows community publishes a journal, and consideration has been given within the institution to producing a Student Transitions edition of the Teaching Fellows journal in collaboration with other higher education institutions (see section 3.2).

67   The University has a 'students as colleagues in teaching review' initiative. At the time of the current ELIR the pilot involved 18 students and staff working in partnership to review staff in all aspects of their teaching. Training and support materials are available, including reviewing feedback on assessments, reviewing VLE and course notes, running focus groups, and observing teaching practice. Staff feedback to date has been very positive. The University is encouraged to broaden the use of this innovative practice for teaching review.

68   The new Academic Strategy encourages further integration of teaching and research. To support this, the Academy for Research, Innovation and Scholarship in Education (ARISE) was launched in August 2014. ARISE seeks to engage staff across the University in informing their pedagogy through a series of activities, including public lectures. The University also helped to launch the Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice, first edition in June 2013, to encourage and support pedagogic research.

3.2   Impact of the national Enhancement Themes and related activity

69   The University actively participates in the national Enhancement Themes. The previous Theme, Developing and Supporting the Curriculum, supported the implementation of the University's previous learning and teaching strategy, informed the development of Strategy 2020 and influenced work aligned to meeting the objectives of this Strategy. Six key strategic drivers were identified, which then formed the University's programme of work for the Developing and Supporting the Curriculum Enhancement Theme.

70   Academic and professional support staff highlighted positive aspects of engagement with the Enhancement Themes, for example, as a means to broaden horizons through sharing practice in other schools and subjects, through participation in the Enhancement Themes Conferences and as members of the University's institutional team.

71   The University's Enhancement Theme Team coordinates activities within the current Theme, Student Transitions. The University provided a clear indication of Theme work for 2014-15, using QAA funding to support case studies that will ultimately sit in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Resource Bank. A research assistant is working with staff to support these pedagogic projects. One such project will explore the progress of articulating students, looking at progression, retention and achievement data.

72   The intention of the University is that the Student Transitions Theme, which is currently in the first year of a three-year lifecycle, continues to support the implementation of Strategy 2020. For example, through the promotion and strengthening of pedagogic research, which then links to Strategy 2020 and the intention within this to build a pedagogical research community and inform academic practice.

3.3   Engaging and supporting staff

73   The University has an effective approach to engaging and supporting staff.

74   Successfully supporting academic staff in undertaking their teaching, learning and assessment roles, as well as staff in professional services roles, is an important aspect of the commitment in Strategy 2020 to 'establish a reputation for outstanding teaching across our portfolio'.

75   The University provides a wide range of professional development opportunities for academic and professional support staff, including the Edinburgh Napier Mentoring and Coaching Award, which aims to enhance academic practice, and the ENRoute framework, which seeks to facilitate staff gaining professional recognition for their achievements in teaching and support for teaching. The ENRoute framework was successfully accredited by the Higher Education Academy in 2013.

76   Participation in academic induction is mandatory for staff with less than three years teaching experience within a UK higher education environment, along with undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. The academic induction programme is managed by the Academic Professional Development Team, with contributions from colleagues in the Academic Strategy and Practice at Edinburgh Napier (ASPEN) professional service department and academic schools. Extended induction for new academic staff also occurs in schools through the appointment of a mentor by the line managers. ASPEN delivers an online PgC and MSc in Blended and Online Learning. The University has identified the need to take a more systematic approach to monitoring whether staff participate in developmental opportunities beyond initial induction.

77   Support for individual staff is primarily identified through the Professional Development Review process and involves the development of an agreed action plan and learning development plan detailing priority learning and development areas. Professional development to enhance academic practice is primarily facilitated by the Academic Professional Development Team and by ASPEN. The University plans to further professionalise teaching throughout the institution, through promoting staff participation in the Higher Education Academy fellowship scheme. Staff in professional support roles are primarily supported through the ENable staff development programme.

78   An employee engagement survey is undertaken on a biannual basis, with departments developing plans to address specific areas of concern highlighted through the survey. This is overseen by the University's Human Resources and Development department.

79   The University is encouraged to continue with plans to develop skills in technology-enhanced learning, teaching and assessment.

80   The University identified the need to extend its research supervisory capacity among academic staff to provide effective supervisory support for the planned increase in the research student population. Changes to the Academic Appointment and Promotion Criteria and staff participation in the Staff and Educational Development Association accredited course for new supervisors are likely to contribute positively to this objective.

81   The ELIR team heard from senior staff that the University did not currently expect postgraduate research students to undertake significant teaching loads. First year undergraduate teaching was predominantly the domain of Graduate Teaching Assistants, who received training and support for this role. Linked to the University's efforts to establish a research culture and a research student community, the institution is encouraged to extend the opportunities for research students to gain teaching experience, ensuring that students are trained and supported to fulfil this role.

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

82   The University employs a range of systematic mechanisms to facilitate the identification and sharing of good practice in learning and teaching. These include use of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Resource Bank; engagement with the University's

Teaching Fellows community; and academic and professional support staff engagement with the national Enhancement Themes.

4   Academic standards

4.1   Approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards

83   The University's approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards is set out in the Quality Framework; the Research Degrees Framework fulfils a similar function for research degree programmes. Both frameworks are designed to facilitate the implementation of the University's academic regulations.

84   The Academic Board is responsible for maintaining strategic oversight of the academic standard and quality of all awards. Responsibility for the development and effectiveness of the Quality Framework is devolved to the ASEC, and the Research Degrees Assessment Board has equivalent responsibility for the Research Degrees Framework. The Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Review Committee (QAMRC), a subcommittee of the ASEC, maintains oversight of quality activities on behalf of the ASEC through receipt of faculty annual reports that focus on the learning opportunities, academic standards and the currency and relevance of the provision. The outcome of quality activities is reported to the Academic Board.

85   The Academic Quality department is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Quality Framework, reports annually to the ASEC and is responsible for ensuring that the Committee considers and approves proposed changes on behalf of the Academic Board. Annual reports confirm that the Quality Framework continues to ensure that the academic standards of all awards have been maintained and the quality of the student learning experience has been enhanced in accordance with the Scottish Funding Council and sector expectations.

86   Joint membership of the Academic Board and its subcommittees helps the University to ensure all subject areas are provided with opportunities to influence the development of the quality culture. Feedback has indicated that some staff would welcome opportunities for more involvement and participation in quality processes. In response to this feedback, the Academic Quality department will take this into account when nominating panel members for future events to ensure a wider involvement of staff to broaden the level of awareness and experience in securing academic standards.

87   The Research Degrees Framework is a new resource produced following a review of the regulations governing research degree provision in 2012-13. The Regulations Committee approved action to bring the research degree regulations in line with the other sections of the academic regulations. All procedural information for staff and students was transferred into a comprehensive document, published in April 2014, that represented the Quality Framework for the admission, supervision and examination of research degree students. The Research Degrees Assessment Board is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the implementation of this framework.

4.2   Management of assessment

88   The academic regulations set out the rules governing all academic programmes, and detail how a student proceeds through the University's degree programmes and receives an award. The academic regulations for taught provision are in three sections and stipulate admission, assessment, continuation and award regulations.

89   The academic regulations provide for a percentage marks scheme for undergraduate provision and a 16-point grading scale for taught master's provision. In 2012,

a working group considered how the two schemes could be merged to produce a single grading scheme for undergraduate and postgraduate work, and concluded that moving to a unified assessment grading scheme was not a University priority.

90   Programme design guidelines and the Assessment Handbook support staff in assessment design and in considering how assessment shapes and motivates learning. Programme approval processes require academic staff to consider the alignment between approaches to learning, assessment design and learning outcomes in order to enable students to demonstrate their achievement of the intended learning outcomes effectively. A programme handbook template, enhanced to incorporate programme-wide assessment mapping has been provided to make assessment approaches more transparent. This was initiated in Trimester 1 of 2014-15 and the University plans to evaluate it during the current academic session.

91   All assessed work, including that with collaborative partners, is internally moderated. Assessed work at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) levels 9-11 is externally moderated by external examiners. External examiners are required to contribute to programme boards where awards across all SCQF levels are recommended. Mandatory online annual training for convenors and clerks of Board of Examiners meetings is provided to ensure they are all aware of any regulatory changes. Changes to regulations are also highlighted to staff at annual briefings held at each campus prior to Trimester 1 each year. All external examiners have the opportunity to attend face-to-face training, for which the feedback is overwhelmingly positive and the resources are available online for those who cannot attend.

92   The University pays close attention to academic integrity and academic misconduct. Its approach is overseen by the Academic Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Officer. Students are offered development and education opportunities in the first instance of academic misconduct to support its prevention and there is a code of practice for the use of online plagiarism detection software, which is increasingly used as an effective education tool to support students with their assignment preparation as well as for plagiarism detection.

93   Faculties manage the arrangements for the recognition of prior learning (RPL). Credited RPL for admission is managed centrally by the Admissions Team, with criteria provided by the faculties. Requests for exemption from individual modules on the basis of RPL are managed on a case-by-case basis by programme teams considering evidence mapped against the SCQF. In 2012 the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Care hosted a symposium aimed at raising awareness of the national Recognition of Prior Learning Guidelines. The University acknowledges that RPL guidance would benefit from updating and, at the time of the current ELIR, a working group had been formed to develop RPL guidance.

4.3   Use of external reference points in managing academic standards

94   The University's approach to managing academic standards takes account of the Expectations set out within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) and guidance issued by the Scottish Funding Council including the Subject Benchmark Statements, as well as professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) accreditation. The ASEC receives annually a schedule of activity to ensure that policy and procedures associated with setting and maintaining standards and enhancing academic quality are systematically reviewed and updated.

95   The University has conducted a comprehensive mapping exercise of its policies and procedures against the Quality Code Expectations. The outcome was presented to the ASEC in February 2014. All indicators were included in the mapping to provide a complete

picture of how recognised sector-wide practice is taken into account. The mapping was accompanied by an action plan to demonstrate the University's continuing commitment to promoting continuous and systematic improvement of quality and standards. An updated mapping outcome was presented to the ASEC in October 2014.

96   The University used publication of the revised *Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* in June 2014 as an opportunity to ensure that the institution met sector expectations, and is confident that qualification nomenclature conveys accurately the level, nature and subjects of study. A new subsection of the University's Quality Framework was introduced in September 2014 to assist staff involved in designing and developing taught provision, and to provide a summary of the programme design guidelines. The Framework also includes guidance to ensure that external expectations relating to level, nature and subjects of study will continue to be met.

97   Where considered appropriate and relevant, accreditation or recognition by PSRBs is a feature of taught provision, for example in computing, engineering and nursing programmes. Subject areas report routinely on the outcome of PSRB activity to the QAMRC. Some engagement with professional bodies does not result in a written report and some subject areas do not routinely report to the University on the outcome of all external monitoring and review activities, but the QAMRC is working with faculties to address this.

98   The University has positive experiences of working in partnership with a range of professional bodies, including the Nursing and Midwifery Council and NHS Education for Scotland. There was a successful internal subject review of law provision that reported in March 2013 and took account of the Law Society of Scotland annual review outcomes. Activities have been designed to enable the University to be confident that it can make better use of outcomes from PSRB activities to enhance the learning experience of students and it intends to build on this experience. The University has recognised that it does not currently use external accreditation monitoring and review activity to reduce the burden of quality assurance activity on relevant subject areas. The QAMRC received proposals related to this activity in September 2014 and the University indicated that it would continue to monitor progress throughout 2014-15.

99   Module and programme leaders may apply, in exceptional circumstances, for an exemption to standard regulations. The expectation is that all programmes will operate the standard University regulations; exemptions are only approved in the very few situations where a case is made and accepted. Potential exemptions are discussed at faculty ASECs before the Regulations Committee considers the rationale for formal approval. For example, in nursing and midwifery programmes, PSRB requirements have led to the production of bespoke regulations for programmes of study leading to a Bachelor's of Midwifery or a Bachelor's of Nursing award to ensure that students meet Nursing and Midwifery Council registration requirements and standards. All approved exemptions are added to a register to ensure oversight, and the exemptions register is reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to support PSRB requirements.

4.4   Effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic standards

100   An online training package for convenors and clerks to the boards of examiners has been introduced and staff welcome this move to an online format. The University considers that this is a successful use of technology to enhance staff understanding of quality processes and consequently developed plans to work in partnership with faculties and schools to create online briefing material covering all quality processes.

101   The University's Quality Framework and Research Degrees Framework clearly reflect the University's effective approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic

standards. Work has recently been undertaken to enhance the web-presentation of the Quality Framework to improve its functionality. The evidence of the mapping of policy and procedures to Quality Code Expectations indicates that academic standards remain secure.

102   The University acknowledges that guidance and process for RPL would benefit from further development and intends to engage fully with current sector-wide developments associated with the Recognition of Prior Learning Framework to inform its internal enhancement activity.

5   Self-evaluation and management of information

5.1   Key features of the institution's approach

103   Implementation of the Quality Framework is currently devolved to faculties. To support consistency in operations, the University ensures that the convenors of each faculty Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee (ASEC), and academic and administrative representatives are full members of the Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Review Committee (QAMRC). Since 2010-11, University, faculty and school responsibilities have been set out in the Quality Framework to assist in ensuring consistent application of University expectations. The University is asked to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing Quality Framework during the organisational restructure, particularly as responsibilities are delegated to schools when the faculties are disestablished.

104   There is clear indication in section 2 of the Quality Framework of the responsibilities of the University, faculty, head of school, subject leader, programme leader and module leader in internal monitoring and review. The roles and responsibilities of the committees (the QAMRC, ASEC and Academic Board) are also set out. The University's decision to restructure, disestablishing the faculties, provides an opportunity to review the committee structure (see paragraph 3).

105   Annual reports produced for the ASEC by the Academic Quality department serve an important function in highlighting recommendations for the improvement of the effectiveness of the Quality Framework itself. For example, an amendment to ensure that the effectiveness of the role of the professional service areas was taken into account as an integral part of the overall scrutiny of the quality of the student learning experience during the subject review process. Enhancements to the Quality Framework are also informed by staff feedback through the Campus Conversations and such projects as Actions for Change. Work has been done to address concerns around the clarity and accessibility of key information, and to improve the mechanisms by which information about provision is entered into the student record system. The outcomes of the review of the Quality Framework are summarised in the paper introducing the purpose of the Quality Framework.

106   The new school review process was introduced in 2014-15 and provides scheduled peer review activity over a five-year cycle, resulting in a report to the ASEC on the effectiveness of the management of the student learning experience across the school. This process aims to provide a strong enhancement focus and relationship with programme review and annual monitoring. Subject areas now provide an evaluation of their engagement with professional services as part of programme and school review. At the time of the current ELIR, only the School of Computing had been reviewed using the new method. The ELIR team heard from staff, both those involved as part of the review team and one who acted as an internal panel member, who highlighted the focus on the student experience and confirmed the opportunities the new process presents for sharing good practice across schools.

107   Internal monitoring and review provides opportunities to ensure that the student voice is being heard and to respond to feedback from students. Both staff and students indicated that this was the case at module and programme level. Staff confirmed that students from across the range of the school's programmes had been involved in the School of Computing review.

108   The University's evaluative processes are informed by a variety of surveys and intelligence. The Market Intelligence and Evaluation Team within Student and Academic Services coordinates the collection and reporting of information from a range of internal and external surveys, to which all staff have access and can use to inform self-evaluation processes. The Team also provides regular briefings to senior management to support the implementation of strategy. The Student Development and Well-being Evaluation Group consider process and procedures relating to student learning and support, and evaluation outcomes inform the review and enhancement processes.

5.2   Commentary on the advance information set

109   The content of the advance information set is in line with ELIR 3 guidance and, together with the additional information, provided the ELIR team with a good understanding of the University's arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement. In particular, the paper Introduction to the Advance Information Set was informative and useful to the team.

110   The development of the advance information set was overseen by the QAMRC and coordinated by the Academic Quality team in liaison with faculty and school offices. The University indicated that the process of developing the advance information set had encouraged it to reflect on the way in which it gathers and reports on quality-related information, and also to consider how it uses the qualitative data collected during internal monitoring activities. As a result of this, the University indicated it would make a number of adjustments, for example a sample of annual programme monitoring reports will undergo formal consideration by the QAMRC; the templates used for annual monitoring will be amended to encourage all module leaders to reference the sources of student feedback in providing their module reflections.

111   Information contained within the advance information set shows that the University has a robust Quality Framework, which is benchmarked against the Quality Code, and provides evidence of a culture of critical self-evaluation. The thorough mapping against the Quality Code confirmed that the University's policies and practices are aligned with the Expectations of the Quality Code, and identified only four Indicators that were not met fully. During the ELIR visit, the University provided the ELIR team with an update on activities that were underway to enhance practice in these areas.

5.3   Use of external reference points in self-evaluation

112   KPIs underpin, and have been aligned to, Strategy 2020. The University is committed to developing and embedding a detailed set of academic performance indicators in its business planning approaches to support the implementation of the new Academic Strategy (see paragraph 6).

113   The University makes appropriate use of a wide range of external reference points including PSRBs. Many of these reference points are explicitly referred to in the University's quality documentation, including the Quality Code, the Scottish Funding Council guidance, the SCQF, the national Enhancement Themes, the Staff and Educational Development Association work, the Higher Education Academy activity and the UK Professional Standards Framework. External examiner annual reports facilitate self-evaluation both at institutional level, through the overarching report to the QAMRC, which identifies common themes, and at programme level. The Planning and Business Intelligence Team coordinates

all the data submitted to bodies such as the Higher Education Statistics Agency or the Scottish Funding Council.

5.4 Management of public information

114 Overall, the University has an effective approach to managing public information. A number of enhancements have been made since the 2011 ELIR, with further developments underway. Core external publications are produced centrally by the International Development and External Affairs department with the involvement of staff across the University including key academic and professional support staff as appropriate. Procedures are in place for the publications to be formally approved to ensure the accuracy of information.

115 Specific arrangements are in place to ensure the accuracy of information published about provision by collaborative partners (see paragraph 126). Key staff will be involved in providing this information, the process is overseen by the Marketing, Brand and Communications department and approved by the Assistant Director Marketing, Brand and Communications.

116 Student-facing communications have been enhanced through the recently relaunched student portal (MyNapier). This includes information specific to individual students, for example it provides access to assessment results and a facility to pay for printing resources. The wide range of information hosted on MyNapier was highlighted by staff, and students confirmed that they welcomed the user-friendly navigation and greater accessibility to information that this provided.

117 The University is currently undertaking a project to redevelop its external website. The Website Review Project will also consider how the University ensures the ongoing accuracy of content, particularly within the staff internet. This web review and development project is being taken forward by a project group with external consultant input, and is on track to launch the revised website for the start of 2015-16. The ELIR team recognised that the project is likely to continue the enhancement of web information following the relaunch of MyNapier.

118 The University has clear policies and procedures for staff on the use of social media. The ELIR team noted that some class representatives organised consultations with their peers through social media. Postgraduate research students also highlighted their use of LinkedIn and other social media to develop a research student community. The ELIR team learnt that there is a policy for students (similar to that for staff) on the use of social media, with a link provided in the programme handbook template. In addition, a webpage on the University VLE provides guidance on keeping safe when using social media. The University offers a course on the VLE, EN:Compass, which provides information for staff and students on digital literacy, including the use of social media.

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

119 The University has an effective approach to self-evaluation and the management of information, including meeting sector expectations in its use of a range of external reference points. The University has developed a culture of critical self-evaluation, which is evidenced in its thorough mapping of policy and practice against the Quality Code.

120 The University has effective arrangements in place for the regular and systematic review of its academic programmes and support services. The strategic decision has been taken to change the academic structure of the institution, in particular to remove the faculties (see paragraph 3). The University is encouraged to continue evaluating the effectiveness of

its existing Quality Framework during the organisational structure to ensure that the Quality Framework remains effective particularly as responsibilities are delegated to schools.

6   Collaborative activity

6.1   Key features of the institution's strategic approach

121   In 2012-14, just over a third (6,403) of the student population were overseas students, with the majority of these studying on programmes delivered in Hong Kong, Singapore and India through the University's TNE model of provision. This figure also includes overseas students studying in Edinburgh. Between 2010-11 and 2013-14 the number of students (undergraduate and taught postgraduate, full-time and part-time) on University programmes delivered overseas increased from 3,478 to 5,052.

122   Internationalisation is one of four key objectives within the University's new Strategy 2020. Strategy 2020 sets out the University's intent, not only to grow TNE delivery and student numbers, but also to create an 'internationalised' environment through its curriculum, pedagogy, research service delivery, and increased staff and student mobility and international experience. In support of this, the University has developed an Internationalisation Strategy 2020, which highlights the central role that the growth in TNE activity will have in enhancing the University's global reach, reputation and revenue. The Internationalisation Strategy 2020 sets out clear indicators of success, including a doubling of revenue by 2020 and an increase in students studying on University TNE programmes from 3,390 FTE in 2013-14 to 5,900 by 2020.

123   In order to achieve these ambitious growth targets, the University has recognised its need to develop new models of partnership and delivery, supplementing, but not necessarily replacing, its current delivery model, which involves high-contact, face-to-face teaching delivered in-country by University staff in intensive blocks. At the time of the current ELIR, a subgroup of the University Court, comprising three Court members, the Director of Finance and the Assistant Principal Internationalisation, was working on the development of a risk framework within which new TNE delivery models will be located. It was expected that the subgroup would report in June 2015. In parallel, work is ongoing to develop a TNE Strategy, which will, in common with the approach taken to the development of the Internationalisation Strategy, involve a year-long period of consultation. Following agreement by the University Leadership Team, the strategy will be considered for approval by the ASEC, Collaborative Provision Committee and the University's Academic Board.

124   Senior staff noted that the extent of engagement with TNE activity currently differed between schools. They confirmed that the Internationalisation Strategy was enabling rather than prescriptive and that each school would, therefore, continue to make a different level of contribution. Nevertheless, the University would remain fully responsible for the student experience and would work to enrich that experience for students studying under every type of TNE partnership arrangement. The University anticipates that the wider TNE student experience will be enriched and more closely aligned with that of Edinburgh campus-based students through, for example: a strong programme focus (see paragraph 15); enhanced use of the common VLE; and affiliation of students studying outwith Edinburgh to the NSA. Overall, the University is committed to being responsive to student and staff needs, with processes relating to student support being built on common principles regardless of geographical location.

125   The University is aware of the many operational challenges that the ambitious TNE growth targets present and is working through its consultative and deliberative processes and committees in order to ensure changes are made on a fully risk-assessed and managed

basis. It is also conscious of the great potential that exists for TNE activity to enrich the University community as a whole.

126   The University has extensive and long-standing partnerships with colleges in the region. It leads the ELRAH and currently has 240 formal articulation agreements with eight colleges. In 2014-15 the University admitted 565 students with advanced standing through articulation routes. Internationally there are 29 formal articulation routes from international partners into University programmes delivered in Edinburgh.

127   Links between the University and the colleges are mature and cemented by the engagement of professional services staff working in Student and Academic Services. As part of the University's commitment to delivering an excellent personalised student experience, University staff work with college students from the time at which they begin their college studies. Students articulating from college partners have Associate Student status. The University recognises that key challenges for Associate Students include issues relating to the learning environment and the learning culture. To support an effective articulation to the University, customised campus visits are organised to complement the work of University staff at the college. Associate Students are able to drop in on normal timetabled University lectures, giving them a first-hand insight into differences in teaching styles that they may expect. On arrival, Student and Academic Services signpost college students to relevant services, including study skills support, such as guidance in note taking; student-to-student mentoring; employer mentoring; and study abroad opportunities.

128   The progress of students joining the University through articulation routes is monitored with progression and retention being reviewed. Project work in this area is currently being funded under the auspices of the national Enhancement Theme, Student Transitions (see section 3.2).

129   The University participates fully in Key Action 1 of the new Erasmus+ Programme. Since 2013, the University has established 57 agreements in 17 European countries, and it also has 23 non-European partners in six countries (US, Canada, China, Australia, New Zealand and Colombia), which allows for student and staff mobility.

6.2   Securing academic standards of collaborative provision

130   The University has effective arrangements in place for securing the academic standards of its collaborative provision.

131   Section 4 of the University's Quality Framework 2014-15 details the processes for designing, developing, approving, monitoring and review of all taught provision delivered in partnership. The development of this section of the Framework was informed by, and meets the Expectation and all Indicators of, the Quality Code, *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*.

132   Approval and monitoring of all programmes offered by partner organisations is undertaken by the Collaborative Provision Committee, a subcommittee of the Academic Board. Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, this committee meets monthly (except July to September). As part of the approval process, the Collaborative Provision Committee ensures that the necessary academic resources, for example library provision, are in place to support the student learning experience. The Collaborative Provision Committee is responsible for the institutional oversight of all articulation arrangements, receiving an annual report on UK-based articulation activity in May-June each year and noting all new overseas articulation proposals.

133   The principal means by which the University secures academic standards on collaborative programmes is through its teaching model, whereby campus-based University

staff travel to partner locations to deliver teaching and support to students and partner staff. Additional activities, routinely undertaken during regular visits, include student staff liaison committee meetings, and staff meetings to deliver module and programme induction and training for partner staff. Outwith these visits, University staff, primarily programme leaders, based at the Edinburgh campuses are in regular contact by email, video conference and telephone to discuss the general management of provision. In a small number of cases staff from partner institutions travel to Edinburgh as visiting scholars.

134   Staff involved in the delivery of TNE activity confirmed the effective operation of key elements of the Collaborative Partnership Agreement, including: common module descriptors (variation for the purposes of local contextualisation is permitted with due approval); harmonised assessment arrangements, moderation of coursework and final examinations for modules delivered in Edinburgh and at TNE partners; common external examiners for programmes delivered in Edinburgh and at TNE partners; and common annual monitoring processes. All collaborative agreements are routinely reviewed by programme teams after five years of operation.

135   The ELIR team recognised that University staff are proactive in their engagement with, and support for, colleagues in international partners to the benefit of the students. There is clear evidence of University staff reflecting on practice at the module and programme level, and sharing the outcomes of this reflection with colleagues in international partners to enhance the student experience.

136   Another means by which the University assures itself of the maintenance of quality and standards at TNE partner locations is through external validations for individual programmes, a subset of the whole portfolio. Examples of these include accreditation from the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications for BA (Hons) Accounting and BA (Hons) Accounting and Finance provision in Hong Kong. Similarly, the undergraduate nursing provision in Singapore is accredited by the Singapore Nursing Board.

137   For newly established partner provision, the University undertakes an additional 'first year review' conducted between 15 and 18 months after the first student cohort has enrolled. The University, through the Collaborative Provision Committee, has highlighted a number of cases where these reviews have not been undertaken within published timescales and intends to expedite matters according to a TNE First Year Review Catch up Plan. The Collaborative Provision Committee has also agreed to review the process, with a view to ensuring that the principles underpinning first year review continue to be implemented but within the intended timeframe. Meanwhile, collaborative provision, including new arrangements, continues to be monitored as part of annual programme evaluation.

6.3   Enhancing the student learning experience on collaborative programmes

138   The University has systematic arrangements in place for enhancing the student learning experience on its collaborative programmes (see section 6.2).

139   The experience, expertise and enthusiasm of programme leaders responsible for the delivery of equivalent modules in Edinburgh and overseas was evident to the ELIR team. Staff provided evidence of the ways in which academic practice is aligned and additional support tailored to partner staff and students. The importance of good communication between University staff, TNE partner staff and students was highlighted. Formal (for example, student staff liaison committees) and informal (for example, direct contact with University staff) communication channels are used extensively by partner staff and students, and were seen by students and staff to be effective. At present, the work of the NSA does

not extend systematically to TNE provision, although the University intends to build this into future plans.

140   The limitations of the present model were understood by both staff and students; these included the limited periods during which face-to-face contact between University staff and students studying at TNE partners was possible, and the challenges of organising teaching timetables at the Edinburgh campus and overseas partner locations. More extensive use is being made of Associate Staff for delivery in order to overcome these constraints. Associate Staff recruitment is undertaken at school level through normal systems. All Associate Staff, whether employed directly by the University or the partner, must be approved by the University through the schools. Under the new Internationalisation Strategy and the TNE sub-strategy, senior managers signalled to the ELIR team the University's commitment to extending in a more holistic and systematic way features of the Edinburgh-based student experience not yet available to students studying elsewhere.

141   University staff involved in TNE teaching delivery at module and programme level demonstrated a number of ways in which they currently proactively manage the operational aspects of the relationship, seeking, systematically, to enhance the student learning experience. An important aspect of this is the use of technology to underpin the delivery of an equitable student learning experience to all students regardless of location. University staff travelling to partner institutions offer both induction and bespoke staff development sessions for partners according to local staff needs. Partner staff have access to their own institution's staff development provision and may access relevant University courses. The ELIR team learned of a number of enhancements to TNE provision, for example offering online versions of student development workshops developed in the VLE, and the approval of a protocol (by the Collaborative Provision Committee in October 2014) on the provision of disability and inclusion support to students studying remotely at partner institutions. Staff confirmed to the team that a more comprehensive suite of initiatives will be brought forward under the TNE Strategy, covering, for example, extension of the PDT scheme and student representation via the NSA.

142   An E-Services Feasibility Study, which scopes aspirations for student facing support services regardless of location or mode of study, has been completed. The University agreed that by 2020: all key administrative transactions and routine student queries should be capable of being fulfilled or resolved remotely, consistently and at any time; online services should be delivered seamlessly, and wherever possible through automated workflows; and the service experience should be personalised, flexible, speedy, supportive and user-friendly. At the time of the current ELIR, work was underway to produce an e-services implementation plan to commence in 2015-16. The University is encouraged to continue with their proposed outputs from this plan.

143   TNE activity is covered by standard annual monitoring processes, which is one means by which good practice is shared across schools. Reports are considered by the QAMRC, which includes members of the Collaborative Provision Committee. Other means by which good practice specifically relating to TNE is shared include the staff conference and the Teaching Fellows network.

6.4   Effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative activity

144   The University has an effective approach to managing collaborative activity. Its regulations, policies and procedures embodied in the comprehensive Quality Framework (especially Section 4) meet sector expectations as set out within the Quality Code, *Chapter B10*.

145   Oversight of all collaborative activity is exercised by the Collaborative Provision Committee, which has recognised the need to complete its TNE First Year Review Catch Up Plan. The University is encouraged to continue with this and to conclude its review of the process.

146   The University has in place a clearly articulated Internationalisation Strategy, which is understood and supported by key academic and professional services staff. Further work led by senior management to elaborate the Strategy in the context of TNE is ongoing, with particular attention being given to alternative models of provision necessary to sustainably underpin its ambitious growth plans. The ELIR team endorses the University's commitment to further enhancing the experience of its students at partner providers, enabling it to offer more elements of its Edinburgh campus-based development and support resources, thereby building a single, more fully integrated University community. In particular, the University should continue to explore staffing models, opportunities for student representation, and student support.