



Enhancement-led Institutional Review of University of Dundee

Technical Report

November 2018

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About the Enhancement-led Institutional Review method

The QAA website explains the method for [Enhancement-led Institutional Review \(ELIR\)](#) and has links to the ELIR handbook and other informative documents.¹ You can also find out more about the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#).²

Further details about ELIR can be found in an accompanying [brief guide](#),³ including an overview of the review method, information about review teams, and explanations of follow-up action.

About this review

This is the Technical Report of the ELIR conducted by QAA at the University of Dundee. The review took place as follows: Planning Visit on 19 September 2018 and Review Visit on 19-23 November 2018. The review was conducted by a team of five reviewers:

- Bobi Archer (Student Reviewer)
- Dr Frank Haddleton (Academic Reviewer)
- Professor Clare Peddie (Academic Reviewer)
- Veronica Strachan (Academic Reviewer)
- Peter Watson (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.

About this report

In this report, the ELIR team:

- delivers a threshold 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 threshold judgement can be found on page 2, followed by the detailed findings of the review given in numbered paragraphs.

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

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

¹ About ELIR: www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/en/reviewing-higher-education-in-scotland/enhancement-led-institutional-review

² About QAA: www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland

³ Brief Guide to ELIR: www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/reports/brief-guide-to-elir-method.pdf

⁴ Outcome Report: www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/quality-assurance-reports/University-of-Dundee

Threshold judgement about the University of Dundee

The University of Dundee has **effective** arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. In order to secure the effectiveness of its arrangements for collaborative activity, as a matter of priority the University is asked to improve its academic oversight at institutional level.

This is a positive judgement, which means that, overall, the University meets sector expectations in securing the academic standards of its awards and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience it provides, currently and into the future. The University is asked to take action to demonstrate it meets sector expectations for managing the provision it delivers in collaboration with its partners. This judgement confirms there can be public confidence in the University's awards and in the quality of the learning experience it provides for its students.

1 Contextual information about the institution, student population and the review

1.1 Summary information about the institution

1 The University of Dundee became an independent university in 1967, having been founded in 1881 and been a constituent college of the University of St Andrews since 1897. The University expanded between 1994 and 2001 as a result of mergers with Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Tayside College of Nursing and Midwifery, Fife College of Health Studies, and the Dundee Campus of the Northern College of Education.

2 The University's current five-year strategy (to 2022) is part of its 25-year vision to be recognised as Scotland's leading university and focuses on the theme of transformation. The Strategy to 2022 has four interdisciplinary themes: understanding and improving health and wellbeing; life enhancing creativity and design; innovating technological solutions to tomorrow's problems; and promoting social change to enhance diversity, justice and socio-economic prosperity. The Strategy has eight strands: embed interdisciplinary research and teaching; grow and diversify our student community; deliver sustainable ambition; embrace 'One Dundee' approach; enhance University performance and reputation; enable our people to flourish; advance our values; and intensify our impact locally and globally. Each strand is supported by specific action areas.

3 In 2015, the University engaged in a programme of restructuring moving from four colleges to nine schools. Schools are led by deans and, linked to the restructuring, associate dean posts were established in all schools covering four areas: learning and teaching; quality and academic standards; international; and research.

1.2 Composition and key trends in the student population

4 In 2016-17, the University had a total of 15,390 students (all numbers are given here as full person equivalents) with 11,800 students studying at one of the three campuses, the vast majority at the City Campus in Dundee with others at the Medical School in Ninewells Hospital on the outskirts of Dundee and a proportion of Nursing students based in Kirkcaldy. Some 3,600 students were studying by distance learning in 2016-17. The student population comprises 10,590 undergraduates, 4,210 taught postgraduate and 590 postgraduate research students.

5 The proportion of students from Scotland has risen steadily each year from 58.9 per cent of the overall population in 2012-13 to 66 per cent in 2016-17 with a consequent drop in the proportion of students from the rest of the UK, EU and overseas. The University's

ambition is to grow the number of overseas students. The proportion of widening access students has increased overall during the past four years. In 2016-17, 36.5 per cent of the student population came from SIMD 40, of whom 15.9 per cent came from SIMD 20.

6 The University identified student retention as a high priority area. In the last four years, the overall trend has been of improvement in student retention from 92.9 per cent in 2013-14 to 93.9 per cent in 2017-18. However, the University recognises that this total figure masks a complex picture which includes a decrease in retention for Scottish domiciled students in the year 1 to year 2 transition from 92 per cent in 2013-14 to 91.1 per cent in 2017-18. The drop in retention among those students from SIMD40 has been greater, from 90.7 per cent in 2013-14 to 85.9 per cent in 2017-18. The University has been working to address this (paragraph 38).

1.3 Commentary on the preparation for the ELIR, including contextualisation

7 The University indicated that it had engaged with this ELIR with the aim of promoting the further development of its strategic approach to enhancement of all aspects of the student experience. The University established an ELIR Steering Group to guide the drafting of the Reflective Analysis and preparations for ELIR, and also formed an ELIR Working Group with a wider membership to act as a consultative group. Both groups had student membership including Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA) sabbatical officers. In order to consult with wider groups of staff and students, the University held four workshops in the year before the ELIR visit. The initial two workshops identified areas of good practice and areas for development with DUSA developing and organising the student workshop. The second two workshops focused on the detailed development of the Reflective Analysis (RA) and engaged staff and students together.

8 Three contextualised themes were identified which emerged from discussion at the workshops and were explored further by the ELIR Steering Group and the University Quality and Academic Standards Committee:

- Student engagement
- Internationalisation
- One Dundee.

9 From the review documentation and discussions with staff and students, it was clear to the ELIR team that these themes reflect the University's current strategic priorities.

10 Overall the ELIR team considered the RA was a comprehensive self-evaluation of the University's activity to assure standards and quality and enhance the student experience. The RA made extensive use of quantitative evidence to support the areas of good practice identified and to illustrate the areas where the University intends to develop its policy and practice.

1.4 Summary of the follow-up to the previous ELIR

11 The University has taken action to address each of the three recommendations identified in the 2013 ELIR report. In particular, the substantial institutional restructuring programme that took place in 2015 resulted in a commitment to a 'One Dundee' approach which aligns closely with the recommendation from the previous ELIR relating to reducing variability in policy and practice affecting the student experience. The University has made considerable progress with the support it provides for postgraduates who teach (paragraph 54). In relation to recognition of prior learning (RPL), the University revised its policy and

guidance on RPL in 2014 but recognises it still has further development activity to undertake, for example to ensure the information on its website is clear for prospective students.

1.5 Impact of engaging students in ELIR preparations

12 There was extensive DUSA engagement including as members of the ELIR Steering and Working Groups. Of the four ELIR workshops held, one was designed and led by DUSA solely for students. DUSA sabbatical officers - and University staff - took explicit steps to engage the wider student body, for example the DUSA Vice-President Representation shared a working draft of the RA with the School Presidents' Forum which resulted in revised drafts of section 2 in particular and DUSA also provided a mini case study on Open Badges which was included with the RA. Taken as a whole, the ELIR team considered these activities constitute a wide-ranging and comprehensive set of opportunities for students, and not only sabbatical officers, to engage with and influence the ELIR.

2 Enhancing the student learning experience

2.1 Student representation and engagement

13 The University takes a partnership approach to enhancement and works in close collaboration with Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA) to ensure that the student view is at the centre of decision-making and strategy relating to enhancement of the student experience.

Student representation

14 The University demonstrates a productive working partnership with DUSA and it was evident that students were actively engaged in the preparation for the ELIR (paragraph 12). Throughout the review, the ELIR team heard many examples of collaborative activity between the University and DUSA, for example joint work to revise the support for academic advisers, actions to enhance the student voice and the joint development of a University-wide module evaluation survey.

15 The University and DUSA work together to develop an annual Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) which aims to further enhance the student experience and its impact is monitored through a set of mutually-agreed KPIs. The University and DUSA have had SPAs in place since 2013 and the latest SPA sets out the ambition to introduce school-level Student Partnership Action Plans (SPAPs). The ELIR team learned that SPAPs, which had already been introduced in some areas, were developed in collaboration between the relevant associate dean (learning and teaching) and the school president. They are aligned with the institution-level SPA and contain a series of school-specific actions. The ELIR team considered these to be a very positive development.

16 As a result of the close partnership approach, the student representative structure is jointly owned by the University and DUSA, with both organisations able to develop and assign representative roles. This is set out in the Joint Agreement on Student Representation. The RA confirmed that the representative structure had been designed to ensure that students are involved at every level of decision-making within the University.

17 The University restructure from four colleges to nine schools provided more opportunities for students to become representatives with, for example, the introduction of school president roles. School presidents are supported by vice-presidents for each of the subject disciplines and/or other significant student groups (such as distance learning or postgraduate students) within a school. Students and staff who met the ELIR team confirmed that these roles have been well received as a whole and emphasised that there had been increasing uptake and engagement with the annual student representative

elections. The team also learned that student representatives can gain recognition for their roles through a suite of arrangements including open badges, the Dundee Plus award and leadership programmes. These are all positive opportunities for recognising the learning and skills associated with representation.

18 During 2017-18, the University piloted the use of student voice support officers to promote and embed representation. At the end of that year DUSA provided the Learning and Teaching Committee with an evaluation of the pilot which had operated in three schools. Following some adjustments identified in the evaluation relating to the clarity and breadth of the role, DUSA appointed five student voice support officers for 2018-19 with support, including financial investment, from the University. The University intends for these roles to strengthen the link between DUSA and the school representatives, which they clearly have the potential to do, but acknowledged their introduction was very new. The University is encouraged to continue evaluating the impact of this new role.

19 The University and DUSA acknowledged that, while arrangements for the majority of undergraduate students were very positive, representation and engagement among postgraduates and students studying online would benefit from improvement. The ELIR team learned that, due to the timing of the elections, the school president and vice-president positions are not currently accessible for taught postgraduate students which limits their opportunities for representation at school level. However, postgraduate taught and research students do have the opportunity to nominate themselves for the University-wide elected PGT and PGR representative positions. These provide a good opportunity to have their views discussed at the Student Representative Council and University-level meetings.

20 Postgraduate research student representatives are assigned at subject-level and the ELIR team considered there was a high level of engagement by PGR students. Students who met the team indicated that they had seen evidence of the impact of their representatives' engagement, for example bringing about improvements in the use of technology for learning and teaching. The team learned there was less engagement among taught postgraduates with fewer students taking up the available class representative roles. This meant those students who were representatives considered they had greater responsibility as well as greater demands on their time to attend meetings and otherwise represent their peers. The University is encouraged to continue promoting the benefits of engagement and representation among the PGT student community.

21 The ELIR team learned about steps the University had taken to introduce representative roles for students in a range of modes of delivery and entry routes. In the School of Science and Engineering, a Vice-President of Graduate Apprentices role has been introduced and module leaders have assigned class representatives for students articulating into the University through the 3+1+1 route. A Vice-President Distance Learning role has been introduced in some schools, for example Nursing and Health Sciences. The introduction of these roles is a positive step to ensure students from a variety of routes have representative opportunities. In relation to students studying online, the ELIR team heard there was varied awareness of the school and class representative positions (see paragraph 32). Given that many of these positions are new, the University is encouraged to continue promoting them and consider evaluating their relative effectiveness in supporting student engagement among the different student groups.

Listening and responding to the student voice

22 The University uses a wide variety of structured and less formal approaches for gathering student views to ensure it is able to listen and respond to the student voice. Examples include student-staff liaison committees (SSLCs), participation in the National Student Survey (NSS), holding representative drop-in sessions, and running consultations

and surveys throughout the semester. The University worked in collaboration with DUSA to develop a consistent institution-wide module evaluation questionnaire. At the time of the ELIR, the questions that would be posed in the survey had been developed with DUSA and agreed by the University Learning and Teaching Committee with the intention of the survey being implemented in 2019-20. The use of a consistent set of module evaluation questions across the institution will enable the University to have more consistent and comparable information to enhance its oversight of provision.

23 DUSA has also introduced 'SRC Online' which is a facility for students to provide feedback directly on their experience. Feedback may be anonymous, and the facility is accessible for students on and off-campus, regardless of their mode of study. The ELIR team considered the University is responsive to student views, for example feedback from SRC led to a joint DUSA-University short-life working group to review policy regarding Honours-year resits (paragraph 58).

24 The Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) and the Strategic Planning team produce an annual analysis of the NSS results which is shared with schools, directorates and the Learning and Teaching Committee. The Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) considers all of the accompanying qualitative comments from the NSS and discusses potential actions with schools and DUSA Presidents. The University hosts an annual NSS forum which provides an opportunity to consider the results and disseminate good practice. Staff discuss the feedback with students and generate actions in a range of forums including SSLCs and the School Presidents' Forum.

2.2 Recognising and responding to equality and diversity in the student population

25 A key aim of the University Strategy to 2022 is to 'substantially grow and diversify' the student body. Overall, the University has an effective approach to recognising and responding to equality and diversity among its students and has had notable success in widening access to study. In support of its strategic ambition, the University is continuing to develop the availability of the qualitative and quantitative information which is needed to monitor the student experience in relation to the changing demographics and diversity of its student population.

26 Equality and diversity are embedded within curriculum review and development. Online equality and diversity training was introduced for all staff in 2009 and includes diversity in the workplace, disability, stress in the workplace and a manager's guide to stress. The ELIR team learned that the University's data dashboard service was being developed to provide information with respect to specific student groups including the BME student population. The intention is to identify any attainment gaps and/or specific needs. Among a range of measures, DUSA and the University have agreed a joint zero-tolerance policy against sexual harassment and bullying which students are invited to sign up to at the beginning of the academic year.

27 The University has a detailed Gender Action Plan to address issues of gender imbalance across the University and in subjects with significant gender imbalances. The ELIR team heard about innovative actions, for example a project involving running stalls in shopping centres staffed by male nurses in an effort to recruit more male students into the School of Nursing and Health Sciences.

Widening participation

28 The University highlighted that there had recently been a large expansion in the number of undergraduate students coming from SIMD20 and SIMD40 linked to the wide range of highly laudable initiatives the institution has put in place including: a contextualised

admissions policy; the Reach Tayside and ACES Tayside projects; the Discovering Degrees for Schools programme; the Dundee University Access to Learning (DUAL) Summer Schools providing free accommodation and food for those living more than 40 miles from the city; and articulation programmes with local further education colleges. The University intends that its work to increase the availability of qualitative and quantitative data should enable staff leading these initiatives to evaluate the relative effectiveness of the steps they are taking to recruit and retain students from a range of backgrounds (paragraph 114).

International students

29 In 2016-17, 14.5 per cent of the University's student population came from outside of the UK. The Vice-Principal (International) provides senior leadership for the international student experience and has introduced a number of positive initiatives to welcome and support the international student body. The ELIR team heard that international students are routinely contacted by telephone or email or are invited to attend an 'in country' pre-departure session to prepare them for arrival. In 2016-17, the University conducted a review of the Global Student Experience which recommended a steering group should be established to take oversight of the welcome for international students. It also recommended identifying a dedicated physical space for international students. This resulted in The Global Room which provides an informal social space for students. In addition, the Student Services Directorate provides welcome events and support for on-campus international students.

Distance learners

30 In 2016-17, the University had 3,600 distance learning students and has a strategic goal to expand this cohort. The RA highlighted that, because the NSS predominantly reflects the views of full-time, on-campus students, the University has less understanding of distance learning students' satisfaction, the majority of whom are postgraduate, than it does of other student groups. The University's internal audit of the student experience conducted in 2017 was specifically aimed at the experience of distance learning students. It resulted in a range of recommendations including to work in partnership with DUSA to improve the number of distance learning student representatives. A working group, chaired by the DUSA President, was convened during the summer of 2017 to address this recommendation. One of the actions DUSA and the University took in response was to develop a questionnaire for distance learners about their experience of representation. At the time of the current ELIR, the working group was developing a series of recommendations to the Learning and Teaching Committee based on the survey outcomes. These were likely to include sharing good practice and making use of a toolkit developed by Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs) aimed at promoting distance learning students' representation and engagement.

31 The University has a Distance Learning Forum which meets eight times a year (four times on campus and four times online) to showcase, share and develop good practice. Membership of the Forum includes academic and professional services staff along with student representatives. At the time of the ELIR, the University had recently appointed an Academic Lead for Distance Learning to act as a champion for distance learning provision and students, and to work in partnership with DUSA to strengthen the student voice.

32 While these developments are positive, staff who met the ELIR team acknowledged that the distance learning student experience is variable across the University and indicated that there would be benefit in taking action to support programme teams to provide greater consistency. The University is therefore encouraged to continue progressing its work aimed at improving the distance learning experience. In particular there would be considerable benefit in the University providing guidance to programme teams on the good practice expected for distance learning programmes covering online materials and VLE use as well

as student support and representation (paragraphs 57 and 60).

Students with disabilities and additional needs

33 In 2016-17, 11 per cent of the student population were disabled, representing an increase of 20 per cent on the previous year. In general, students are highly satisfied with the support services provided. The Disability Services Annual Report demonstrates clear reflection on the services provided and includes detailed evidence to support their efficacy and level of use. The ELIR team learned of some innovative positive practices to support disabled students, such as the alternative formats service and Honorary Graduate's Award for Inclusive Practice run by the Academic Skills Centre. In addition, the University offers a transitions course for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Anxiety Disorders which includes a welcome from Disability Services, a talk on what to expect at University and an introduction to sources of support on campus.

2.3 Supporting students in their learning at each stage of the learner journey

34 Overall, the University has effective arrangements for supporting students at each stage of the learner journey. It has recently developed improved processes to produce quantitative evidence to understand the progression of its students through their degree programmes and to help understand the efficacy of learning and teaching at each stage. There are induction programmes and ongoing support providing students with the study and life skills they need to be able to engage effectively with their studies and graduate with attributes that lead to successful employment opportunities.

Induction

35 There is a Welcome Programme for undergraduate students which is coordinated by the Student Services directorate. The Library & Learning Centre and Student Services, through its Academic Skills Centre, provide a series of academic skills workshops as well as resources for students signposting them to key information to help with study and wellbeing - LIVE Smart and LEARN Smart. There is also a supportive Welcome booklet providing practical and academic advice on preparation for study with additional helpful information provided on the Welcome pages on the University's website.

36 The University welcomes students to the institution from an increasingly diverse variety of routes such as through articulation from further education colleges and International College Dundee, graduate apprenticeships and international students joining the final or penultimate year of undergraduate study. The ELIR team heard about a wealth of impressive welcome activities targeted at specific student groups, for example the international student welcome (paragraph 29) and the induction arrangements for students entering from International College Dundee. However, the team also heard about students who were entering later years of programmes through articulation routes who had experienced a lack of induction support. Currently, the University does not have a mechanism for taking oversight of the wide variety of entry routes and initiatives it offers, for example to share good practice or consider which are the most effective (paragraphs 37 and 61).

Articulation

37 The University has partnerships with local colleges, such as Dundee & Angus College and Fife College which provide mechanisms for students to transition into the University. The ELIR team heard from students and staff that, due to challenges in matching the curriculum, students entering from colleges into later years of study at the University were less likely to succeed than if they entered the University into first year. In an effort to

address this, the University has developed a 'STEP UP' (Student Transition Enhancement Programme for University Progression) module which is designed to help articulating students in the humanities and social sciences, and another 'STEP UP' module designed for business management students. These modules are delivered by the Academic Skills Centre and the University indicated they are available in the disciplines with the greatest numbers of articulating students. There would be benefit in the University considering how it supports those students articulating into other discipline areas. A Transitions Officer, located within the Academic Skills Centre, acts as an academic adviser to articulating students. The University has a range of positive practice in this area which is likely to benefit from the increased availability of detailed data to support evaluation of which approaches are most effective (paragraph 61).

Retention and progression

38 Student retention is a high priority for the University with oversight provided by the Retention and Progression Committee. The University held a Retention and Progression Summit and has also begun to use a business analytics service with data visualisation. The University has used this improved data to identify the points at which students leave their studies, for example noting that some non-continuation takes place at the end of second and third year, as well as the more-expected end of first year. This, in turn, has enabled the University to target supportive actions for specific groups, such as care experienced students. The improved data has also identified that some students leave programmes for positive reasons, such as choosing to remain with placement employers rather than returning to University to complete their degree.

39 Students who are identified as being at risk of leaving their programme are referred to 'Stay on Course', a University-wide initiative which is aimed at supporting students to remain engaged by encouraging them to be referred for support and advice. The service is based in the Enquiry Centre and students can self-refer or be referred by staff. Referrals are made on a range of issues including non-attendance. The ELIR team was given an example of a student who might have to withdraw for a maternity period. Use of the very positive service has increased, demonstrating that it is meeting a need and having an impact.

Academic advisers and support

40 There has been an ongoing commitment between the University and DUSA to review the role of the academic adviser. The ELIR team learned that there has been considerable variation in how academic advisers are used across the University. Some students are advised in groups rather than individually, some have their module coordinator as an academic adviser and some have no adviser at all. The team heard that DUSA had worked with the University to produce a handbook and to develop training for academic advisers. The training is provided by OPD but is still at an early stage of development. Not all academic advisers have participated in the training. The team learned that some schools provide support for academic advisers through a senior academic adviser role and that such senior advisers had recently been appointed in all schools. There would be benefit in the University continuing to work with DUSA to bring greater consistency to the operation of the academic adviser role.

41 The Academic Skills Centre (ASC) provides support for students and staff in a range of academic skills. ASC works very closely with the Centre for Technology & Innovation in Learning (part of the Library & Learning Centre directorate) and school staff to provide tailored and more generic workshops and courses for students in academic and information technology skills. ASC is active and inventive in supporting students in their engagement with learning and teaching (paragraph 89).

Assessment and feedback

42 In 2014-15, linked to the recommendation in 2013 ELIR to improve institutional oversight of a range of policies and practices, the University undertook a substantial review of its assessment policy. In addition to the revised assessment policy, a range of associated policies and guidance have been introduced on mitigating circumstances, conduct of examination boards, academic misconduct, external examining, and the recognition of prior learning. These represent a significant change for the University, and they have contributed to a more consistent approach to assessment being introduced across the institution.

43 TESTA (Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment) is a quality improvement methodology that has, for the last two years, been a formal requirement for all programmes undergoing periodic review. The methodology, which includes activities such as programme teams presenting each module as a brick, builds a visual picture of the structure of the programme, promotes reflection on the assessment schedule and identifies areas for development in assessment methods. The University had used TESTA previously on an optional basis. Staff reported that TESTA was energising for the whole programme team, and the ELIR team noted several case studies across a number of schools demonstrating examples of improvement as a result of adopting TESTA. TESTA is an enhancement process which is having a demonstrable impact on assessment design and the quality of learning and teaching and is contributing positively to the student experience.

44 The University's Assessment Policy for Taught Provision provides statements on the timing of feedback on assessment to enable 'feedforward'. There is an expectation that students should normally receive marks and feedback on coursework no later than three working weeks after the submission of the work. This requirement is monitored by school programme administrators, who highlight any that require further action. Students who met the team were generally satisfied that this was adhered to and, if staff were not going to meet the deadline, they would inform the students. With the exception of final degree examinations, this entitlement to feedback includes examination performance, but the ELIR team learned, in practice, it is rare for students to request this, even although those who met the team were aware they could ask for it. Overall the University has a positive approach to providing feedback on assessment.

Employability

45 The current University strategy includes an action and performance indicator to increase engagement with the Dundee Plus Award and, during 2018-19, the Careers Service has made significant changes to Dundee Plus which have been approved by the Employability & Enterprise Sub-Committee. The University confirmed it is keen to work with DUSA to ensure the Award continues to evolve and that even more students engage with it. Students who met the ELIR team highlighted that the Student Services directorate (through its careers service) provides very good support for students seeking part-time work during their studies as well as supporting students to find employment after graduation.

2.4 Postgraduate taught and research student experience

46 The University has effective arrangements for ensuring there is a high quality postgraduate student experience. In particular there is an excellent postgraduate research student experience.

47 Oversight of quality assurance and enhancement for all taught programmes is provided by the Quality and Academic Standards Committee and the Learning and Teaching Committee. The RA indicated that a former Postgraduate Taught Degrees Sub Committee had its business subsumed into the main Senate Committees to avoid any divide in

expectations for quality enhancement. The Research Degrees Sub-Committee reports to the Senate Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

48 The University indicated that the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey provided by the former HEA (now part of Advance HE) have been the principal mechanisms for gathering feedback from postgraduate students for many years. Analyses of the results are considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Research Degrees Sub-Committee respectively, and in relevant school committees. The survey outcomes show that the University's postgraduate taught students are generally satisfied with their experience; the scores are aligned with or above national averages. At the time of the ELIR, the University was piloting its own postgraduate taught student survey and was considering ways of working with other institutions to enable benchmarking.

49 All postgraduate students are allocated an academic adviser to provide both academic and pastoral support. The Academic Skills Centre (ASC) offers a broad range of advice, support and academic skills sessions and can tailor this to the requirements of individual students. ASC offers postgraduate students a four-day event, Gateway to Postgraduate Study, focusing on academic culture, research skills and writing. There is also a one-day abridged version available online and accessible to all students. Postgraduate students who met the ELIR team highlighted that there is high engagement with ASC, confirming that it is a highly beneficial service for student development (paragraph 89).

Postgraduate research students

50 Oversight of the research student experience in schools is overseen by the relevant associate dean for research or by the research student lead. Students attend a thesis monitoring committee twice a year to review progress in their studies. The committee comprises two independent members and allows the student to discuss any potential challenges in completing their thesis (paragraph 76). The ELIR team commends this practice which provides an opportunity for students to raise both academic and pastoral requirements at regular intervals throughout their research. It also provides a regular opportunity to discuss the relationship between student and supervisor, which allows any potential challenges to be addressed.

51 The Researcher Development Policy outlines the provision in place to support postgraduate research students through their career and professional development. The support for researcher development is emphasised through the transferable skills training provided by the Human Resources & Organisational Development directorate through its Organisational and Professional Development (OPD) team. Beginning as a pilot in 2015, the University offers a two-day Thesis Bootcamp programme to all students who are working towards completing their thesis. The ELIR team noted the programme was well established and students who met the team spoke enthusiastically about their positive experiences of it.

52 OPD delivers mandatory training for all research student supervisors through a workshop, Developing Effective Relationships in Postgraduate Supervision at Doctoral Level. The ELIR team learned that, in some cases, a new academic can become a second supervisor and participate with the mentoring process which facilitates their development and capacity to take on a supervisor role.

53 Since the 2013 ELIR, and to promote the research student community, the University expanded the postgraduate space in the Library & Learning Centre on the City Campus and at the Ninewells Campus Library. The University also indicated it is actively considering the feasibility of creating an institution-wide Doctoral Academy. The intention would be to adopt a 'One Dundee' approach to the arrangements for supporting postgraduate research students which would be beneficial to enhancing the student

experience. The ELIR team heard from students that the University is highly responsive to their changing needs, for example students have flexibility to adjust their study mode from full to part-time.

54 In the 2013 ELIR, the University was asked to improve the support provided for postgraduates who teach. Since then, the University has taken a variety of measures to improve the induction and ongoing support for students throughout their teaching journey. The Academic Skills Centre (ASC) provides a mandatory training programme. Attendance at the training is monitored by ASC and the schools by comparing teaching and training records. The ELIR team noted this approach could allow students to begin teaching before they have completed training and there could be benefit in monitoring more closely to reduce this possibility. Students who met the team confirmed that they had good opportunities to gain teaching experience and there would be value in the University ensuring this is true for all postgraduate research students.

2.5 Learning environment

55 The Digital Literacies Framework was introduced in 2015 to provide the baseline skills and behaviours for supporting learning in the workplace and at university. In 2017, the University invested in a substantial refurbishment of the Library & Learning Centre on the City Campus. The project was designed in consultation with students and embraces the latest technology. The ELIR team noted that, overall, students are satisfied with the learning resources provided.

56 Staff and student engagement with new technology is promoted through initiatives such as Digital January, which aims to showcase a key digital application 'in the field', and Digital Friday which showcases a new 'app' each week. The University also offered an 'APPvent calendar' initiative in which a new app was shared each day of December. These initiatives and other activity aimed at supporting staff to use technology is provided through the Digital Literacies Community of Practice which includes academic staff as well as staff from key professional services such as the Library & Learning Centre and Student Services (Academic Skills Centre). The ELIR team recognised that there was proactive engagement by staff with these activities.

57 The Centre for Technology and Innovation in Learning (CTIL) was established within the Library & Learning Centre directorate as part of the University restructure in 2015. CTIL is integral to providing the virtual learning environment (VLE) for students. Developments are guided by the Digital Strategy Committee to ensure alignment with the pedagogic approaches of the disciplines. The ELIR team noted that the University uses two VLEs, one for the Medical School and one for the rest of the institution. The team learned that the University does not currently provide guidance to programme teams on the good practice expected for VLE content and there was considerable variation in the way the online environment was used in different schools and programmes, for example in the extent to which functions, such as discussion forums, were used. The University is asked to develop its practice in this area (paragraph 60).

2.6 Effectiveness of the approach to enhancing the student learning experience

58 The University has an effective approach to enhancing the student learning experience. The University and Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA) have a productive and collaborative relationship which brings a rich range of benefits. There is a well-established Student Partnership Agreement in place which the University and DUSA monitor through mutually-agreed KPIs. DUSA has introduced 'SRC Online' which enables students to provide feedback anonymously and this is having a positive impact with

examples of feedback topics being considered and actioned by the University. The University has embedded the use of the Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment (TESTA) approach across all of its academic schools and this has had a positive impact on assessment design and the experience of students.

59 There is an excellent postgraduate research student experience provided across the University. This includes careful progress monitoring which takes place twice-yearly through thesis monitoring committees, covering academic progress and pastoral support needs as well as offering an opportunity to explore the effectiveness of the student-supervisor relationship. In addition, the University provides a range of imaginative support, such as the intensive two-day Thesis Bootcamp.

60 The University has a substantial number of students studying by distance learning with plans to increase this further. Following an internal audit which focused on the distance learning student experience, the University is at an early stage in implementing a range of measures aimed at promoting distance learning student engagement, representation and support. The University is encouraged to progress its work in this area and to develop guidance for programme teams on the minimum expectations for the design and use of the virtual learning environment with particular focus on distance learning students.

61 The University aims to increase the diversity of its student population and has had considerable success in widening access to students from SIMD20 and SIMD40. It has a range of initiatives in place to support students entering from a wide variety of backgrounds and targets these to specific student groups. Currently it does not take an overview of the full range of these initiatives in order to evaluate which are the most successful in supporting the different student groups to enter and succeed in their studies. There would be benefit in the University considering ways of sharing practice between the initiatives to support the staff delivering them and to ensure students have an equivalent experience in key areas such as welcome and induction.

3 Strategy and practice for enhancing learning and teaching

3.1 Strategic approach to enhancement

62 The University has a clear and effective strategic framework for enhancing learning and teaching and the wider student experience.

63 The RA indicated that the University's approach to developing and implementing strategies has matured. The University Strategy 2012-17 had a complex structure including a series of separate component strategies. In order to ensure that quality enhancement was appropriately embedded in University Strategy, a Quality Enhancement Metastrategy was developed which included all the aims from each of the component strategies that related to enhancing the student experience and included an accompanying action planning grid. The creation of the Metastrategy was informed by the University's own evaluation of practices as well as the outcomes from the 2013 ELIR. At the end of 2017, when moving to the new strategic period, the University reported fully on its performance, referencing data and national benchmarks and rating areas of risk. The University's reflections demonstrated an enhanced performance including on many learning and teaching KPIs with NSS outcomes being particularly strong. The ELIR team shared the University's view that these results demonstrate the success of the strategic drive to enhance the student experience.

64 The University Strategy to 2022 was launched in 2017 following substantial consultation with staff and students and was described as 'fully integrated', designed to encompass all that the institution does. The RA indicated that at the centre of the Strategy to

2022 was the ethos of the University as a high-performance community and taking a 'One Dundee' approach. The One Dundee concept was underpinned by a Business Transformation Programme which was underway at the time of the current ELIR.

65 The Strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive action plan and, as with the previous University Strategy, KPIs have been developed to assess progress and impact. Each of the actions in the plan has been assigned to a University Senate or Court committee. In the case of enhancing learning and teaching, actions are primarily owned by the Learning and Teaching Committee. It was clear to the ELIR team that the University's action planning approach has facilitated the institution's ability to ensure the coherence of its Strategy overall, with learning and teaching actions influencing wider strategic aims.

66 The ELIR team learned that schools developed their own plans within the strategic framework. The team noted that, as the associate dean roles have their priorities set at school level, there was a potential for a conflict between a school view and an institutional committee view of priorities. Nevertheless, the relationships between the associate deans and the active engagement of the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) with deans of the schools appeared to ensure the structure operated effectively.

67 The University uses internal audit to assist in identifying actions in areas of strategic importance including a regular audit exercise that focuses on the student experience. Since 2008-09, the University has conducted audits in a range of areas including student services, student recruitment and DUSA, with evidence of actions being taken as a result.

3.2 Impact of the national Enhancement Themes and related activity

68 The QAA national Enhancement Themes are a key external reference point for the University and make a demonstrable contribution to policy and practice aimed at enhancing learning and teaching.

69 The University is engaged to a significant extent in the national activity with the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) leading the current Theme, Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience. The Head of the Academic Skills Centre was the Deputy Leader of the previous Theme, Student Transitions. It is very positive that the University has significant senior engagement with the national enhancement activity.

70 Although at a relatively early stage in the current Enhancement Theme's timeline, it was evident to the ELIR team that the University is actively pursuing its action plans in relation to Evidence for Enhancement. Staff were aware of the strategic drive to develop data to inform decisions, for example through the provision of data dashboards (paragraph 112). The team noted that the Organisational and Professional Development team offers workshops and other staff-facing activity to promote staff engagement with the Enhancement Theme agenda.

71 The University is able to demonstrate significant actions arising from the previous Theme, Student Transitions. In some instances, existing work was given more prominence as a result of the Theme, but the RA confirmed that new initiatives had also been stimulated which have now become embedded in practice, such as the development of a Student Transitions unit on the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Higher Education programme for teaching staff. The impact of action linked to the Theme on the student experience is evident in a range of activity including the STEP UP to business module which is embedded in the curriculum and is a model of practice which is of interest to other schools and the student body.

72 Further evidence of the impact of the previous Enhancement Theme is LIVE Smart and LEARN Smart, two online resources that assist with three stages of transition, from

entry to thinking about employment. The ELIR team learned that the engagement of students with these resources is significant in schools where they have been embedded. In discussions with staff, the team heard that the University intends to extend the applicability of LIVE Smart to its distance learning students and plans were in place to develop a further resource, Support Smart, for academic advisers. These are examples of very positive initiatives which the team would encourage the University to continue embedding across all schools

3.3 Approaches to identifying and sharing good practice

73 The University has an effective and systematic approach for identifying and sharing good practice using a wide range of mechanisms, both formal and informal, as well as drawing on external networks and agencies to support enhancement.

74 Good practice is identified at the Quality and Academic Standards Committee and shared with school quality and academic standards committees. For example, in relation to external examiner reports, the Director of Quality and Academic Standards provides a synopsis of all reports for discussion at the Quality and Academic Standards Committee and dissemination to schools. The Annual Programme Review process asks schools to reflect on their external examiner comments and schools are expected to share external examiner reports with student representatives in a suitable forum.

75 The ELIR team learned that the Periodic Programme Review (PPR) process had been modified recently to incorporate a 'critical friend' approach where schools are able to engage with an academic from another discipline to assist with review preparations. In discussions with the team, staff emphasised that the introduction of this experienced support is very helpful for schools and was regarded as a very positive development.

76 Since January 2017, the University has conducted 'wash up' sessions for the conveners and secretaries of boards of examiners and these have led to enhancements including paperless boards. Thesis monitoring committees provide a further regular opportunity for experience and practice to be shared. The six-monthly reviews of research student progress are frequently conducted by an experienced, successful supervisor accompanied by an early-career and less experienced member of academic staff. This provides a valuable opportunity to learn from more experienced colleagues.

77 The Learning and Teaching Development Forum for professional services staff, academic staff and student representatives is a mechanism for sharing good practice and developing enhancement opportunities. The University also frequently forms working groups of academic and professional services staff to address short to medium-term aspects of student experience or to amend or develop policy. Forming these collaborative working groups facilitates the identification and sharing of good practice. At the time of the current ELIR, working groups were in place on a wide range of topics including: benchmarking in partnership with other Scottish institutions; investigating incentives to become student representatives; engaging distance learning students; addressing gender-based violence; improving the conversion of applicants to students; investigating international student satisfaction; assessing the global student experience; promoting international exchanges; updating the policy on recognition of prior learning; and considering the introduction of a doctoral academy.

78 In addition to the use of working groups, the University offers workshops to engage staff and students in addressing ad hoc topics, such as preparing the RA for ELIR and, within programmes, workshops are frequently offered to support the training and development of teaching staff and student. Examples include academic skills workshops for students provided by the Academic Skills Centre, researcher skills workshops for

postgraduate research students, development workshops for associate deans, and the Sharing Good Practice programme for teaching staff.

79 Good practice is disseminated through the Annual Teaching Awards where winners are encouraged to present at the annual Discovery Days, alongside the newly-inducted professors. Through these days, staff, students, members of the University Court, school pupils and the general public all hear about the good practice employed by the Teaching Award recipients. In addition, schools offer several conferences and events which facilitate discussion and opportunities to learn about practice from colleagues.

Associate deans

80 The associate deans play a significant role in the dissemination and sharing of good practice in structured arenas such as the Learning and Teaching Committee and through regular, informal catch-up meetings which provide the opportunity to share challenges and solutions. Good practice identified through the Periodic Programme Review process is disseminated by the associate deans at school quality and academic standards committees. The ELIR team heard how associate deans form a link between the institutional committee structure and the schools. The team also noted that the role descriptors and time allocations for the associate deans are identified at institutional level but there are school-level modifications to areas of responsibility and expected workload. It was evident to the team that the associate deans form supportive communities both within and across schools which are central to the establishment and dissemination of good practice.

Academic Skills Centre

81 The Academic Skills Centre (ASC) within Student Services plays a pivotal role in sharing good practice across the University. The Sharing Good Practice Programme (a series of workshops, seminars and symposia) and the less formal Friday Fry Up, both run by ASC, are excellent mechanisms by which good practice is identified and shared. The University is aware of the challenges associated with evaluating the full extent to which participants disseminate the practice learned back in their own schools. ASC is therefore developing a longitudinal approach to feedback where participants are asked to comment on outcomes and impact six and 12 months after the event. It is intended to help ensure that the Sharing Good Practice Programme is supporting staff effectively and helping the University to achieve its strategic objectives on learning and teaching. The ELIR team considered this was a positive approach.

3.4 Engaging, developing and supporting staff

82 The University has effective arrangements in place for engaging and supporting staff in the development of their learning, teaching and academic practices, providing an imaginative range of formal and informal staff development opportunities.

83 The RA identified the Academic Skills Centre (ASC) as the primary locus for academic skills development. Along with a wide range of seminars and workshops aimed at supporting professional practice, ASC provides an academic induction programme, the HEA-accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Higher Education, and a Learning to Teach in Higher Education programme which is mandatory for postgraduate students who teach. The Postgraduate Certificate is available by distance learning and the ELIR team learned that staff from other higher education institutions enrol on the programme. ASC has established four school liaison staff, dedicated to allocated schools, who are proactive in establishing collaboration between the Centre and the schools. ASC works very closely with the Centre for Technology and Innovation in Learning (CTIL), DUSA, and school staff to provide bespoke training opportunities where a need is identified, for example Essayfest which was organised through a partnership between ASC, DUSA and

CTIL and focused on essay writing through a week-long series of events including workshops, masterclasses and drop-in sessions. ASC is proactive, collaborative and innovative in its approach to supporting learning and teaching in the University.

84 The Organisational and Professional Development (OPD) team is actively engaged in the Teaching, Research and Academic Mentoring Scheme, a cross-institutional mentoring scheme and offer an annual programme of workshops and events to support continuing professional development in staff. OPD also provided the strategic leadership development programme for the associate deans which comprised a series of workshops. In discussion with the ELIR team, associate deans confirmed they had been well supported by the programme, although the team also heard that more recently-appointed associate deans had to rely on informal peer training and development opportunities.

85 The Centre for Technology and Innovation in Learning supports staff through a suite of communities of practice. The Library & Learning Centre provides training for staff on digital literacies, reading list software, survey tools, reference management techniques, appropriate use of plagiarism detection software, e-assessment and technology-enhanced learning. A regular column 'Digital Dundee' in the University's Highlighter newsletter provides information on the most recent updates in technology enhanced learning. A website 'Learning spaces' provides resources for teaching and learning and hosts the Distance Learning Forum as well as Learning X, an informal learning forum.

86 The University has a stated goal to increase the proportion of staff with teaching qualifications or Fellowship of the Higher Education Academic (HEA - now part of Advance HE) as part of its strategy to engage and develop staff. Successful completion of the Associate Module from the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Higher Education is a mandatory requirement for all new probationary lecturers. The programme is also available to all non-probationary teaching staff who wish to gain Associate Fellowship or Fellowship of the HEA. It is also available to postgraduates who teach and who have completed their mandatory programme (paragraph 83).

87 At the time of the current ELIR, the University had recently incorporated the recognition of teaching and learning into its promotions process. The ELIR team met staff who had been promoted to Reader and/or received increments on the basis of teaching. The team also learned that a number of staff had been promoted to Professor through the teaching and learning route. This change to the promotions process has been welcomed by education-focused staff and the team heard that the culture within the schools has changed positively in response to this recognition of teaching and learning.

88 Training and development needs for academic staff are identified through the annual Objective Setting and Review meetings. The ELIR team learned that all associate deans participated in the University's formal leadership development programme. Currently, there is no specific formal review process to identify ongoing support for staff in the associate dean roles although there are opportunities for informal identification of development opportunities and feedback. There would be benefit in the University considering the ongoing opportunities provided to associate deans to support their development. Overall, academic staff who met the team confirmed that they were very well supported, especially by ASC and OPD, in relation to the provision of opportunities to develop their teaching, learning and technology skills.

3.5 Effectiveness of the approach to implementing institutional strategies and enhancing learning and teaching

89 The University has an effective approach to implementing institutional strategies and enhancing student learning. It has a wide variety of systematic approaches for

identifying and sharing good practice including those linked to its regular quality processes, supplemented by innovative practice such as the presentations by Teaching Award winners at Discovery Days. ASC, in particular, is a centre of excellence with a wide-ranging, innovative, responsive and proactive portfolio for students and staff.

90 The University has brought about greater institutional oversight and opportunities for systematic enhancement through the introduction of the pivotal associate dean role. Associate deans enhance communication within and between schools, for example through their membership of school committees, bringing greater consistency in the student experience. Together they form an effective cross-school community which serves to enhance learning and teaching and share good practice across the University.

91 Since the previous ELIR, the University has introduced a number of measures which prioritise learning and teaching across the institution. Staff are recognised for the delivery of high-quality learning and teaching, for example through the promotions policy, and are supported through opportunities to develop their practice provided by ASC and the OPD team.

4 Academic standards and quality processes

4.1 Key features of the institution's approach to managing quality and academic standards

Procedures, policy and regulations

92 The ELIR team would support the University's view of its quality framework as mature and fit for purpose. The University restructuring in 2015 resulted in significant changes to the management of quality and academic standards associated with the shift from four relatively independent colleges to nine schools. The schools now report directly through the institutional committee structure, supported by the Quality and Academic Standards Office, and this has enabled a more consistent approach to the implementation of the University's Quality Framework. The team recognised the University's focus on a 'One Dundee' approach, and the consequent improvement in institutional oversight across the schools. As the University recognises, some variability in school policies and practices persists, such as in the use of VLE, and it is encouraged to continue its programme of harmonisation.

93 As part of the restructure, the University introduced the associate deans roles in each school. Associate deans (quality and academic standards) and associate deans (learning and teaching) share responsibilities for the quality and academic standards of the University's taught programmes. In the case of programmes delivered in collaboration with overseas partners, these responsibilities are also shared with associate deans (international). The associate deans roles have improved communication and supported good practice sharing across the University, in particular through their cross-institutional responsibilities and activities (paragraph 90).

94 Linked to the decision that oversight of quality and standards should rest with a central University committee, the Quality and Academic Standards Committee (QASC) was established in 2015. It works closely with the University Learning and Teaching Committee, reports directly to the Senate, is chaired by the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) and its core membership comprises the associate deans (quality and academic standards), key professional services staff and student representation.

95 Learning and teaching committees and quality and academic standards committees have also been introduced in the schools although, in some schools, the two committees are

merged but maintain separate agendas. During discussions with groups of staff, the ELIR team repeatedly heard how these committees at school and institutional level have facilitated more effective communication and opportunities to share practice, especially through the associate deans' membership. In discussion with staff, the team learned that some schools have also introduced discipline committees, which staff suggested could create barriers to effective communication. There would be benefit in the University exploring the extent to which this is the case.

96 The University's Academic & Corporate Governance directorate is responsible for maintaining institutional policies, procedures and regulations in relation to corporate and academic matters. Students are made aware of regulations, policies and procedures through programme handbooks and through the information provided for current students on the University's website, as well as in other programme-specific documentation. Students who met the ELIR team were satisfied that the information they require was made available to them.

Programme approval, monitoring and review

97 The University's new programme approval and periodic review processes have both been subject to review and significant revision in the past two academic years. The approval process is now more streamlined at the initial business planning stage. The periodic review process now provides a more structured, evaluative approach and the development of data sets to support programme leaders.

98 The programme approval process is preceded by an analysis and approval of the business case by the University's Educational Business Development Oversight Group (EBDOG) to confirm that the proposal relates to operational plans and strategies at school and University levels. Stage two of the approval process allows for more detailed academic scrutiny of the proposal, with independent external panel members often supplemented by professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) representatives and practice partners.

99 The ELIR team learned that the University had considered changing the unit of review in its periodic review process to the subject level but has retained programme-level periodic review while also providing enhanced central support through the Quality and Academic Standards Office. The Periodic Programme Review (PPR) process includes the ability to specify areas for development and suggestions at both the school and, occasionally, the institutional level. The team considered that the inclusion of more informative programme data and 'a critical friend' in the later stages of the PPR process are both positive developments which both enable the exploration of key matters in advance of the formal event. 'Critical friends' are not full panel members but they have enhanced the process through improving communication and enabling more effective use to be made of the formal meetings. Associate deans (quality and academic standards) chair all programme approval and periodic review events, and this is also an important means of gaining consistency and sharing practice across the University.

100 There was a substantial revision of the annual review process in 2013, with further revision in 2016 to reflect feedback from staff and to align with the new University structures. The review process involves a cascade from module review to programme review which leads to the development of school learning and teaching enhancement reports. The school reports form the basis of annual discussions with the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching), the Director of Quality and Academic Standards and, to aid links between quality and enhancement and strategic planning, the Vice-Principal (Provost) or the Director of Strategic Planning. Another relatively recent enhancement has been the inclusion of student representatives in the meetings.

101 The ELIR team learned that the annual review process has also benefitted from the development of data dashboards (paragraph 112). From the examples it saw, the team considered the annual review process is effective, although some variation in practice was evident across modules and programmes, for example in relation to the consideration of external examiner reports and action planning.

Research degrees

102 The University currently has an annual school monitoring process in place for research degrees. The process is enhancement-led and makes use of recently-improved data on research students, with reports being considered by the University Research Degrees Sub-Committee. The RA indicated that this Sub-Committee has been leading on the development of a periodic review process for research degree programmes. However, staff who met the ELIR team had little awareness of the proposal and it appeared that progress has been slow. The team considered that, supported by the existing improved data, the addition of a periodic review process would give the University a more holistic view of its research degree provision and the research student experience.

4.2 Use of external reference points in quality processes

103 The University makes effective use of a range of external reference points in its academic standards and quality processes. The University's quality framework is aligned to the UK Quality Code and other external reference points, and is regularly reviewed.

104 The University makes good use of its external stakeholders in programme development, including for the large proportion of its awards with professional accreditation, addressing the expectations of PSRBs. The University's processes for programme approval and Periodic Programme Review both include the requirement that programme learning outcomes should reflect the level of the final qualification through the level descriptors provided by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and the Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland (FQHEIS), and that relevant Subject Benchmark Statements and PSRB requirements are taken into account. Periodic review reports do not specifically confirm that the requirements of FQHEIS are being met, but the ELIR team noted that the resulting programme and module specifications do include a requirement to reflect a distillation of the SCQF level characteristics.

105 External examiners are also asked to confirm that programme/module learning outcomes are aligned with the relevant qualification descriptor(s) set out in the FQHEIS, that the content and structure of the programme/module is appropriate with regard to the stated SCQF level and volume of credit, and the stated programme/module aims, content and intended learning outcomes are aligned with PSRB requirements.

106 External examiner appointments are approved by the school's associate dean (quality and academic standards) prior to University approval through the Director of Quality and Academic Standards on behalf of the Quality and Academic Standards Committee. The previous ELIR highlighted the University's approach to external examining as an area of positive practice. The current ELIR team considered that the support and guidance made available to schools and their external examiners continues to be thorough and encourages a consistent approach.

107 The University acknowledges that a proportion of external examiners' annual reports are submitted late or not at all. Although external examiners are not paid a fee unless they submit their annual report and schools do pursue the submission of reports, a small number of external examiners do not submit. The University explains the need for an annual report in its appointment letters and guidance booklet for external examiners. It is considering the introduction of institution-level induction for all new external examiners.

The ELIR team would support the University's continued efforts to ensure it receives a full complement of external examiner reports.

108 The Quality and Academic Standards Office works with the schools to ensure that all external examiner reports are responded to. Schools respond with involvement as required from the Quality and Academic Standards Office. If necessary, the Director of Quality and Academic Standards will respond directly to external examiners.

4.3 Commentary on action taken since ELIR 3

109 The University has been responsive to the outcomes of its 2013 ELIR. It was asked to develop in three areas, the first of which related to having greater institutional oversight of policy and practice. The University's response was closely linked to, and largely addressed by, the significant structural changes it has gone through since the previous ELIR including the associated emphasis on the 'One Dundee' approach. The second area related to ensuring that training and support was in place for postgraduate students who teach, and the University has made good progress on this, introducing the Learning to Teach in Higher Education programme which is delivered by the Academic Skills Centre (paragraph 54).

110 The University was also asked to develop its arrangements relating to the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The University revised its policy and guidance in 2014 but recognises that this would benefit from further work (paragraph 11). The ELIR team learned that the University intends to develop an admissions portal as part of a new student management system and this will include the delivery of a consistent RPL approach. The University is encouraged to progress its intentions, given the potential importance of RPL in supporting wider institutional strategy around widening access.

4.4 Approach to using data to inform decision-making and evaluation

111 The University has a broadly effective approach to using data in support of decision-making which it is continuing to develop. The University has a centralised data system which is pivot table based and which produces reliable data that can be reflected upon within its quality processes. Data supports the development of strategy, and decision-making and evaluation are underpinned by robust and reliable data which informs enhancements to the student experience. It was clear to the ELIR team from the documentation and discussions with staff that significant progress has been made to enhance the University's systems for capturing, collating and analysing data and that the University is continuing to invest in further data enhancement activity.

112 The University uses data dashboards for annual and Periodic Programme Review. The dashboards have filters so that data can be examined at school, programme and module level, as well as by student characteristic. In order to capture the full diversity of its student body, and as diversification of the student population increases, the University requires more sophisticated data monitoring. The current data dashboards enable some filtering of data, however their functionality is not always simple and the ability to split data between different population groups could be enhanced.

113 The ELIR team learned that, as the supply of data to schools by the University has improved, there has been an associated reduction in the amount of data being held separately in schools. During meetings with staff, the team heard some instances of specific data being held, for example in order to monitor student placements. Because the University does not yet have a standard approach for gathering student feedback through module evaluation questionnaires (paragraph 22), staff hold student feedback data at programme level and there is a perception among some staff that this data is more useful to programme teams than the NSS results data. The team was also told that not all programmes in all schools use the dashboards.

114 The ELIR team learned that the University has plans in place to enhance its data capability further using a business analytics service which provides interactive data visualisations. The team considered this was a positive development and would support the University's plans to continue developing the data dashboards to provide a more visually-intuitive and user-friendly experience which would also enable users to interrogate the data more effectively.

4.5 Effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic standards

115 The University has effective arrangements in place for securing academic standards which meet the expectations set out in the UK Quality Code and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidance to institutions on quality. The restructuring of the University has had a significant positive effect on its management of academic standards and quality processes, enabling a more consistent approach to implementing the University's Quality Framework.

4.6 Effectiveness of the institution's approach to self-evaluation, including the effective use of data to inform decision-making

116 The University has an effective approach to self-evaluation including its use of data to inform decision-making. Consideration of institution-level data sets throughout University and school committees supports a consistency of approach and enables the priority of actions to be rated as part of an effective reporting scheme. The Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) has played a key role in strategic planning for learning and teaching including championing the institution-wide use of action planning underpinned by the systematic use of data.

117 The University's key annual and periodic quality processes have evolved since the 2013 ELIR to include a number of enhancements including the annual conversations between the schools and senior staff including the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching). The inclusion of students in the annual meetings is positive, as is the link with the strategic planning function.

5 Collaborative provision

5.1 Key features of the institution's strategic approach

118 As part of its Strategy to 2022, the University aims to increase its international recruitment, partnerships and income. As a result, the University has significantly increased its collaborative activity over the past five years and plans for this growth to continue. The University wishes to move towards a portfolio of fewer, larger partnerships including a range of activities in China and Singapore, with a focus on articulation-type arrangements which provide students with a meaningful experience of study in Dundee. The University operates only a limited range of validated or franchised provision.

119 International collaborations and other international activities are overseen by the Senate Internationalisation Committee, chaired by the Vice-Principal (International) with operational matters being overseen by the International Deans Operating Committee which comprises the associate deans (international) and certain professional services staff.

120 The Educational Partnerships Development Unit (EPDU) was established in 2015 to support the development and management of both potential and existing UK and international collaborative partnerships. The University stated in the RA that the role of EPDU includes a mix of business development, governance, development of business processes, risk management, financial modelling and partner relationship management. The

University indicated that the Quality and Academic Standards Office and the QASC have responsibility for the oversight of the quality and standards of collaborative arrangements. From the RA and discussions during the review, the ELIR team formed the view that the Quality and Academic Standards Office could be more actively engaged in the oversight of international collaborations. The associate deans (quality and academic standards), associate deans (learning and teaching) and associate deans (international) also fulfil roles in respect of collaborative provision and the precise nature of the roles varies from school to school, depending upon the type and location of the collaborative partnership. The team noted that the Associate Deans' role descriptors provided limited detail on their responsibility for collaborative arrangements and, in the team's view this contributed to the observed variability.

121 The business case for new collaborative arrangements is initiated by schools and considered by the University's Educational Business Development Oversight Group. Decisions are guided by the strategic fit, the financial case and the risks associated with the proposal, with schools supported by the EPDU's toolkit for teaching collaborations. This toolkit provides schools with a structured and supported process for the approval of taught collaborative provision, as well as a means to monitor and review partnerships from a business perspective. It is effective in achieving a risk-based, responsive and consistent approach across schools, and is aligned with the principles laid out in the University's Quality Framework for Teaching Collaborations. The ELIR team noted that it is necessary to read both the guidance in the Toolkit and that provided in the Quality Framework. Integrating the two sets of guidance would provide a clearer approach to monitoring and review from the perspective of quality and academic standards.

122 All collaborative arrangements are monitored and supported by link coordinators and reviewed annually by schools through the risk-based consideration of annual programme quality enhancement reports. Supported by EPDU, the link coordinator is the main contact point for all matters relating to the development and operation of the collaborative arrangement. The University has a role descriptor for link coordinators, which is positive, although the team considered the descriptor could place greater emphasis on the aspects of the role relating to supporting and monitoring the quality of the student experience. The 2017 review of UK transnational education at Ballyfermot College of Further Education confirmed that link coordinators act as key points of contact between the partner team and the school and commended their engagement with students. The ELIR team considered there would be benefit in the University establishing a community of practice for link coordinators, akin to those available for associate deans, in order to support the coordinators and share good practice across the institution.

123 The University operates a small range of joint, dual and double awards at bachelor's, master's and doctoral level. Detailed policies and guidance on the approval and ongoing monitoring of such awards are described in the University's Code of Practice on Taught Joint, Double/Multiple or Dual Qualifications, and require all components of the programme to be taught and assessed in English at both institutions concerned. The University conforms to these requirements in all cases, and in some cases also delivers aspects of the components offered at the partner institution. At the time of the ELIR, the University was at an early stage of planning to develop a Joint Education Institute in China. The ELIR team considered that the University's current practices for collaborations of that nature gave confidence that it would manage the arrangement securely.

International College of Dundee

124 In 2017-18, the University developed a partnership with the private education provider, Oxford International, to set up the International College of Dundee (ICD). This initiative enables students to access an undergraduate or postgraduate international

incorporated degree programme. The students spend the first year on a pathway programme in ICD before transitioning into the second year at the University. The School of Social Sciences has responsibility for the quality assurance arrangements and the student learning experience. ICD is based on the University's campus and its students are matriculated students of the University, which allows them to integrate more easily and aids their transition. Consequently, this model provides a supportive environment for the students and allows for academically robust monitoring and review arrangements.

Graduate apprenticeships

125 The University launched four Graduate Apprenticeships in 2017-18, adding one more in 2018-19. The School of Science and Engineering currently has responsibility for the oversight of academic standards and quality of the apprentice experience for all current Graduate Apprenticeships, although other schools are likely to take a role as the number of Apprenticeships expands. Given the University's plans for expansion, there would be benefit in considering how the Graduate Apprenticeships will align with the University's Quality Framework and the collaborations toolkit.

Ballyfermot College of Further Education

126 In 2017, the University's partnership with Ballyfermot College of Further Education (BCFE) was included in QAA's review of UK transnational education in the Republic of Ireland. The report noted that academic standards were being maintained and that quality assurance processes were effective, identifying the University's collaborations toolkit and the work of link coordinators as features of positive practice. It also made a number of recommendations relating to the student learning experience including communication about feedback on assessment, monitoring of appropriate resources for students, closing the feedback loop, clarifying complaints procedures, and monitoring information provided to students and prospective students. A response from the school and BCFE was considered by the University's Quality and Academic Standards Committee in February 2018 and included a range of actions to be completed by the University and the College. Through discussions and consideration of documentation, the ELIR team found that three of the recommendations had not yet been acted upon at the time of the current ELIR. The team noted that recommendations had been delegated to the relevant school to action and the school, in turn, had entrusted BCFE to take appropriate action. The ELIR team considered that the University should exercise greater oversight of the partnership, specifically, ensuring that all agreed actions are carried out within an agreed timeframe.

127 BCFE has delegated authority to maintain its own student representation system, which the ELIR team learned is common practice with the University's small number of collaborative arrangements. The students undertaking these validated programmes are all matriculated students of the University which allows them to access the University's learning resources. The students are represented by the Students' Union in their primary institution and it wasn't clear to the team how the arrangements would work to enhance the learning experience of students on collaborative programmes. The University is encouraged to introduce a mechanism for gathering student feedback to ensure the learning resources provided by the University are accessible and relevant for collaborative students. This would also help the University to understand and meet the requirements of its diverse student body, whether from further education or an international institution.

Arab Society of Continuing Dental Education

128 At the time of the current ELIR, the University was in the process of terminating a collaborative agreement in Egypt to deliver master's programmes through a flying faculty model. The University's partnership with the Arab Society of Continuing Dental Education (ASCDE) was initiated in 2012. The partnership was extended in 2016 to include provision

which required more extensive clinical facilities. Assurance of appropriate refurbishment of existing facilities was given to relevant approval panels (that is the programme scrutiny event, the school board and the University Quality and Academic Standards Committee) and a detailed specification of the required clinical facilities was provided to ASCDE before the new programme started. It became clear that the necessary refurbishment of clinical facilities would not be completed in time for the planned start of the programme, so the University took the decision to delay the start date to March 2017 and to proceed with only non-clinical teaching until ASCDE had completed the refurbishment to specification. The clinical facilities were put in place by June 2017. However, by late 2017, feedback from University staff and complaints from students revealed that the clinical facilities were falling short of expectations.

129 This, and concerns over the legal capacity of ASCDE to operate in Egypt, led the University to commission further due diligence work which persuaded it to terminate the partnership. The University considered a number of potential options including identifying other potential partners in Egypt, delivering the programmes in Dundee, and reviewing the programme requirements to allow the students to complete by alternative means. Some student cohorts were able to complete their studies, but the University had to discontinue a number of students' studies, refunding tuition fees and offering goodwill payments.

130 The University has acknowledged that it needs to reflect on the lessons learned from this partnership to ensure that such a situation does not recur in the future. The ELIR team would strongly encourage the University to progress with identifying the lessons learned, ensuring that any future arrangements include adequate contingency planning and prioritising the needs of its students as the University's collaborations toolkit intends.

5.2 Effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative provision

131 Overall, the University has effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience in relation to its collaborative provision. In order to secure the effectiveness of its arrangements, as a matter of priority the University should improve its academic oversight at institutional level to ensure it has effective arrangements in place for identifying and mitigating academic risks.

132 The University's toolkit for teaching collaborations provides schools with a structured and supported process for the approval of taught collaborative provision, as well as a means to monitor and review partnerships from a business perspective. It is effective in achieving a risk-based, responsive and consistent approach across schools when used alongside the University's quality framework.

133 The University recognises the importance of supporting a high quality student experience and ensuring that academic standards are secure. There would be considerable benefit in reviewing the location of responsibility at institutional level for the academic standards and quality of collaborative provision to ensure adequate oversight of key academic quality processes including approval and follow up. There would also be benefit in providing greater clarification of the associate deans' roles in overseeing collaborative provision within schools.

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