



Enhancement-led Institutional Review of University of Glasgow

Technical Report

March 2019

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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 Glasgow. The review took place as follows: Planning Visit on 22 January 2019 and Review Visit on 18-22 March 2019. The review was conducted by a team of six reviewers:

- Professor Jeremy Bradshaw (Academic Reviewer)
- Professor Hilary Grainger (Academic Reviewer)
- Ms Nichola Kett (Coordinating Reviewer)
- Associate Professor Åsa Kettis (Academic Reviewer)
- Mr Alex Muir (Student Reviewer)
- Dr Gillian Thomson (Academic 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-Glasgow

Threshold judgement about University of Glasgow

The University of Glasgow has **effective** arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience.

This is a positive judgement, which means that 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. 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 Glasgow was founded in 1451 and is one of Scotland's four ancient universities. The University describes itself as a research-intensive, broad-based, civic university with global reach and local roots. Students come from around 140 countries, as well as from the West of Scotland.

2 In 2010, the current academic structure was introduced which comprises four colleges (Arts; Science and Engineering; Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences; and Social Sciences) - within and across those colleges there are 33 schools and research institutes, including a graduate school in each college. The colleges are highly autonomous in relation to resource allocation, learning and teaching, and research activity.

3 The University's vision is to be a world-class, world-changing university by focusing on three core elements: people, place and purpose. These elements are underpinned by specific action areas which include: attracting the best staff and students; connecting with the world through internationalisation; developing a transformative campus; streamlining processes, policies, systems and student support; and undertaking outstanding teaching and world-class research that has societal and economic impact. The current five-year strategy (to 2020), *Inspiring People*, is intended to support the vision by providing a framework within which schools, colleges and services are empowered to implement policy and practice appropriate to their own circumstances to the benefit of their staff and students.

4 A number of notable changes have taken place since the last ELIR in 2014, in support of the vision and strategy. At the time of the current ELIR, a significant campus redevelopment was underway involving the creation of entirely new learning, teaching and study spaces. The first new building being planned, the James McCune Smith Learning Hub, is scheduled to open in 2019-20 and is intended to provide flexible and technology-enhanced teaching and learning spaces. In parallel, the University was refurbishing a number of existing buildings to ensure a good study environment for existing students.

5 The University has also carried out some significant organisational and governance changes. In 2017-18, work commenced to group professional service departments into eight directorates with the aim of providing better coordination and more streamlined and accessible support for students - these changes were ongoing during the current ELIR. In addition, following the Review of Senate effectiveness in 2014, the University replaced its Senate - comprising all professors (600 members) and a small number of elected members, with the Council of Senate comprising 120 elected members (including students) - with the aim of facilitating more effective and efficient strategic decision-making.

6 Cultural change work, underway at the time of the current ELIR, was aimed at strengthening what the University calls 'distributed leadership' by making staff feel more empowered to implement change at school and college level. Several initiatives were in place to support this including the development of a Leadership Framework, which supports, for example, recruitment and leadership programmes (paragraphs 98-103) and the introduction of a development programme called the Glasgow Professional, which sets out how professional services staff can contribute to the changes being made.

7 The World Changing Glasgow (WCG) Transformation Programme was running in parallel with these initiatives. Still in early stages of development during the ELIR, WCG was a new approach through which the University aimed to manage projects more effectively across a large, diverse organisation. Experts on organisational change lead cross-institutional projects with project teams drawn from across the University. Areas of focus include: assessment and feedback; student services; professional services; culture and ways of working; and data-led decision-making. To underpin this work, the University has expanded its Business Intelligence team and created a 'data warehouse' with a view to supporting informed and transparent decision-making at all levels within the institution (paragraphs 34, 45, 79, 88 and 141-142).

1.2 Composition and key trends in the student population

8 In 2018-19, the University had a total student population of 28,780, of whom: 19,180 were undergraduate; 7,140 postgraduate taught (PGT); and 2,460 postgraduate research (PGR). Of these: 18,640 were categorised as home/EU students; 3,220 as rest of UK; and 6,940 as overseas. 5% of the 2018-19 student population were studying part-time, 2,636 transnational education (TNE) students were studying with the University's collaborative partners, and a small number of validation arrangements included a total of 3,297 students (paragraph 158).

9 Since the 2014 ELIR, overall student numbers have increased across all levels of study and the University anticipated that this growth would continue with comparatively faster growth in international (including TNE) and postgraduate students. The number of part-time postgraduate students has decreased, and there is a small increase in the imbalance between men and women. The number of online distance-learning programmes offered has increased significantly from three to 24 in a four-year period, with an increase in online distance-learners from 260 in 2013, to 524 in 2017.

10 In 2017-18, 37% of entrants to the University were from a widening participation (WP) background. The University identified widening participation as a high priority area and defines WP students as applicants who are unable to enter higher education through the traditional route direct from school, due to a disadvantage in their personal circumstances, including those who are living/have lived in care, those estranged from their family, those who attended a target school and those who are participating in a recognised pre-entry programme, such as the University's Top-Up or Summer School.

11 The University's aim, set out in its Outcome Agreement with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), is to increase the proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate students from the 20% and 40% most deprived postcodes, as defined in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). At the time of the current ELIR, the University had already met its agreed targets to 2020 for increasing its MD20 and MD40 student intake. Since 2010, the number of students entering from this demographic had increased by over 35% (MD20) and 41% (MD20-40).

12 At the time of the current ELIR, the University was managing an increase in student numbers. It was also proactively planning in order to maintain the student learning

experience, given predicted further increases. Some students, interviewed for focus groups in preparation for ELIR and who met the ELIR team, indicated that they would welcome a cap on student numbers particularly during the campus redevelopment phase, while also recognising the significant work and resource being invested to mitigate its impact.

1.3 Commentary on the preparation for the ELIR, including contextualisation

13 The University's preparations for ELIR were led by a steering committee chaired by the Vice-Principal (Academic and Educational Innovation) which comprised senior staff - with key responsibilities for learning and teaching, and quality and standards - and the President and Vice-President (Education) from the Student Representative Council (SRC). The steering committee consulted with a range of staff from across the University and involved key committees in the drafting of the Reflective Analysis (RA). Student views were sought via focus group interviews, the Student Experience Committee and through SRC Sabbatical Officers.

14 The University identified four main topics for exploration in the ELIR. These were clearly articulated and aligned with current institutional strategy and activity, and with work undertaken since the last ELIR. The topics also featured clearly in feedback from staff and students. The topics identified were:

- assessment and feedback
- learning and teaching infrastructure and study-space development
- student support and engagement
- staff development and engagement.

15 The ELIR team particularly welcomed the University's openness about its areas of challenge. The team was of the view that the University had adopted an effective approach to preparing for ELIR which took into account the views of a range of staff and students. Overall, the ELIR team considered the RA was a comprehensive self-evaluation of the University's activity to assure academic standards and quality, and to enhance the student experience.

1.4 Summary of the follow-up to the previous ELIR

16 The University has taken action to address each of the recommendations identified in the 2014 ELIR report. Initial work has also been undertaken to improve oversight of the postgraduate student experience, but the University recognises that there is still a need for clear ownership of the PGT student experience through university committee structures, and was reviewing its approach (paragraphs 63-64 and 138).

1.5 Impact of engaging students in ELIR preparations

17 The ELIR team considered the University's approach to engaging its students in preparations for ELIR to have been effective. SRC representatives were on the ELIR steering committee, and student views were sought via focus group interviews, the Student Experience Committee and SRC Sabbatical Officers. Student feedback from these sources aligned with, and was representative of, other forms of student feedback provided to the team, such as annual monitoring reports and institution-led reviews.

2 Enhancing the student learning experience

2.1 Student representation and engagement

Student representation

18 The University has effective arrangements in place to support the engagement and representation of students, including responding to student feedback. There is a strong and constructive relationship between the SRC and the University which works successfully to ensure that the student view is reflected in strategy and policy relating to enhancement of the student experience.

19 There is no formal Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) between the SRC and the University. The ELIR team learned that student representatives and senior staff have considered the introduction of a SPA but were of the firm view that it would not add further benefit to the already existing strong ethos of student partnership, particularly in light of the SRC's sole remit as a representative council rather than a students' association, which allow it to focus the full range of its work on representative activity. Student representatives expressed the view that there were very few occasions where they were not consulted and, rather than have a formal SPA which they considered might be restrictive, they welcomed the flexibility to be able to change priorities throughout the academic year.

20 The Council is the governing body of the SRC and comprises four student Sabbatical Officers; four Undergraduate College Convenors; four Postgraduate College Convenors; the Postgraduate (research) Convenor; nine Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officers; four General Student Representatives; two First-Year Representatives and 19 School Representatives who represent the students of their particular school or research institute. All university-level academic committees include the relevant member of the SRC Executive or Council in their membership. Working groups and project boards also include student representatives to ensure that the student voice is taken into account in significant changes or developments. There is a student representative structure in place across all other parts of the University to ensure that student views are reflected at all levels of decision-making. SRC Council members are supported by a wide network of class representatives who represent individual classes, courses, subjects or programmes. A minimum requirement is that each school, institute or graduate school has a Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC), used to raise issues and formulate action, which meets at least once per semester. The composition of SSLCs varies in line with structures appropriate to the school or research institute. If issues are not resolved, these can be escalated to SRC College Convenors and on to the College Learning and Teaching Committee or Graduate School Board.

21 The student representatives who met the ELIR team spoke very enthusiastically about the contributions they could make through the formal representative and committee structures to the University's quality assurance and enhancement activities, including policy development and implementation, and confirmed that they thought their views were listened to and valued.

22 The SRC is responsible for the recruitment and training of student representatives and there are systematic processes in place to deliver this work. In addition to carrying out training on the Glasgow campus, the SRC also provides class representative training for students at the Dumfries campus, Singapore Institute of Technology, the Joint Graduate School in Nankai, and the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China. The ELIR team learned that SRC representatives had recently visited China to support the student representatives there. An online version of the training for online distance-learners has recently been developed which provides further flexibility for training TNE class

representatives. TNE students who met the ELIR team indicated that the class representation system works well, although they also said they would not hesitate to contact staff directly if they had a problem. They were able to give examples of the University responding to their feedback.

23 The SRC acknowledged that, while arrangements for the majority of undergraduate students were very good, representation and engagement among postgraduate research (PGR) and mature students would benefit from improvement. The SRC is undertaking work with the Deans of Graduate Schools and PhD groups, to gain a full overview of the PGR student experience in order to develop more effective representative structures which will work alongside existing activities being undertaken within Colleges and through the PhD society. Increasing emphasis is being placed on creating a postgraduate community on campus, with the provision of common rooms, study spaces and social events, as well as forums for mature students, and students who are parents and carers to provide feedback on their learning experience. These initiatives are being led by postgraduate representatives on the SRC working in partnership with the schools. Greater emphasis is also being placed by the University on monitoring MD20-40 students and mature students as it is recognised that there is a need to better understand how to support these students in their transition into and throughout their study, and it is hoped that this will inform these developments.

24 Since the 2014 ELIR, the University's Student Voice Portal has been redeveloped into MyClassReps (paragraph 137) to make information about class representation available to all students through a single point. Student representatives are registered on MyClassReps and all students can easily see who their class reps are and how to contact them. MyClassReps also records student completion of representative training and success in fulfilling the role which, in turn, verifies an entry on each Student Representative's Higher Education Achievement Record. Functionality in MyClassReps also offers online discussion and sharing of information, for example, student-staff consultative committee minutes. The University is aware that the low-level of student engagement with the system is an issue, and that students prefer other communication tools. It is hoped that engagement will be improved following the development of a student representation toolkit which, at the time of the current ELIR, was being developed in partnership with the SRC as part of the University's contribution to the national Enhancement Theme, Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience (paragraph 88). The toolkit, which will be hosted on MyClassReps, will contain a collection of resources, information and good practice examples for student representatives and staff, to ensure the effectiveness and understanding of the representative roles at class, school, college and university levels. Students expressed the view that the toolkit could potentially be very useful.

Responding to the student voice

25 The Student Experience Committee (SEC) has recently been established to further strengthen engagement with the wider student body and increase the student voice. The Committee works to ensure that the views of students are understood, and that the University's response further strengthens engagement with the wider student body. Academic and professional support staff representation on the committee ensures that academic and non-academic student experience requirements are considered. The clear partnership between the SRC and the University is further evidenced in the co-chairing of this committee by the Chief Operating Officer and University Secretary, and the President of the SRC. The success of this partnership was evident during the current review visit. Recent work of the SEC includes commissioning a suite of pre-arrival induction material which will be developed by the University's Transitions Working Group (TWG). The SEC's remit also included responsibility for determining how to progress with the ongoing review of student support services and the effectiveness of the Student and Academic Services Directorate. The SEC was tasked with developing an action plan to identify key areas of focus and it was

envisaged that these key areas are likely to determine the themes of future professional services reviews.

26 A number of mechanisms are used to capture student feedback. These include the use of course evaluation software to run a university-wide survey (which includes a number of core questions in addition to specific school/college questions) and course evaluations run by staff within schools and colleges. Inclusion of a standard set of core questions, completed by all respondents, allows comparison between courses, while the specific questions allow course teams to gather key information tailored to their needs, for example, to gain feedback on the introduction of a new aspect of a course, or to follow-up on the impact of any new measures introduced. The ELIR team also heard that many staff follow these matters up through in-class discussions with summaries posted on the University's VLE to assist with closing the feedback loop. Feedback and resultant actions are reviewed by the colleges more formally through Summary and Response Documents (SARDs) which are discussed at SSLCs (paragraphs 128 and 141).

27 Throughout the review visits, the ELIR team heard many examples of collaborative activity between the University and the SRC, prompted by feedback from the wider student body including: consistent involvement of students in the planning and design of new buildings and facilities during planning and implementation of work around the campus redevelopment; joint work on gender-based violence in the 'Let's Talk' project and involvement in early phases of the World Changing Glasgow transformation programme (paragraphs 7, 53, 55 and 80). Of particular note, is the work that the University and SRC have undertaken to produce a student-friendly version of the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy and changes made to the aims of the Assessment and Feedback Working Group to more closely reflect student views. Further examples include: the effective partnership working between the University and SRC to develop the Policy for Assessed Groupwork, following student feedback on fairness and recognition of individual contributions to assessed projects; work with the University library to provide laptop loans; and the current review of the lecture recording policy co-chaired by the SRC Vice-President (Education) and the Director of Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service (LEADS).

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

28 There is very clear evidence that the University has systematic measures in place to support its students and staff in matters of equality and diversity. These are outlined within its Equality Outcomes and relevant KPI targets, and supported by its network of equality champions who work to promote equality and diversity across the University, overseen by the Equality and Diversity Strategy Committee. The committee is chaired by the Principal and is supported by the Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU). It brings together all the Equality Champions, representatives from the SRC, the heads of a number of key university services, as well as a Learning and Teaching and Trade Unions' representative. The Equality Champions' roles cover the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender (sex), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief; gender and sexual diversity (including sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership); refugees and mental health. Notable evidence of the University's progress includes: an Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze award in April 2013 with submission for Silver planned in November 2019; Equality Impact Assessment being embedded in the programme approval process from 2018; and support of a Learning and Teaching Development Fund bid for a project on Embedding LGBT Equality in the Curriculum and Implementing Inclusive Active Learning Spaces. The project is aimed at reviewing current practice with a view to investigating how LGBT equality can be mainstreamed. Students and staff have been consulted about their experiences and four student interns have been recruited to work on

the project. Outputs will include case studies and training materials to support staff who wish to embed in their teaching practice.

29 The EDU supports the Equality Champions and associated activity ensuring that there is suitable student and staff representation on groups and projects from those with protected characteristics. The EDU is responsible for promoting all aspects of equality and diversity in the University. This includes meeting legal compliance obligations but also supporting staff to exceed this baseline. The EDU has a dual reporting line to Human Resources and the Clerk of Senate and Vice-Principal, enabling it to address both student and staff perspectives.

30 The University provided very good examples of initiatives undertaken in partnership with the SRC to support equality and diversity. These include the Peer Support programme and Mind Your Mate (paragraph 38); Let's Talk (paragraph 27); the development of the Family Study Lounge (paragraph 37) and the SRC-led development of a student-friendly one-page guide to help students understand the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy. The University introduced the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy in 2017-18 with a view to promoting inclusion and to ensure that students were being provided with clear and concise documentation.

Widening participation

31 The University operates a sophisticated contextualised admissions process which results in clear adjusted offers based on a sound appreciation of success indicators. Work on widening access is evidence-based and underpinned by 15 years of research and tracking, with the scope of activities extending to the whole of the west of Scotland (and the whole of Scotland for some initiatives). The University has seen a number of significant successes in the area of widening access not only in admission, but also in retention which reached above 90% for this demographic for the first time in 2016-17.

32 A range of highly-effective outreach pre-entry programmes are in place with: 14 Local Authorities; over 120 secondary schools; FOCUS West (the largest division of the Schools for Higher Education Programme which aims to support young people into education); SWAP West (a partnership between colleges and universities in the west of Scotland which aims to support access to higher education for adults) as well as other higher education institutions and further education colleges. The University also works with partners such as the Robertson Trust, ICAS, Carers Trust, Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways. The ELIR team heard that, each year, the University works with over 25,000 pupils in secondary schools across the west of Scotland.

33 A number of specific measures are employed to support students from a widening participation (WP) background on arrival at the University, including using an identifier for WP students that allows staff, including Advisors of Studies, to track students' progress. This is used in Advisor of Studies meetings with students and staff. Advisors who met the ELIR team considered this to be a positive development which helped them support their advisees more effectively. Other initiatives to support widening participation include the introduction of scholarships to support outgoing exchange students who may have been unable to undertake the international mobility opportunities on offer for financial reasons and college specific induction days for WP students.

34 A detailed analysis of data has supported existing initiatives and is used to develop the University's approach, including using its 'data warehouse' to analyse the success of outreach programmes and summer schools, as well as investigating the factors contributing to the retention and success of WP students. The University has developed a continuation model, using in-depth data analysis to provide detailed information on the risk factors involved in students discontinuing their studies. This enables the University to take action,

targeting students at risk. Initial analysis has highlighted that mature students are less likely to continue their studies than other groups, and the Retention and Success Working Group have proposed 10 actions to support these students, which were being considered by the University's senior management at the time of the current ELIR.

35 The University's 2016 Impact for Access Report, funded by the SFC, draws a number of conclusions about how to impact positively on the number of SIMD20/40 school pupils progressing to higher education (HE). The University considers that its work in this area represents good sectoral practice and is valuable to the WP agenda more broadly while also underpinning its own future priorities and demonstrating its use of data and evidence to support institutional planning. Among the findings, the report evidences the strong correlation between deprivation and low progression to HE and shows that the statistical link between where a pupil resides and their likely entry to HE is also strong. In addition, there is a correlation between 'low progression' schools and access to HE, which is independent of the previous factor. Based on analysis of data for higher progression schools, the report also reached the conclusion that there are significant numbers of pupils in disadvantaged circumstances that are not routinely engaging with widening participation programmes because they attend a higher progression school and therefore pathway programmes are not always available to them. The work, shared with other higher and further education institutions and the wider sector has had a direct impact on the direction taken by both SFC and the Scottish Government. The University has plans to develop approaches to reach disadvantaged pupils in higher progression schools and consider the individual circumstances of those within all 163 secondary schools in the west of Scotland, targeting interventions based on new metrics available including the SIMD20 status of pupils and free school meal eligibility. This mirrors approaches recently adopted by the Scottish Government aimed at bridging the poverty-related attainment gap in school age pupils through 'Pupil Equity Funding'.

Articulation

36 In discussions with the ELIR team, staff outlined current work on an 'enhanced' Higher National Certificate (HNC) as one of the first articulation projects offered by the University. This involves current HNC students, from the Glasgow further education colleges, coming onto the University campus to undertake classes and activities (for example, using the virtual learning environment (VLE) and library) to support their college work, culminating in a three-week summer school which aims to replicate the experience of being a new entrant to the University. The pilot, carried out in Life Sciences, will be implemented in other schools (Engineering, Social Sciences and Education) as well as increasing the intake for Life Sciences (from 20 to 40) in 2019-20. Staff viewed the pilot positively as it provided them with an insight to the questions and concerns of prospective articulating students, enabling them to develop more effective support in preparation for the students' arrival on campus.

Student parents and carers

37 It is recognised that progression rates for mature students are not as good as those from other groups and this has acted as a driver for the introduction of several initiatives aimed at supporting student parents and carers including the Student Parents Policy, implemented in 2018-19 and the Student Parent Working Group. In April 2017, the SRC commissioned independent research into the needs of student parents which achieved a response rate of 36%. This research highlighted the value parents would place on child-friendly study spaces and resulted in the development of the Family Study Lounge. Located in the main Library, the Family Study Lounge was established in partnership between the SRC and the Equality and Diversity Unit. In addition, the move to more online resources has been very positive for mature students and student parents in terms of supporting

accessibility. The developments in Blended and Online Learning Development (BOLD) initiative have supported this (paragraphs 69-70).

Support for student mental health

38 The University has undertaken a suite of work in the area of mental health in reaction to a rise in the number of students identified as experiencing mental health conditions. As well as restructuring student services, the University has developed a Mental Health Action Plan (which includes a £200K investment in Counselling and Psychological Services); introduced an online mental health community and peer support network to supplement face-to-face services; and trained more than 150 Mental Health First Aiders as part of its Mental Health First Aid initiative. The University has also worked in partnership with the SRC on mental health campaigns including the particularly successful 'Mind your Mate' initiative, a peer-led suicide awareness programme, which has received praise from staff and students.

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

39 The University employs a variety of measures to support the learner journey from application to graduation. This is an effective approach which includes support provided by a range of services and individuals across the institution. Supporting functions are overseen and underpinned by both centralised and local systems and processes.

Student support services

40 Most staff and students who met the ELIR team, considered there to be a wide range of effective support structures in place and commented that there was a positive culture of student support. Students expressed the view that there is a high quality of support in terms of staff helpfulness and a focus on wellbeing and success, and were aware that details of support services are available on the Student Life area on the University website. However, the University recognises that it is sometimes difficult for both academic staff and students to identify the correct person or service to access support required.

41 University services have been restructured into eight directorates with the aim of reducing complexity in organisational structure and fostering collaboration across services. The ELIR team learned that students had not yet felt the impact of the restructure but welcomed plans for support to be accessed through a single point of contact in a few recognisable and accessible locations across the campus. The team considered that the plans in place would help to address student concerns that had been raised in focus groups in preparation for ELIR and in student surveys about the effectiveness of student services relating to challenges in finding the right support.

Student transitions

42 Provision of induction activities is supported through the University's induction network hosted on the VLE. The University acknowledged that this is a complex activity as it applies to a number of different degree structures, and improvements in overall coordination of induction are underway. For undergraduate students, an effective college-led approach is essential, unless the degree is contained mostly within one school (for example, medicine). For PGT/PGR students, induction is focused mainly at the school or research institute level, although there are variations to this.

43 The University established a Transitions Working Group (TWG) with work commencing in session 2017-18 to consider the various transition points throughout the student life cycle. The TWG has produced an induction checklist to help ensure consistency

of student induction across the University, and this has been well received by the staff, especially Advisors of Studies. The group has secured approval, from the Student Experience Committee, for a suite of pre-arrival induction materials (paragraph 25). The University also recognises that there is a need for longitudinal induction, extending the process beyond the short period at the start of semester. This has taken place in some areas of the University, but staff acknowledge that this needs to be more consistent in terms of approach.

44 From 2012-15, the University participated in the 'What Works? Student retention and success change' programme working with the Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE) and 13 other universities. Initiatives to support student belonging and engagement were designed and evaluated in three schools - Engineering, Life Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies - under the themes of Active Learning, Induction and Co-Curricular Activity. The success of this work has led to developments such as further improvements to induction materials for new students and implementation of successful pilot initiatives across the University. This has included better signposting of support information and better coordination across diverse communication channels to provide more consistent messages to students. This work has seen the number of new students accessing welcome material via the new students' welcome app more than doubling and user sessions reaching 800,000. There has also been an 18% increase in traffic to the new students' webpages.

45 The University's Retention and Success Working Group (RSWG), established in 2006, has explored how the University can use the existing data it has to support student retention and success. As a result, work has begun to optimise the use of existing data, for example, by exploring new functionality of available business intelligence software to monitor student progress. This work has led to the identification of specific groups of students that could benefit from additional support. It was clear from meetings with staff involved in student support that they were finding the information provided from the analysis available through the University's data warehouse to be of use in enhancing communication and student support.

Advisors of Studies

46 Advisors of Studies focus on both academic and pastoral care for undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. Authority for the organisation and structure of advising is devolved to the colleges and schools. An overarching set of University guidelines, supplemented by college handbooks, provide guidance to staff and students and the Senate Office webpages outline key requirements, including target ratio and training for advisors. Remits for the advising roles across the University were revised in 2018 to reflect current initiatives and give guidance to advisors on dealing with mental health issues and new policies and procedures, such as the new policy on temporary withdrawal.

47 Most students who met the ELIR team, indicated that the advising system was largely effective for undergraduate students. In 2018, the SRC conducted a survey on Advisors of Studies which confirmed this view, although students raised issues around variation of provision across colleges. The survey highlighted that advising was working less effectively for PGTs, albeit the response rate was low at around 11% of the total student population (including 10% of all taught postgraduates). Over half of PGTs who responded were unsure of the role of the Advisor/Advising Team, as were 45% of respondents in the College of Social Sciences, and 45% of those respondents aged over 25. Over 20% of students were unsure if they had an Advisor/Advising Team with this rising to 92% among postgraduate respondents.

48 Free text comments from the SRC survey suggested that there was a need for more training for Advisors around disability and mental health issues, which the University

has addressed (paragraph 46). There were also a number of students who expressed unhappiness with the perceived impersonal nature of the Advising Team format and the lack of an assigned single named Advisor. This model was used in some parts of the University at particular levels of study. In discussions with the ELIR team, some PGTs said that they were less likely to use their advisor as a result of having a positive relationship with their course convener, where they could raise any issues and receive support to increase their own confidence in being able to handle issues personally. Staff outlined that more support is being provided for those undertaking the role of Advisor of Studies and that a formal network of Chief Advisors of Studies plays an important role in terms of sharing good practice across the University. The team considered that there would be value in the University reflecting further on the way the system is working across colleges, particularly for postgraduate students, to inform developments. Senior staff recognised that additional work could be carried out to strengthen the system and the team would encourage the University to continue using the Chief Advisors Sub-Committee to inform the Deans of Graduate Studies Committee, further promote awareness of the system to students, and draw on any successes in the College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences (MVLS) resulting from the implementation of detailed Guidelines for PGT Advisers.

Support for academic skills

49 In 2018-19, the LEADS Academic Writing Skills Programme (AWSP), previously a case study in ELIR 3 and a Learning and Teaching Development Funded pilot, was extended and made compulsory for all new undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. The programme has had uptake of 92% and been completed by approximately 8,000 students in its initial implementation. The AWSP aims to provide a range of writing and grammar advice with materials covering topics ranging from elements of style and punctuation to wider details on structure and argumentation. Students submit answers to a range of multiple-choice questions on grammar and a short essay via the University VLE where the essay is assessed by a team of Graduate Teaching Assistants in LEADS who provide feedback specific to the student's writing needs.

50 After the initial diagnostic stage, students are offered a variety of options depending on their specific needs including open classes run by LEADS, an online writing course or in-person classes to work on improvements. In addition to supporting the transition between writing at (most often) school and University level, AWSP provides students with feedback on their academic writing before submission of their first assessed work. In so doing, AWSP provides students with the ability to test, refine and improve their capabilities prior to submitting assessments that could affect their progression.

51 The ELIR team learned that staff could use the information available from the analysis of the AWSP outcomes to track the student's progress and help them become aware of the requirements expected of them at an early stage. In both the diagnostic exercise and in the classes, instruction and clarification on academic integrity and plagiarism are highlighted as key components of academic standards. For most students, this acts as the earliest sustained focus on plagiarism and academic integrity. Staff who met the team commented on the positive results that they were observing with respect to students' writing skills, as did graduate teaching assistants leading the course. In addition, they considered that another key success of the programme was the way in which it appeared to raise awareness amongst the student population of other academic support and development services within LEADS. Although not all students who met the team were aware of the programme, there was general agreement that the programme was welcomed and those that had undertaken it commented that they had found it to be beneficial. Senior staff believe that implementation of AWSP across the University will have a beneficial impact on retention and success, citing: early indications of success as anecdotal feedback from the academic

community; statistical analysis of AWSP outcomes; and an uplift in retention and success since the introduction of the programme (paragraph 77).

52 The 'Let's Talk About [X]' multidisciplinary conference is organised by LEADS and provides an opportunity to share the research undertaken by undergraduate students with the aim of showcasing the (often hidden) research that is going on at undergraduate level. Alongside the Let's Talk About [X] conference is '[X]position', a multidisciplinary journal which accompanies the conference. This gives undergraduate students the opportunity to have their research published and feedback is provided on the students' work by PhD students who get the opportunity to be involved in the editing team. This provides an insight to academic life and helps the students to develop communications skills which can be used in their academic studies and their chosen careers.

Assessment and feedback

53 Assessment is a key priority and primary KPI of the University. The University has identified scope to continue developing its practice in this area, while also recognising it has performed above the Russell group average. Practices vary across the University as does student satisfaction, as recorded in the National Student Survey (NSS). NSS results have been a driver in making assessment and feedback the first transformation project within the all-institution approach to change, the World Changing Glasgow (WCG) Transformation Programme. Nevertheless, staff were careful to state that they did not want to overplay the role of the NSS, which has limitations, and they considered it provided information that should be considered in the context of other data.

54 The University's Assessment Policy articulates the purpose and approach to assessment. Regulations are in place for all types of degrees and there are processes in place for the regular review and update of regulations, and supplementary guidance is made available as necessary to provide additional clarity. Additionally, the Senate Office provides an annual Guide to the Code of Assessment and a 'Just the Basics' guide for staff and guidelines for students called 'Understanding the Marking Scheme'. All policies and guidance are presented as a single web page. Students who met the ELIR team were, in the main, clear about assessment requirements.

55 Since the 2014 ELIR, the University has undertaken a range of initiatives aimed at improving student satisfaction with assessment and feedback including: the establishment of an Assessment and Feedback Working Group in 2016 (AFWG); the introduction of a University policy on assessment and feedback based on good practice from across the institution that focuses on processes, systems and academic practice; produced a series of recommendations around how to apply policy and practice more consistently across the University; developed an Assessment and Feedback toolkit (paragraphs 58 and 86) and begun an Assessment and Feedback transformation project as part of its WCG programme (paragraphs 7, 53, 65, 76 and 80). The WCG project has three main strands: benchmarking and researching methods of assessment design, focused on academic practice; e-assessment and the benchmarking of VLEs to provide insight into effective systems architecture; and mapping assessment processes from course design to end award.

56 Some student representatives who met the ELIR team expressed a desire for more 'creative' and varied assessment styles and indicated that they considered their views were being listened to and acted upon by the Assessment and Feedback Working Group. (AFWG). Staff confirmed that they were making continued efforts to diversify assessments methods.

57 Timeliness of feedback is the area where students report the lowest levels of satisfaction and the University recognises that it does not consistently provide high-quality feedback within an appropriate timescale in all areas, while also noting the very high

satisfaction levels within some parts of the University. It was evident from discussions with staff and students that the recommended 15-day turnaround time for feedback was not always achieved. Most students who met the ELIR team understood that the turnaround time could not always be met but considered it very important that more consistent measures were taken to communicate the reasons for late returns to the student body. Staff reported that the 15-day turnaround time for feedback was a challenge and there was general recognition amongst the students during the current ELIR that the provision of quality feedback within agreed timescales requires appropriate time to be allocated to staff, especially where there are large student cohorts.

58 The ELIR team was also provided with examples of good feedback practice and it was evident that students were aware of the University's efforts to enhance assessment and feedback. In 2015, the University developed an Assessment and Feedback Toolkit as part of the Leading Enhancements in Assessment and Feedback (LEAF) project, which was developed from the 2011-14 national Enhancement Theme, Developing and Supporting the Curriculum. Staff who met the ELIR team indicated that the toolkit was very useful, highlighting the introduction of assessment and feedback calendars as a particularly positive addition in supporting timely return of feedback. Students also welcomed the toolkit, the majority of which is student-facing. Examples of ways in which the toolkit is being used effectively include staff CPD, Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) training and development, and in class as a vehicle to help explain feedback processes to the student body.

Student mobility

59 The University has had notable success with the student mobility strand of its Internationalisation Strategy and has effective processes for promoting and managing student exchanges. Student exchange and mobility arrangements are overseen by the Study Abroad and Exchange Team, working in collaboration with academic leads in the colleges. The University set itself an ambitious mobility target, at the launch of its Internationalisation Strategy in 2014-15, that 20% of each graduating cohort should have an international experience of five days or longer by 2020, a target which the University had already met at the time of the current ELIR. The number of students having an international experience through formal exchange programmes, such as Erasmus and bilateral international student exchange, has also seen growth. The Study Abroad and Exchange team operate an effective 'hub and spoke' approach to student mobility with the colleges managing promotion, applications, credit accumulation and orientation. The central team maintain oversight of all exchange activity and carry out regular review to evaluate success. The University has recruited Go Abroad Student Ambassadors (GASAs) who work with the Go Abroad team to help promote exchange opportunities to Glasgow students. The GASAs write blogs about their time abroad, share their experience with students considering mobility opportunities and help with study abroad events and information sessions. The University is also considering the introduction of more short exchanges to further facilitate increased uptake.

Employability and enterprise and entrepreneurship

60 The University aims to embed graduate attributes within the curriculum. Quality assurance processes, including course specification and programme specification documentation, are used to ensure this is considered systematically. While this approach is very well embedded from a staff perspective, the University recognises that student awareness of graduate attributes could be improved. A working group, chaired by the Clerk of Senate, has been established to consider how to create an environment where students are aware of the importance of these aspects, and are able to take ownership of their development, from an early stage. SRC representatives reported that graduate attributes

were well-embedded in most curricula, but the project was providing an opportunity to revisit and reinvigorate them. Although not all students who met the team were clear about the term graduate attributes, they were able to give a variety of examples where graduate skills development was embedded in their courses.

61 The University's approach to engaging students in enterprise and entrepreneurship is to embed core skills in the curriculum. Central funding from the University Innovation Fund, where one of the seven priority areas is enterprise, has been used to support students working on research projects on enterprise and help staff to incorporate enterprise aspects within the curricula. A focus on this area has seen the development of a credit-bearing honours course focusing on professional skills and a number of school-wide courses orientated towards graduate attributes. At the time of the current ELIR, a curriculum review was underway to determine how to provide further effective opportunities within the curriculum for all students to engage in enterprise and entrepreneurship education.

2.4 Postgraduate taught and research student experience

62 Since the 2014 ELIR, the University has taken action to improve oversight of aspects of the postgraduate student experience (paragraph 16).

63 At the time of the current ELIR, oversight of the postgraduate experience was mostly devolved to each school and/or research institute and a variety of structures are in place across the four colleges. As a result, arrangements for systematic oversight of the postgraduate student experience at university-level are complex. The University acknowledged this, but staff were confident that the structures worked and that no systemic issues had been identified.

64 The 2014 ELIR report recommended that the University should reflect on how the graduate schools maintain oversight of the holistic postgraduate student experience. The University recognises that there is still a need for clear ownership of the postgraduate taught student experience through institutional committee structures and has reviewed its approach and developed a number of options for change which were currently under consideration. Staff reported that there was some oversight of the totality of the postgraduate experience at the Deans of Graduate Studies Committee, where there was also consideration of the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, although formal remit of the committee does not include analysis of postgraduate annual monitoring processes (paragraphs 117 and 138). Overall satisfaction of PGTs is marginally below sector averages, based on the results of the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey data, and somewhat below that of the University's undergraduate students. As a result, the ELIR team would encourage the University to continue to progress quickly with work in this area, especially in light of its intention to grow postgraduate numbers.

Training and support for postgraduates who teach

65 LEADS deliver a three-hour compulsory training course for all Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) which can be supplemented by optional additional training courses. These programmes have received positive reviews from staff and postgraduate students, however, during the ELIR visits, some students raised concerns about the level of supervision and monitoring provided to GTAs for marking students' assessed work. Support for GTAs on assessment and feedback will form part of the work of the Assessment and Feedback transformation project (paragraphs 7, 53-58, 76 and 80).

2.5 Learning environment

66 The University has effective arrangements in place to review and enhance the learning environment it offers to students and the ELIR team found evidence to indicate a

clear commitment to pedagogic enhancements achieved through the effective use of the learning environment. Campus redevelopment is underway to improve the physical and technological infrastructure in line with the University's vision and the need to accommodate an increasing number of students (paragraph 9).

67 The University has created Technology Enhanced Active Learning (TEAL) spaces which allow for more collaborative and active ways of learning. The ELIR team learned that these have encouraged different ways of delivering learning and teaching and there is an indication from class representatives that there is an appetite for more interactive classes. The spaces are supported by high density Wi-Fi, upgrades to AV/IT and collaboration software. Students spoke very highly about IT support within the University. Developments have also included improvement to video conferencing facilities to support TNE and international teaching collaboration. This work has involved many stakeholders across the University through the Refurbishment Working Group which includes academic, student and professional services representation. The James McCune Smith Learning Hub (paragraph 4) is intended to further support changes in the way teaching is delivered and alleviate pressure on the University library by providing additional teaching and self-directed study space.

68 Feedback from students indicates high levels of satisfaction with the quality of existing teaching and learning resources (including spaces and technology), for example, the 2018 NSS data showed satisfaction at nearly 10% above UK sector averages. Nevertheless, with increasing student numbers (paragraphs 8-9), one of the current issues remains the lack of learning and teaching space. Students who met the ELIR team commented that pressure on University teaching space sometimes had a detrimental effect, especially in view of the continuing increase in student numbers throughout the period of the campus redevelopment and refurbishment. However, overall, students agreed that the changes were exciting and positive, and that there were appropriate measures in place to mitigate the impact on current students in order to maintain a positive student experience (paragraph 12). There would be benefit in the University continuing to keep the impact of the campus redevelopment on current students under review with a view to ensuring that adequate resources and learning spaces are available to all students.

Blended and online delivery

69 The first phase of the University project for Blended and Online Learning Development (BOLD) considered how best to support the development of online distance-learning. The second phase of the project considered how to expand online distance-learning and saw the number of programmes increase from three to 24, with a significant increase in students studying via this route (paragraph 9). The work highlighted the need for staff to develop their capabilities in writing online teaching material, provide more support for their students and to make much wider use of technology-enhanced learning across campus.

70 The University has established a framework for supporting student and staff transitions into the blended and online learning environment, and a number of resources have been developed as a result. These include a multimedia resource to motivate and inspire staff to become involved in developing online and blended learning, and the introduction of an induction course to assist students transitioning into blended learning and online learning. In parallel, there has been a growing range of activity focused on massive open online courses (MOOCs) which has further contributed to establishing a cohort of staff who are actively engaged in teaching in an online space. This expertise is now supporting the development of online Masters programmes. Senior staff commented during the current ELIR that the project has offered students a much richer experience than they would have had solely in a classroom environment. To share learning from BOLD, the University recently held a showcase event to disseminate the outcomes of several of the projects.

71 Effective support for digital education is provided by LEADS, with academic staff commenting during the ELIR that this empowered them to initiate programmes that would not have been developed otherwise. An Online Distance Learning Board, convened by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Digital Education), has been established to foster effective communication and coordination of activity across the institution.

2.6 Effectiveness of the approach to enhancing the student learning experience

72 Overall, the University has an effective approach to enhancing the student learning experience. This is evidenced by a robust student representation system - which is in operation across all schools and colleges - and the partnership working between the University and the SRC on a range of projects, which is making significant impact on the student learning experience. A variety of student feedback opportunities are provided, and students consider that the University acts on the feedback it receives. It is clear that the University has a strong and productive relationship with the SRC, which is commended, and that the University has made positive moves to engage the wider student body on formal committees and in the range of strategic projects underway. Students are clear that their contributions are valued and acted upon.

73 Data and sector benchmarks are used effectively to underpin and inform the University's wide range of approaches to widening access. This is having a positive impact on the ability of students to succeed and the University's targets are consistently achieved. Through its proactive approach, the University is influencing the wider sector on its range of activity and research-informed approach. The University is commended for its strategic approach to widening access, which it continues to proactively develop and expand through engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders.

74 The University recognises the diverse student population and has responded to equality and diversity matters with proactive campaigning, and staff development and upskilling. Outcomes are based on ambitious performance indicators which allow equality and diversity to be viewed as a core activity across the institution. In collaboration with the SRC, the University has a proactive approach to supporting the diverse needs of the student body. Equality Champions recruited from the Senior Management Group work effectively in conjunction with the SRC and the Equality and Diversity Unit. The University is commended for its approach to recognising and responding to equality and diversity in the student population.

75 The University has reviewed the effectiveness of its student support services and has taken steps to improve the student experience, including conducting a significant restructure of student services. Work is continuing to address remaining challenges, especially where support is devolved. A clear action plan has been put in place that aims to achieve a greater level of integration between central and school-based services to provide clarity for both staff and students, which is positive. The University is encouraged to establish a systematic mechanism for reviewing the contribution these services make to the quality of the student experience. This is particularly important during the current time of significant change across the campus (paragraph 123).

76 A range of positive work on assessment practice is taking place through the Assessment and Feedback Working Group, Assessment and Feedback transformation project and other initiatives. As part of work that is underway, the University should ensure that staff communicate consistently to students where the stated institutional policy expectations on turnaround time will not be met.

77 The University has strengthened its approach to developing the academic skills of its students through the Academic Writing Skills Programme. The mandatory institution-wide course aims to improve the academic writing skills of all taught students. In addition to the benefits expected from the programme, its implementation has led to increased student engagement with other academic support provided by LEADS.

78 The University recognises a number of limitations in the advising system for PGTs which may be contributing to lower levels of satisfaction among this student cohort. In light of the differing models operating across the colleges, the University should make certain that the arrangements in place for advising postgraduate taught students, are communicated clearly to the students, in particular, identifying their designated advisor/advisory team at an early stage and outlining their role and responsibilities.

3 Strategy and practice for enhancing learning and teaching

3.1 Strategic approach to enhancement

79 The University has an effective strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching and the wider student experience, supplementing the management information available from its data warehouse with extensive use of external benchmarking to inform the development of its strategies and measure progress towards its strategic aims.

80 To support its Strategic Plan 2015-20, the University embarked on the 'World Changing Glasgow' transformation project (WCG) (paragraphs 7, 53, 65 and 76), intended to deliver change across a large, complex institution, through a number of interconnected projects. The transformation programme responds to the rapid growth of the University over the past seven years with increasing numbers of international and transnational education students and anticipated changes in UK student demographics. The programme aims to identify, shape and deliver innovative initiatives that anticipate the future needs of the University, including its people, environment, systems and processes. The first projects selected include: a review of the human resources recruitment process which aims to create a simpler, more consistent approach to recruitment; an Assessment and Feedback project; the Learning and Teaching Hub development; a project considering the end-to-end student journey to include recruitment, registration and enrolment and student-selected curricula; and the transformation of professional services to make them more accessible and effective.

81 The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy (LTS), introduced in 2014, outlines the University's vision for learning and teaching and prioritises: staff development; recognition and reward; student engagement; infrastructure and support; student experience and innovation in curriculum and pedagogy. The Strategy was reviewed in 2017-18, resulting in closer alignment with the Digital Learning Strategy. The review highlighted a number of areas for further work, and under the broad title of curriculum innovation, several projects were planned that included student choice, interdisciplinary learning and internationalisation of the curriculum. The University's Internationalisation Strategy focuses on: external engagement; student recruitment and mobility; research; curriculum development aligned to the LTS and staff support. The ELIR team learned that internationalisation of the curriculum would be re-emphasised in the coming years as the University reviews its internationalisation strategy in 2020.

82 Following a restructure, the Learning and Teaching Strategy is led by the Vice-Principal (Academic and Educational Innovation), who is a member of the Senior Management Group. The Vice-Principal is supported by an Assistant Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) and an Assistant Vice-Principal (Digital Education). All three chair or are members of the main learning and teaching oversight committees. The University Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC) takes overall responsibility for this area and

advises the Education Policy and Strategy Committee (EdPSC) on good practice, contributes to the development of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, and monitors sector developments. The committee membership includes four SRC subject conveners.

83 The ELIR team learned that the colleges each have different support structures for learning and teaching and that the autonomy of the colleges allows each to meet the strategic aim of connected but distributed leadership. Each college has a Dean of Learning and Teaching, whose role is focused on undergraduate provision, except for the College of Science and Engineering. The University Learning and Teaching Committee seeks to ensure there is equal consideration given to postgraduate taught studies by working closely with the Deans of Graduate Studies, but the University recognises this is an area for development which was under review at the time of the current ELIR (paragraphs 63-64). The University considers the Deans of Learning and Teaching are crucial to effective communication across the institution, working with their respective Vice-Principal and Head of College. They are members of their College Management Group and take responsibility for a wide range of activities, including convening Boards of Studies, appeals and progress committees and working with key role holders to coordinate the delivery of all aspects of teaching, learning and enhancement.

84 College learning and teaching committees are responsible for approving and implementing the college learning and teaching plans, which operate alongside NSS action plans. Schools and research institutes have structures in place for the oversight of learning and teaching, although the nature of the posts and structures varies. Each school has a Learning and Teaching Committee which is chaired by the School Convenor, Director or Lead for Learning and Teaching. The University stated that the variation in nomenclature does not cause problems in practice.

3.2 Impact of the national Enhancement Themes and related activity

85 In line with sector practice, the University has engaged with the Enhancement Themes with different levels of intensity depending on the focus of each Theme and how closely the Theme relates to its strategic objectives. The ELIR team heard about a number of initiatives that have arisen as a result of Theme work.

86 The Leading Enhancements in Assessment and Feedback project emerged from work related to the 2011-14 Enhancement Theme, Developing and Supporting the Curriculum (DSC) and resulted in the development of an assessment and feedback toolkit, which has been well received by staff and students (paragraphs 55 and 58).

87 The Student Transitions Enhancement Theme which underpinned a number of developments, resulted in a range of resources being made available across the University and was seen as an opportunity to work on student transitions into blended and online learning, building on recent investment into expansion of the University's portfolio of online courses and programmes under the BOLD project (paragraphs 37 and 69). Examples of work undertaken include: a framework for supporting understanding of student and staff transitions into blended/online learning; resources to help staff developing online provision and an elective course for staff offered as part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) 'Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching' - the content of which was directly informed by Enhancement Theme activity. In addition, the University indicated that one of the anticipated outcomes of its work on this Theme was ensuring that discussion around transitions to blended and online learning would feature more prominently across the University. This has been incorporated into the Transitions Working Group remit - which has a focus on academic transition into, through and out of the University for all taught

undergraduate and taught postgraduate students - and the work of the University's Retention and Success Working Group.

88 The current Theme, Evidence for Enhancement, has provided an opportunity for the University to explore how better use can be made of data in decision-making processes, with an explicit emphasis on enhancing the student experience. The data warehouse has been created, together with several tools to access and interrogate the data, and this is starting to be used by staff in strategic and operational quality assurance and enhancement processes. Senior staff also outlined that work was ongoing with the SRC as part of the Theme to create a student representation toolkit which will guide the engagement between students and staff and showcase good practice in student representation activity (paragraph 24). Additionally, the Planning and Business Intelligence team is working closely with the wider community to expand provision of usable data to support evidence-based decision-making around the student experience and student attainment (paragraph 142).

89 The University has an effective approach to engaging with the national Enhancement Themes which are a key external reference point for the University and make a demonstrable contribution to policy and practice aimed at enhancing learning and teaching.

3.3 Approaches to identifying and sharing good practice

90 The University employs a range of systematic and effective mechanisms for identifying and sharing good practice. These operate both at institutional and local levels. The University Learning and Teaching Committee, together with working groups and college and school committees, provide an overview of practices across the University. The University also makes good use of external benchmarking to identify and share examples of good practice in teaching and learning operating in other UK and global institutions in order to enhance its provision and to take account of future developments.

91 The recently restructured LEADS plays an important role in identifying opportunities for sharing good practice across University and college learning and teaching committees. LEADS Academic and Digital Development Advisors are assigned to support particular colleges. Given their close proximity to practices within the colleges, they act as both repositories and reporters of current work being undertaken and foster the sharing of good practice. The LEADS Good Practice Advisor gathers examples of good practice in teaching and learning from across both the University and the wider higher education sector to disseminate across the institution.

92 The ELIR team found evidence of LEADS taking responsibility for developing and adapting good practices for wider adoption across the University. Staff were very positive about the recent restructuring of LEADS, which aimed to better respond to the development need of staff and students, expressing the view that changes have led to a more coherent offer and a greater awareness and engagement with the exchange of good practice and the encouragement of further developments.

93 The University's Annual Learning and Teaching conference (in operation for 12 years) provides a key mechanism for sharing good practice internally and for eliciting external contributions from the wider higher education sector. The two-day conference is well attended, and staff are invited to submit abstracts for a variety of presentational methods, including workshops and seminars, panel discussions and 'lightning talks'. External contributors introduce a valuable additional dimension. Staff confirmed the effectiveness of the conference to the ELIR team. As evidence of its commitment to its external outlook, the University hosted the first Times Higher Education World Teaching Excellence Summit in

Glasgow in 2018, which allowed staff to engage with global leaders in the field of learning and teaching.

94 The Learning and Teaching Development Fund (LTDF), in operation for over 20 years, is open to all staff and is designed to support innovation in learning and teaching with funding available for projects costing up to £20,000. Project proposals are required to align with priorities identified in the University Learning and Teaching Strategy and meet a series of criteria, including cost effectiveness and sustainability, and are assessed by the Learning and Teaching Committee. The risk of failure is countenanced as part of the scheme. The LTDF's track record of success was acknowledged in the 2014 ELIR. Staff who met with the ELIR team were enthusiastic about the effectiveness of the fund and its resultant projects.

95 University-level mechanisms are complemented by a wide range of local approaches to identifying and sharing good practice. Institutional Periodic Subject Review, together with Annual Monitoring processes, provide well-established mechanisms for the identification of good practice. Where instances of good practice are identified and endorsed through Periodic Subject Review (PSR), they are highlighted as 'commendations' which are then considered by the Academic Standards Committee. This approach is reinforced and augmented by the Senate Office which collates these examples for consideration by the Academic Standards Committee, before being passed to LEADS. Examples include learning and teaching fora, mentoring processes and local initiatives. A summary of good practice arising from the PSR process, which includes practice identified by external examiners, is disseminated by the Senate Office to the school level on an annual basis. Staff confirmed that a range of regular processes (such as Annual Monitoring Review and PSR) as well as committees (including the Staff-Student Liaison and the Deans of Graduate Studies Committees) all provide additional opportunities for sharing good practice. The ELIR team noted examples of good practice having been shared in this way.

3.4 Engaging, developing and supporting staff

96 The University has a range of effective mechanisms for engaging, developing and supporting staff that are closely aligned with the aims of the University Learning and Teaching Strategy. Taught provision for staff in support of Learning and Teaching includes the Early Career Development Programme, Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and MEd Academic Practice, as well as a range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) which is aligned to the Learning Teaching and Scholarship (LTS) career track. The Recognising Excellence in Teaching (RET) Framework is well established, as are the Teaching Award Schemes.

Recognising teaching excellence

97 The University identified staff development and engagement as one of its areas of contextual focus for the current ELIR in response to the recommendation in the 2014 ELIR report asking the University to 'continue developing its promotions criteria and the process for supporting the career development of staff on teaching, learning and scholarship contracts'. During the current ELIR, staff commented positively on the developments.

98 The University has made demonstrable progress in this area by revising the Learning, Teaching and Scholarship (LTS) career track, providing clear promotion criteria and providing support through existing mechanisms such as the Early Career Development programme (ECDP). All new academic staff, regardless of their chosen career track, participate in the ECDP, the main elements of which are Research, Knowledge Exchange and Impact; Teaching, Learning and Scholarship; and Leadership, Management and Personal Effectiveness. This programme is designed to embed a culture of professional development and effectiveness, and to support progression and promotion to senior lecturer

and professorial status. The ECDP has been designed to ensure that there is comparable provision for staff on the LTS and those on research and teaching contracts. Staff attested to the effectiveness of the programme and commented that, in parallel to changes to the LTS career track, there was increased emphasis on learning and teaching in the Research and Teaching (R&T) track.

99 The University Recognising Teaching Excellence Working Group (RTEWG) undertook work to map practices and structures against those of other universities within the Universitas 21 network of research-intensive institutions. Revised role descriptors and new promotion criteria emerged from this research, and written and video guidance for applicants and reviewers is now in place. Support sessions are now a formalised part of the LEADS CPD programme and staff spoke positively to the ELIR team about these developments.

100 During the ELIR, the University provided evidence that indicated encouraging progression and promotion on the LTS career track. Alignment with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and the introduction of an Account of Professional Practice as part of the promotion framework, has further enhanced the integrity of this track. The adoption of the same job titles across the LTS and R&T tracks further accentuates the parity of esteem between tracks. Academic staff who met the team confirmed that, as a result of the University's efforts to raise the parity of esteem between teaching and research, the culture of the University was changing, and that learning and teaching is now being rewarded and recognised to a greater extent. The Recognising Excellence in Teaching framework, established by the University in 2014 and accredited by the Higher Education Academy until 2017, remains in place and is open to both those on the R&T and LTS tracks, and is aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning.

101 The University acknowledges that there is scope for further progress. Mentoring has proved challenging even with relatively few staff on the LTS track. The University also recognises that study leave opportunities are not consistent with those on research contracts and teaching workloads are often perceived as being onerous. There is, however, a clear commitment to continue the work through human resources, LEADS and Deans of Learning and Teaching.

102 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) offers have been developed over the past three years and leadership programmes introduced for all staff involved in teaching and leadership of teaching and learning. These leadership programmes employ a variety of approaches. Three programmes have been introduced for strategic, emerging and aspiring leaders, and two aimed at specific leadership roles in research and teaching.

103 The Programme Leaders Development Programme was introduced in 2017-18 and was designed for those with programme or large course responsibilities. The first successful iteration of the programme has led to continued funding and its embedding into the overall provision. Sponsored by the Vice-Principal (Academic and Educational Innovation) and the Assistant Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching, the programme represents an important acknowledgement of the importance of local leadership and the provision of appropriate support. The ELIR team found evidence that staff were engaging enthusiastically with the various leadership programmes and had found the experience very positive.

104 The University supports two types of teaching-related awards. The Student Teaching Awards are financed by the University but run by the Students' Representative Council. Nominations are growing year-on-year, with 1,800 being submitted in 2017-18 in 14 award categories. In parallel, the University Teaching Excellence Awards have been developed to include associated college-level awards. Success in these awards is marked both financially and by public recognition at graduation.

Performance and Development Review

105 Support and training materials have been provided to ensure the effectiveness of the Performance and Development Review Process (P&DR). The University maintains that the provision on the ECDP, the annual P&DR cycle, leadership and CPD offerings and the Annual Professorial Zoning mechanism, which determines remuneration against a set of determined criteria, ensure a holistic approach to continuous professional development. However, staff indicated to the ELIR team that there remained some dissatisfaction with the operation of the bandings.

Support for new staff

106 Newly appointed staff are required to complete the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP). This course was revised substantially in 2018-19 and is now integrated with the MEd Academic Practice (MEdAP). The PGCAP now offers a wide range of elective choices. There are three 'core' courses and staff then select two electives drawn from a list of six. Staff engaged on the PGCAP can elect to continue their study by selecting more options and three additional advanced courses and, potentially a master's project (60 credits) leading to the award of MEdAP. The flexibility of this provision shows early signs of encouraging further engagement with professional development and staff spoke positively about this development.

107 Staff development is also supported by peer observation of teaching, which is mandatory for those participating in the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice, where they are observed by a subject specialist and Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice member of teaching. While there is no mandatory University scheme, there is a Peer Observation of Teaching Guide for Academic Staff.

Staff survey

108 Staff engagement is encouraged through participation in the biennial staff survey, launched in 2014. Staff confirmed to the ELIR team that themes were identified for University action, but also pointed to the work that ensued in the schools following the publication of the findings. Staff confirmed that they were confident that survey outcomes were acted upon and monitored at university, college and school level.

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

109 The University has a clear strategy for learning and teaching, and an effective approach for enhancing practice in this area. The University has made demonstrable progress since the 2014 ELIR in reviewing and revising the career development pathways and promotions criteria for academic staff. In particular, there has been commendable progress towards achieving parity of esteem between staff on the LTS and those on the R&T track. The University has identified further work it wishes to carry out, notably around mentoring and workload allocation.

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

110 The University has systematic processes in place for the management of quality processes and maintenance of academic standards that meet sector expectations.

111 The Academic Quality Framework (AQF) sets out the procedures for course and programme design and approval, annual monitoring, external examining and periodic subject review, as well as university services review and professional, statutory and regulatory body review. The AQF identifies efficiency and enhancement as underlying principles, with the acknowledgement that efficiency in this context relies on significant devolution of responsibilities to colleges and schools in relation to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards.

112 The University Senate is responsible for the quality of teaching and the academic standards of awards, and the management of academic standards. It delegates detailed consideration of many matters to the central committees responsible for specific areas: Education Policy & Strategy (EdPSC); Research, Planning and Strategy (RPSC); Academic Standards (ASC); Learning and Teaching (L&TC); and Deans of Graduate Studies Committee (DoGS). Colleges, graduate schools, schools and research institutes play a key role in managing and enhancing quality and standards, and each have their own structures and operate both their own and University processes for this purpose.

Programme approval

113 In response to staff concerns expressed over the complexity of the course and programme approval process, and related concerns over the supporting Programme Information Process (PIP), the University has devolved increased responsibility to schools, research institutes and colleges. In 2015-16, the University operated a pilot to allow schools to approve course changes and colleges to approve programme changes. Further revisions were made in 2016-17 to extend responsibility for the approval of new courses to schools and approval of new programmes to colleges on a pilot basis. Changes are now embedded but remain subject to ongoing monitoring by ASC, which receives summary reports and carries out audits of approvals granted.

114 The University indicated that feedback on the process from the Deans of Learning and Teaching, and college boards of study was provided with the 2018 annual report of Programme Approval to ASC and was broadly positive. The Senate Office is enhancing guidance and training for staff and LEADS are supporting academic staff with course and programme design. It was clear to the ELIR team that staff welcomed the streamlined course approval process, which generated a greater sense of ownership on the part of staff. Students also spoke positively about their involvement in the process.

Annual monitoring

115 The University considers that the enhancement of course provision is most effective when implemented at course level by programme and course leaders and, as a result, annual monitoring is the most devolved of its quality process. Course or programme leaders reflect on a range of material including: external examiner comments; staff feedback; course evaluation data; student feedback; information on student performance, and strategy and action plans. The University indicated that its NSS action plans were becoming more coordinated with the annual monitoring processes and also identified that it had recently

replaced annual NSS action plans with three-year plans. Staff indicated to the ELIR team that they found the new approach to be more holistic and that the link to annual monitoring brings NSS data into context, and supports taking a long-term approach to areas for development - for example, assessment and feedback. Annual monitoring reports include planned actions, as well as updates on progress made on actions identified in the last annual monitoring cycle. The annual monitoring process applies to undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. There is no corresponding annual monitoring process for postgraduate research provision. Outcomes from annual monitoring reports are considered through Staff-Student Liaison Committees, during Periodic Subject Reviews and by the Academic Standards Committee. The ELIR team noted inconsistency in the format and quality of annual monitoring reports and this was recognised by the University.

116 In 2014, the University undertook a review of the Annual Monitoring process which considered the burden of annual monitoring on staff. As a result, two options for gathering and reporting annual monitoring activity are available. The first continues with longstanding practice based on the completion of forms for each 'unit of learning', summarised by the School Quality Officer and reported to the College Quality Officer. The new option introduced a meeting-based approach, where groups of staff, as appropriate to school structures, meet to discuss and reflect on their experience of the past year, then report to their School Officer via minutes of that meeting. The University indicated that School Officers who use this method, considered it to be effective, providing a prompt for useful discussion. There is anecdotal feedback that it has improved staff engagement with the process and reduced some frustrations. The team noted that further amendments continue to be made to ensure efficiency. During the current ELIR, academic staff told the team that they welcomed the opportunity to hold such meetings. The team learned that student interns have been recruited to undertake further review of the operation of the annual monitoring process. There would be benefit in monitoring success in this area with a view to encouraging greater staff engagement and more consistent application of the options available.

117 Staff and students had mixed views on the effectiveness of the University's processes for monitoring and enhancing its arrangements for postgraduate research students. While annual monitoring processes for postgraduate taught students are clear, operational responsibility for oversight of the postgraduate research student experience is devolved to the relevant school or research institute, with no systematic arrangements in place for oversight at university-level. In particular, there are no systematic arrangements at university-level for considering the postgraduate research student experience on an annual basis that would allow for tracking student progression (although this is monitored by each graduate school) or analysing student feedback (paragraph 148). Monitoring of postgraduate research student engagement with centrally-provided training has recently been implemented.

118 The University has had early discussions about moving to a risk-based approach to annual monitoring, with a view to concentrating effort on areas where data reveals unusual patterns. The ELIR team would support the increased use and analysis of relevant data to underpin annual monitoring, while also encouraging the University to consider the benefits of using the process as an opportunity for staff and students to discuss and reflect upon practice, not only when data is deviating from the norm.

Institution-led review

119 Overall, the University meets the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) requirements for institutional-led review through its processes of Periodic Subject Review (PSR) for undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses. However, the University should ensure that it continues to meet SFC requirements across the full range of its provision, including professional services review (paragraph 123).

120 Taught provision is reviewed on a six-year cycle, leading to the University conducting between six and nine reviews each year. The reviews are undertaken by a panel convened by a Vice-Principal, the Assistant Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching or the Convenor of ASC. Panels include: at least one external review team member; a trained SRC-representative; a representative of the Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service (LEADS); a Senate Assessor on Court; a cognate academic reviewer from another school; and a coordinating member from the Senate Office. The panel considers a Self-Evaluation Report, supporting information and data, and meets with staff and students. The ensuing report with commendations and recommendations, is submitted to ASC which takes an overview of themes arising from reviews and recommends university action where appropriate. Training and support are provided for panel members, including student members, and this is reviewed at each cycle. Student reviewers now receive feedback on their individual contribution to the PSR process and the evaluations (100% positive) indicate the value that they bring to the review and the effectiveness of their training.

121 The most significant change to the Periodic Review process since the 2014 ELIR, has been the introduction of an all-staff survey which allows staff to provide feedback on their experience of teaching, support for teaching, cultural values associated with teaching and other activities undertaken in the area under review. Responses are anonymised and remain confidential to the panel. The University developed this initiative using questions drawn from the Universitas 21 Teaching Practices Survey, adapting them slightly for its own context. Initial feedback from PSR Panel Conveners has been very positive, suggesting that the survey responses provide context and highlight issues that complement the perspectives expressed in the Self Evaluation Reports. The ELIR team found evidence that this innovation, despite being at an early stage of implementation, was well received by staff and student panel members. The University expects to make further changes to the PSR process, which are likely to include further consideration of non-academic aspects of the student experience. The team supports the widened scope of the PSR, providing any change allows enough granularity at the discipline level to support the effective consideration of learning and teaching.

122 Graduate School Reviews (GSR), introduced in 2008-09, adopt a similar format to PSR and the two most recent reviews have reported common themes including: effective communications with both staff and students across a 'complex landscape of schools and research institutes'; timely submission of theses; opportunities for supervisor development; and the desire for training that is less policy and process-oriented, and more topical and flexible. The University is beginning a review of the Graduate School Review methodology. A new process will involve an increased use of data and may operate on a different frequency. Staff reported to the ELIR team that the Review of the College of Arts would be next in the schedule and would serve as a 'hybrid' between the previous and the proposed new approach.

123 University services have been subject to periodic review since 2006 and are reviewed on a six-year cycle. The University reported that University Services Review has been suspended during the restructuring of all services into eight large executive directorates. The ELIR team learned that the method(s) by which the new arrangements would be reviewed were yet to be determined, but, for the majority of student-facing services (within the Student and Academic Services Directorate), this would be determined by the Student Experience Committee (SEC). The SEC action plan is being developed on a thematic basis, which may offer the potential to introduce a thematically-based approach to service review. However, this had not been determined by the time of the current review visit (paragraph 75).

Student representation in quality processes

124 The University identified student involvement as a vital element of its quality processes and works closely with the SRC to ensure that student representation is effective. The Code of Practice on Student Representation articulates clearly the operation of student representation. Students attested to the role that they play in quality processes across the University through membership of relevant committees, from the University Court to the Senate through to school/subject level committees and working groups. Students reported their involvement in Periodic Reviews and Course Approval, confirming that training was in place and that they received feedback on their involvement.

125 Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) are key in providing a regular, formal route for student representatives to give their feedback on the operation of courses and programmes. The ELIR team met with students who confirmed the effective operation of SSLCs. There is a requirement for one SSLC meeting to be held per semester. All student representatives are members of SSLCs and must form a majority of the committee membership. Discussions from SSLCs are reflected on in the Annual Monitoring and Periodic Subject Review processes. Regular reports are provided to SSLCs on the responses to feedback and instances of unsatisfactory responses or lack of progress can be referred to the school/institute/college Learning and Teaching Committee or Graduate School Board. If no progress is evident then the matter is highlighted in Annual Monitoring. Students can access additional support from the appropriate SRC College Convenor or SRC Postgraduate Convenor if progress is slow or ineffective. Student representatives are responsible for the communication of this information to the wider student community. The team found evidence that student feedback is used effectively across the quality assurance processes.

126 Following the 2014 ELIR, the University has developed and implemented a new Course Evaluation Policy which covers all taught provision and employs five core questions. Course evaluations are the primary data source for student satisfaction with individual courses. The University is considering aggregating student responses to the five core questions at college and university-level, which would allow for comparisons across courses. The ELIR team considered that this would add valuable points of reference for course and programme leaders in enhancing learning and teaching.

127 In response to course evaluation, staff are required to complete a summary and response document (SARD) for both undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision and this is designed to close the feedback loop to students. The SARD also underpins other quality management and enhancement processes including annual monitoring and Periodic Subject Review.

128 SSLCs receive and review SARDS and student representatives are involved in ensuring their satisfactory production. The SARDS play an important role in the reflective analysis phase of Annual Monitoring and they are monitored formally through Periodic Subject Review. Student representatives confirmed that they are responsible for communicating actions to the wider student community and that the process works efficiently. Staff reported that the feedback mechanisms were effective, although some students reported that they were unaware of actions taken as a result of their feedback. The University indicated that reporting and feedback in this area remains a focus for further enhancement.

4.2 Use of external reference points in quality processes

129 The University makes effective use of a range of external reference points, including the Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), in managing its academic standards and in its quality processes more widely.

130 Programme specifications describe the programme aims and intended learning outcomes of each award, they draw on *The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework* (SCQF) and the relevant Subject Benchmark Statement, and confirm adherence to these reference points. The University makes effective use of Subject Benchmark Statements as reference points in course and programme design, and in the Periodic Subject Review process. External panel members for Periodic Subject Review are asked to formally confirm that programmes are current and valid in the context of practice and knowledge within the subject area and that Subject Benchmark Statements are being met. The ELIR team found clear evidence of the University mapping, reviewing and reflecting on the expectations of the Quality Code.

131 External examiners are deemed to play a vital role in securing and maintaining academic standards. There are well-established mechanisms in place for the recruitment, appointment and induction of external examiners which meet the expectations of the Quality Code. External examiner induction is delegated to school or subject level. In addition to involvement in examination boards and reporting, external examiners are consulted on course or programme structure and content and their opinion is considered on course and programme design and in annual monitoring, Periodic Subject Review, and course and programme approval.

132 The External Examiner Management System to facilitate the online submission of external examiners' reports, which was in place at the 2014 ELIR, has been extended and, at the time of the current ELIR include a pilot for the online submission of external examiner nominations, with the intention of this being implemented across the University in 2019-20. The Academic Standards Committee undertakes an analysis of external examiner reports, enabling the Senate to identify and respond to any university-level trends and to have confidence that issues raised are being addressed effectively. Examples were provided of the ways in which good practice identified by external examiners is shared effectively among staff. The ELIR team recommends that the University also makes external examiner reports accessible to students (paragraph 149).

133 The University ascribes particular authority to external examiners in respect of adjudication on individual student results. In 2018, the University organised a workshop on national developments concerning the role of external examiners and the comparability of academic standards and how these might impact on the University's approach. Following the workshop, consideration is being given to adjusting the role of the external examiner to that of 'critical friend'.

134 In response to the 2014 ELIR report recommendation - that the University should ensure the consistent application of its assessment regulations across all exam boards and continue to monitor the impact of its guidelines on the use of discretion by exam boards - the University reported that the Code of Assessment sets out both principles and specific regulations to standardise the approach and management of assessment at undergraduate and taught postgraduate levels, and is supplemented by additional documentation and guidance. The University decided that direct monitoring would require significant, disproportionate effort and staff time, but that the operation of the guidelines would be monitored by the Senate Office through the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee and Academic Standards Committee and, periodically, through engagement with the colleges. From November 2016, all exam boards have been required to publish their chosen criteria in

advance and the guidelines have been clarified to emphasise that the same criteria must be used in each discretionary zone. Following these revisions, the University noted a number of positive comments from external examiners on the more detailed guidance. In March 2017, ASC noted that the issue of discretionary decisions for honours and postgraduate taught level classifications had continued to prompt comment from external examiners in their reports for 2015-16. However, the number of comments had fallen since previous years and the University hoped this trend would continue. At the time of the current ELIR, a small number of queries from external examiners remained annually and the University indicated that it expected this to continue and committed to addressing any misunderstandings identified.

135 In discussions with the ELIR team, staff highlighted that consistency of approach in the operation of discretion across different subject areas continues to be a concern. The use of discretion by exam boards is not routinely analysed in a manner which would allow for monitoring and comparison of trends across the institution. There would be considerable benefit in the University being able to analyse this data systematically, in order to monitor instances and the pattern of discretion across the institution.

4.3 Commentary on action taken since ELIR 3

136 The 2014 ELIR report identified six areas for development and the current ELIR team agreed that the University has made satisfactory progress in addressing these, with some work ongoing.

137 The University has made significant progress with the review of career progression for university teachers (paragraphs 97-101 and 109). In addition, staff and students have made positive comments on the University's approach to supporting technology-enhanced learning and this is now a key feature of the University's campus redevelopment plan and an area of focus for the current ELIR. The Student Voice Portal, which aimed to provide a vehicle for more effective student engagement and feedback but was under-utilised, has been repurposed as MyClassReps and the ELIR team considered this to have been a positive development (paragraph 24).

138 The University continues to develop its approach to the oversight of the postgraduate experience. Since the last ELIR, progress has been made with the review of structures and processes for reporting issues related to the postgraduate taught student experience, although further work was underway at the time of the current ELIR. Oversight of the postgraduate research student experience would benefit from further consideration and the ELIR team concluded that monitoring and review processes remained an area for development. As a result, the University has received a recommendation in this area, where it is asked to ensure that appropriate annual monitoring systems are in place for these students (paragraph 117). Following this action, there would be value in the University reflecting again on how the graduate schools maintain oversight of the totality of the postgraduate student experience.

139 In discussions with the ELIR team, staff voiced concern about the use of discretion by exam boards. The 2014 ELIR report asked the University to monitor the impact of its guidelines on the use of discretion by exam boards to ensure the consistent application of assessment regulations across exam boards. The University has undertaken work on the guidelines and their application, but there is no systematic mechanism in place to allow for robust analysis of decisions and trends across the institution regarding the application of discretion (paragraphs 134-5) and the University is asked to address this.

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

140 Overall, the University has an effective approach to using data to inform its decision-making. The use of data is systematic, contextualised and embedded in several areas of the University's quality processes. Sophisticated analyses and research are increasingly used to support strategic decision-making, particularly in relation to the further development of widening participation strategies.

141 Data is generated from a range of sources to inform decision-making including: administrative systems, course evaluations and SARDS, internal surveys (The Welcome Survey, the Student Life Survey, and the PSR all staff survey), and external surveys (NSS, PTES and PRES). A range of data is considered in the University's key quality processes, primarily annual monitoring (for UG and PGT) and PSR, and data will be central to the revised Graduate School Review. Data is also used to inform strategic decision-making at university-level, and KPIs are used to drive and monitor realisation of the University Strategy, and to facilitate priority setting. The University supplements the management information available from the data warehouse with extensive use of external benchmarking to inform the development of strategy and measure progress towards its strategic aims.

142 The University has strengthened its approach to evidence-based decision-making markedly since the 2014 ELIR. The Business Intelligence team has expanded and new business intelligence software, which allows staff to analyse and combine data in a user-friendly and dynamic way, has been introduced. Insights that emerge from the analysis are used to support informed and transparent decision-making, a notable example being the way data is used to inform the University's approach to widening participation (paragraphs 31-35 and 73). The system also allows staff to directly access sources of data for their own use. For example, staff can access the NSS results for their own students, and compare these with other parts of the University, and across the sector as a whole. The University's NSS dashboard had seen significant use, and staff who met the ELIR team indicated that they have used it actively, both to inform themselves and in planning and quality processes. Similar applications are now being developed for other surveys, for example, the University's Welcome survey.

143 The ELIR team recognises that the University is continuing to explore the full range of potential benefits that might be gained from its use of data. It routinely provides full analysis of its internal surveys (Welcome Survey and Student Life Survey) for international and domestic students separately, as well as analysis of the full cohort. However, the team understood that cross-sector comparisons of the international student experience at the University are not currently possible. In light of expected growth in international student numbers (paragraph 9), the ELIR team considered that there would be value in the University monitoring the experience of the international student body in greater detail and routinely using this data to underpin strategic decision-making in this area.

4.5 Effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic standards

144 The University has an effective approach to securing academic standards, in line with the expectations of the Quality Code.

145 The University's approach to student engagement in quality processes is effective. In order to strengthen this approach further and comply with guidance in the Quality Code, external examiners reports should also be made accessible to students in order to give them the opportunity to engage in discussion and consideration of this element of the assessment process.

146 The University continues to consider its approach to the application of discretion by exam boards. The University is asked to develop a systematic way of monitoring and

analysing the use of discretion in order to have a clear view of the effectiveness of these arrangements and to have clearer and more detailed information about the consistency with which the use of discretion is applied by exam boards across the institution.

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

147 Overall, the University has effective arrangements for self-evaluation which are informed by the use of data from a range of sources. The use of data to inform systematic quality processes and decision-making is part of an increasingly embedded culture of self-evaluation and the University continuously reconsiders and refines the methods and tools that are employed for generating, analysing and using data. The University also undertakes extensive benchmarking and introduces developments based on good practice it identifies.

148 Annual monitoring and institution-led review processes are currently under consideration and are being continually evaluated and updated. As part of its immediate activity, and notwithstanding the current review of the structure of professional support services, the University is asked to continue with its plans to ensure that there is a systematic and timely mechanism to review the contribution of these services to the quality of the student experience during the period of change. The University should also ensure that the postgraduate experience is monitored systematically in a way that is comparable to other annual monitoring processes in place and which would allow an institution-level overview of the holistic postgraduate research experience, including review of student progression and student feedback.

149 The University's approach to student engagement in quality processes is effective. In order to strengthen its approach further, the University is recommended to make external examiner reports accessible to students in order to give students the opportunity to engage in discussion and consideration of this element of the assessment process.

5 Collaborative provision

5.1 Key features of the institution's strategic approach

150 The University has an effective approach to managing its collaborative provision including arrangements for securing academic standards and enhancing the student experience.

151 The University describes its approach to collaborative activity as, 'low risk but not unambitious'. Collaborative provision is relatively small scale, the majority being established joint, double, or multiple degree programmes. The portfolio of articulation agreements has remained relatively stable, totalling 13 overall, all of which are viewed by the University as being low risk. The ELIR team considered that the University manages its collaborative provision in a risk-aware and responsible manner, closely linked to the aims of its Internationalisation Strategy. One of the key objectives of the University Strategy is to 'connect with the world through internationalisation' and the Internationalisation Strategy prioritises the establishment of bilateral and trilateral partnerships and the growth of sustainable, high-quality transnational education with a recent focus on enhancing its strategic approach to partnerships.

152 The University's collaborative research degree provision has shifted from individual, small scale partnerships to framework agreements. This fits with the University's aim of deepening existing partnerships and concentrating on a smaller number of collaborative programmes.

153 The University delivers collaborative programmes through its partnership with the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT). It has a subsidiary company in Singapore - UGlasgow Singapore PTE Ltd (also known as University of Glasgow Singapore or UGS). The University employs academic and professional services staff, as required, in Singapore. The collaborative provision at SIT comprises: BEng (Honours) in Aeronautical Engineering, Aerospace Systems, Mechatronics, Mechanical Design Engineering, and Civil Engineering; and BSc (Honours) in Computing Science, and Nursing. Recognising that students in different parts of the world have different expectations and requirements, the University has been reflecting on the extent to which the curriculum of its transnational education programmes should be contextualised to the countries in which they are delivered. One of the outcomes of this reflection has been the decision to change the engineering programmes delivered in collaboration with SIT into joint-award programmes. This will allow the course content to align more closely with the Singapore context. The move to joint degrees in its partnership with SIT will mean that, in future, each partner will take responsibility for delivering and assessing half of the modules. Assessments for the SIT programmes are currently the same as those used in Glasgow but, under the new arrangements, staff based in Singapore will set assessments with a process of internal scrutiny and reporting to teaching committees in Glasgow. All arrangements will still be required to meet the requirements of the Quality Code.

154 The University has recently created a new Assistant Vice-Principal (International) post. At the time of the current ELIR, an appointment had been made but the appointee had not yet taken up the post. The new Assistant Vice-Principal will line manage the five Deans for Global Engagement and three TNE Deans, will provide dedicated oversight of delivery of the international strategy goals, and ensure a coordinated approach to meeting the Strategic Plan key performance indicators.

155 There has recently been significant growth in transnational education activity and the number of students enrolled on collaborative programmes has increased in recent years. In 2018-19, there was a total student TNE population of 2,636, exceeding the targets set at the 2014 ELIR (and in the University's Internationalisation Strategy) of 1,560. This has occurred mainly through a new partnership with Nankai University, and additional collaborative provision with the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China (UESTC) and SIT. There are now 136 TNE students at Nankai University, and 1,560 at UESTC. The partnership with Nankai University includes a Confucius Institute, the Scottish Centre for Chinese Social Science Research, and a joint graduate school while the collaboration with the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China partnership delivers BEng (Honours) Electronics and Electrical Engineering, and Electronics and Electrical Engineering with Communications.

156 The structures that support the Internationalisation Strategy have developed since the 2014 ELIR. The Academic Collaborations Office was established in 2013 as part of the Senate Office and provides management information and a range of other specialist services. Day-to-day operational support for TNE is provided in the relevant school or college. Recent developments have been underpinned by the introduction of new structures, including College International Deans, Deans for Global Engagement, TNE Deans, a TNE Secretariat and a TNE Board.

157 The University coordinates seven Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degrees (EMJMD) consortia and two further developments are planned. All EMJMDs are in the College of Social Sciences and run with at least four degree-awarding partners. Students have three mobility opportunities, each a two-year, four semester model (240 SCQF/120 ECTS credits). On average, there are 20 EU scholarships. The programmes have proved to be very popular with applicants and have led to the development of research partnerships.

158 The University operates three validation arrangements with two established Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and a specialist provider: the Glasgow School of Art (GSA), Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and the Edinburgh Theological Seminary (ETS). Until 2017, the University also had a validation partnership with Christie's Education. This partnership is no longer in operation, but a small number of students remain on the University of Glasgow programmes and are based solely at the University. GSA and SRUC are accredited institutions and take responsibility for approving new programmes subject to validation by the University, but the University provides oversight for key quality assurance processes and policies. The University is responsible for approving and validating all programmes at ETS (70 students).

159 Postgraduate research collaborations place emphasis on framework arrangements, which are agreed at institutional-level, with high-quality partners. The University also participates in a number of Centres for Doctoral Training (10 in total), Doctoral Training Partnerships and other 'pooled graduate schools'. For example, the Scottish Graduate School for the Arts and Humanities, the Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences, the Scottish Universities Physics Alliance, and the Medical Research Council Centre for Doctoral Training in Precision Medicine. The University is also lead partner in the European Joint Doctorate in Molecular Animal Nutrition, and partner in the Network for Innovative Training in Rotorcraft Safety (NITROS). The University also participates in a number of Doctoral Training Centres. These are each managed by the relevant college, with sharing of good practice and experience within each college achieved through the Graduate School Board and sharing at institutional-level through the Deans of Graduate Studies Committee.

Arrangements for managing quality and academic standards

160 The University separates the processes of partnership approval and monitoring, and programme approval and monitoring. Special processes are in place for partnership approval and monitoring, while programme approval and monitoring are undertaken as part of the University's usual annual monitoring and PSR processes supported by the Academic Collaborations Office. Operational oversight of collaborative partnerships is the responsibility of a joint management board for the relevant collaboration.

161 The procedures for the approval of a new partnership are defined by the Academic Collaborations Office and include three stages: approval by School or Research Institute; approval by College; and approval by the Senate. In some cases, approval by the University Court is also required, typically if there are particular human resources, financial or legal implications for the University, as would be the case with overseas delivery. Individual collaborations are overseen by joint management boards (or equivalent) that report to College collaborations groups.

162 At institutional level, the University Collaborations Group (comprising Senior Management Group members) reviews proposals before they are considered by Education Policy and Strategy Committee or Research Planning and Strategy Committee. Support is provided by the Academic Collaborations Office and the TNE Secretariat. All legal agreements must adhere to the Quality Code. Colleges have structures established for the review of collaborative partnerships. The College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences, the College of Social Sciences, and College of Arts each have a dedicated College Collaborative Group and the College of Science and Engineering uses existing structures.

163 Quality assurance and enhancement of validated provision is achieved by one of three mechanisms: annual joint liaison committees or management boards; quality management processes aligning with the University's own processes; or annual reports to ASC.

Student support

164 Students studying at partner institutions who met the ELIR team tended to associate themselves with the partner institution, rather than the University, but this view changed for those students who subsequently articulated to the University. Students at SIT valued the availability of online lecture material from the associated programmes delivered in Glasgow. The team heard that, as the partnership evolves into a joint degree model in the near future, the University will continue to make this material available as an additional resource to students at SIT, even though the Glasgow and SIT programmes will diverge in content. UESTC students are prepared for, and supported during, their transfer to the University by staff visiting UESTC and through the provision of English language training. Overall, students who met the ELIR team were very satisfied with the support they received from the University.

165 TNE students reported that they were generally very satisfied with the learning resources and opportunities provided, including the provision of advisors of study, student counselling, library and IT resources, and the VLE; and PSR report findings support this view. TNE students were generally satisfied with the arrangements for assessments and reported that the criteria on which they would be assessed were clear and marking rubrics were available to them. The timeliness of the assessment feedback was variable. Staff were aware of this and said that one of the advantages of changing to a joint degree model would be that the University would have complete control over the modules it delivered, and the assessments associated with them.

5.2 Effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative provision

166 The University's management of its collaborative provision is effective. There is clear evidence that careful consideration has been given to managing the risks and opportunities. A new support model for TNE has been developed following critical reflection by the University on its processes, which led to the recognition that the previous approach could not effectively sustain the scale of planned operations. In the new model, there are clearly defined roles for central services, the colleges and schools.

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