



University of St Andrews

Follow-up Report to the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)

May 2016

Preface

One year after publication of their ELIR Outcome and Technical Reports, institutions are asked to submit a Follow-up Report to QAA Scotland. These reports are also submitted to the Scottish Funding Council. Follow-up Reports are written in the institution's own words and require to be endorsed by the institution's Governing Body prior to publication on the QAA website. Guidance on the content and structure is provided by QAA Scotland.

Institutions are asked to focus on the action they have taken since the review and to include an indication of the effectiveness of that action. ELIR reports highlight positive practice as well as areas for development, and institutions are encouraged to comment on key areas of activity relating to good practice that they have prioritised since the ELIR.

Follow-up Reports are discussed with institutions as part of the ELIR annual discussion meetings. They also form the basis of a follow-up event which involves institutions that were reviewed around the same time coming together to explore the ways they have responded to their ELIR outcomes. This activity is intended to emphasise the enhancement-led nature of the review method.

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1. Endorsement

This year-on report was endorsed by the University Court on 17 June 2016.

2. Introduction

The University of St Andrews welcomed the review team for ELIR 3 in the spring of 2015. Preparations for ELIR were well supported by the QAA, and University staff and students appreciated the collegial and open dialogue fostered by the review team.

3. ELIR 2015: Outcome

The University acknowledged the team's judgement that the University has 'effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience' and that the team expected that 'these arrangements are likely to continue to be effective in the future'.

The University was pleased to note that several areas of positive practice were identified by the review team. It was especially gratifying to see praise for St Andrews' positive approach to widening participation, given that the University has been unjustly criticised in this area in the press. It was also pleasing that the University's promotion of equality and diversity was appreciated.

The key themes identified by the University in its RA – i.e., streamlining and reducing bureaucracy; shared responsibility for educational excellence; and secure transitions in student progression – were central to the review and led to some valuable dialogue with staff and students.

4. Monitoring and review of ELIR Report

The ELIR report was made available to all staff and students and presented to University Court. Areas for development were considered by the University's Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC), Postgraduate Research Committee (PGRC), Academic Monitoring Group, Academic Assurance Group and the Audit & Risk Committee. An action plan was created and we are systematically working through this. Actions defined have been included in the LTC and PGRC agendas and have resulted in the formation of short-life working groups led by committee members, and including student representation and other key colleagues from Schools and Professional Services.

A half away-day was arranged for key staff to discuss in detail three key areas for development: the role and status of teaching-only staff; use of technology to support learning and teaching; and marking criteria and the use of the Common Reporting Scale. Action plans arising from this event are being taken forward under the auspices of LTC.

Response to the ELIR report is led by the Proctor's Office and development work is managed through the committees chaired by the Proctor. The University will continue to monitor progress on areas for development through its regular operational and strategic review processes.

5. Progress on Areas for Development included in the ELIR report

5.1. Academic oversight of collaborative activity

The Head of Academic Partnerships & International Experience has responsibility for managing the University's suite of collaborative programmes and study abroad opportunities. She provides a report each year to the Academic Monitoring Group on collaborative agreements and study abroad. From now on this report will provide data reflecting student performance on all collaborative programmes to assure the University that students on these programmes are achieving satisfactory results. Further development in this area includes:

- Creation of a new Collaborative Provision framework that has been disseminated as guidance for academic staff considering a new collaborative programme.
- A new policy on the Management of Work Placements was presented, discussed and approved at LTC on 6 April 2016.
- A training meeting is to be held in May for all Study Abroad Coordinators to clarify their role and responsibilities in Schools.

5.2. Role and status of teaching-only staff

This topic has been on the University's radar for some time, but only recently has there been an opportunity to progress discussions and activity. The topic has now been widely discussed – at LTC, at an LTC away afternoon, at Academic Council, and more informally with Directors of Teaching and Heads of School – to identify what shape a review of the role and status of teaching-only staff should take. In addition, in January 2016 the University hosted a seminar by colleagues at another Scottish University to explain the process they used to extend career paths for teaching only staff. In light of these discussions:

- The Master, Proctor and Human Resources have been working to initiate a review of contracts for teaching-only staff on fixed-term contracts.
- A high-level working group comprising the Master, Proctor, Trade Union, two Heads of School, a Principal Teaching Fellow and the Director of HR has been formed. Its remit is to examine the role of teaching in career paths for academics in both teaching and research and teaching-focussed roles, and to make recommendations which will be considered by the Principal's Office in the first instance.

5.3. Contextualised support for postgraduates who teach

In May 2015, Directors of Teaching met to discuss the role of postgraduate tutors and to share examples of good practice in relation to induction, training, support, development and review. Building on feedback from this event, a working group has now been set up to take forward this discussion, to make recommendations about the support that should be available to PG Tutors at a School level and to create a single policy document that will outline the University's expectations and processes. This group will report to LTC and PGRC in the next year, both chaired by the Vice-Principal (Proctor).

At the same time, colleagues in HR are reviewing the contracts, terms and conditions and appointments processes used across the University to engage PG Tutors. The two groups are in touch to ensure a coordinated approach to the issue.

5.4. Academic engagement in annual monitoring

As reported in our RA, the annual monitoring process has been reviewed and revised over recent years to reduce the amount of documentation required from Schools and to gather information from central sources to support the process wherever possible. We have also adapted the format of the Annual Monitoring report to be more concise and evidence-based. It is a condition of submitting a School's Annual Academic Monitoring report that it must have been discussed at the School's Teaching Committee, and for all staff to have an opportunity to contribute to its production. To increase academic engagement further, we have in addition:

- Raised the profile of Annual Academic Monitoring (AAM) through discussions at various fora.
- Broadened the invitation to attend the Annual Monitoring Dissemination Event: by popular demand, the event held in November 2015 was attended by a wide range of academic staff and by School Presidents as well as Directors of Teaching, yielding the event's highest attendance so far.
- Reiterated at April 2016 LTC the importance of all academic colleagues' having an opportunity of contributing to the AAM report and emphasised that it should be approved by a School's Teaching Committee prior to submission.
- Progress on this area for development will be monitored by the Academic Monitoring Group.

5.5. Use of technology to support learning and teaching

Around the time of ELIR, the University was in the process of appointing a Head of Learning Technology & IT Skills Development in CAPOD. The role-holder is making a great success of raising the profile, and use, of our VLE, Moodle. She is also moving forward with commitment to support the high quality use of technology in learning and teaching to supplement the University's well-established and innovative teaching methods. Responsibility for progress will be collaborative, shared between IT Services and CAPOD, with priorities agreed by the Proctor's Office.

At the same time, related progress includes the following actions:

- A first version of a Technology-Enhanced Learning strategy has been drafted and is currently under consultation involving relevant staff. As part of this, we are considering how technology will improve student access to learning resources, provide a greater choice of place and pace of study, and alleviate risks arising from loss of teaching space (e.g. through fire or other disaster). We are currently setting a priority list that will include responsibilities and a timescale for introduction of new technologies along with training for staff.
- At the time of ELIR the University was also looking into carrying out pilot studies of kit to enhance the use of technology in teaching. Over the last year, it has been decided to pilot the use of lecture capture technology beyond the School of Medicine, where it is already well established. Suitable products are being identified by IT Services.
- Moodle has been upgraded so we are now working on the most recent, well-tested version; the VLE has also been customised for the University of St Andrews. A number

of new plug-ins are now installed and in use, and training opportunities on their use are available.

5.6. Further integrate School of Medicine

Progress has been made in this area through closer involvement of key Medicine staff in University committees and working groups. This has helped Medicine meet regularly with colleagues across the University, with the aim of improving mutual understanding of School and University-wide initiatives and issues. For example:

- The Dean of Medicine is now a member of the Curriculum Approvals Group so has an opportunity to gain a wider knowledge of programmes and modules across the whole University.
- The Director of Teaching in Medicine is a member of the Academic Business Committee, which prepares business and sets the agenda for LTC and PGRC.
- The School of Medicine's Fitness to Practise document was re-written this academic year with University-wide consultation on content, form and the processes described.
- The Vice-Principal (Proctor) will monitor progress on this area for development.

5.7. Engaging with the student experience

Work continues in this area across the University. The recent appointment of a Project Developer in Student Services has allowed for a refreshed focus on Student Experience Projects, including Revision Week events, workshops on managing stress and a newly-designed student induction for Orientation in September 2017. In response to a prompt in the ELIR report, other actions include:

- Renewed contact, monitoring and support of the Commuter Student networks and special facilities.
- Establishment of regular diarised meetings between Student Services management and student representatives to identify joint projects for action by (amongst others) the Project Developer.
- Redesign, following discussions between the University and student representatives, of arrangements for student representation at Postgraduate level.
- Continued growth and enhancement of Student Development activities offered by CAPOD (see below).
- Planned programme of renovation and development of residential accommodation that has already provided extra beds.
- Discussion with Residential & Business Services about flexible access to meals in halls for students participating in extra- and co-curricular activities that currently clash with meal times.

5.8. Future development of CAPOD

5.8.1. Consider extending the existing positive work of CAPOD to include further development of the community of practice in pedagogical research

CAPOD was not set up as an academic unit, and as such the University has not included pedagogical research in CAPOD's remit. However, the community of practice in pedagogic research is being developed through initiatives led by the Proctor's Office as follows:

- Beginning in April 2016, the institution of a year-long Pedagogic Research Development Programme in association with the University's Centre for Higher Education Research. This programme will support individual engagement with pedagogic research from concept to draft publications.
- Encouraging engagement with disciplinary pedagogic communities associated with journals and learned societies, through leadership by example. For example, the Dean of Arts & Divinity is now an Associate Editor of the Journal of Management Education and Management Teaching Review, and the Professional Development Workshop Chair of the Academy of Management's Management Education and Development Division. A workshop open to all staff, on working with disciplinary journals and learned societies in these kinds of roles, will be offered later in the year.
- Engagement with key international partners where pedagogic research communities (allied to academic development and reward processes) are more strongly developed, to share learnings. We have particularly engaged with the University of Queensland and a leading pedagogic researcher from that institution will be delivering a workshop in Summer 2016. This is intended to be one of a series of exchange visits as part of long-term collaboration.

5.8.2. Support for mid-career and longer serving researchers

Since CAPOD's formation, support for this group has been considered an important part of its remit. However, pitching support at the right level and finding suitable times for workshops has been a challenge.

Recruiting the University's own experienced staff to co-deliver some of CAPOD's workshops on the Academic Staff Development Programme has been successful. Other current activity includes:

- The University has recently been fortunate to receive a donation towards the development of academic staff and pedagogy. CAPOD has made recommendations as to how this fund should be used and will support its allocation going forward.
- A review of induction and development of Heads of School is underway by CAPOD and Human Resources. The proposal includes a series of preparatory workshops, and mentoring of new Heads by experienced Heads of School. A framework is expected to be in place during AY 2016/17.
- CAPOD is further considering how its 'Heads of School toolkit' can be used to better effect.
- The Director of CAPOD has responsibility for taking this work forward, in liaison with the Master and Proctor.

5.9. Student performance and assessment

5.9.1. Cohort analysis

The University's Data Team based in Registry have been working on the provision of improved data for Annual Academic Monitoring and strategic planning processes, which staff will be able to access via Qlikview. It is expected that a trial version will be available in the summer to assess whether needs have been met.

A topic arising from LTC discussion and URLT reports is whether Joint Honours students are disadvantaged in any way in comparison to Single Honours students. For this reason, we have planned a focussed analysis of Honours entry and degree outcomes at the end of this

academic year, comparing Single Honours and Joint Honours results to assess whether there are any notable trends or outcomes that may need to be addressed.

5.9.2. Marking Criteria and use of the Common Reporting Scale

As noted in the Technical Report, the University has made progress since ELIR 2011 in ensuring consistency and clarity in the mapping of marks to grades on the Common Reporting Scale (CRS). However, it is acknowledged there is still further work to be done in helping students fully understand the CRS, and how assessment marks are assigned and mapped. To this end, a review of the University's webpages has begun, to rationalise and clarify information on the Common Reporting Scale (CRS). This has also been considered at the University's Learning and Teaching Committee and Schools have been asked to review and, if necessary, clarify the marking criteria they use for all assignments and feedback. The University has also reiterated to Schools the need to utilise the full marking scale when assessing students' work. Following discussion of a paper brought to LTC by the student representatives, this was formalised by inclusion of a new paragraph in the University's document 'Assessment Policies and Procedures':

'When marking any piece of assessment, the marker should always strive to use the full range of marks available to them e.g. 0-20 on the common reporting scale. A student should be given the top mark when they produce the highest quality of work possibly expected of a student at their level. By corollary, students producing work that bears no resemblance to university-level material should be given the lowest mark.'

It is also planned that the new Induction session for students in Orientation week will contain a section explaining the CRS in broad terms, with an expectation that this will be supplemented by information provided locally in Schools.

5.9.3. Other related activities

Work has also been instigated to assure ourselves that all students, whether studying in one School or more, receive a consistent overall experience in relation to assessment and marking. Steps have also been taken this year on an early academic intervention scheme where students who are noticed to be under-performing are invited to discuss progress and can be referred to Student Services for support if required. This new scheme appears to be settling in well and has already reached a number of students who might otherwise have experienced serious difficulties.

5.10. Publication of external examiner reports

Following consultation, the University has amended its External Examining policy and made it a requirement for Schools to summarise the key issues raised by their External Examiners, to list the actions to be taken in response to the reports, and to present these items to relevant Student Staff Consultative Committees. Students may request copies of any report from the Head of School. Students have been made aware of the change and of the availability of reports.

6. Update on areas of positive practice

We believed it might be helpful to provide an indicative update on the areas of positive practice identified in the ELIR Report. The University was delighted to receive commendation on these activities, but continues further to enhance its work in these areas.

6.1. Staff and student development

A significant new initiative in student development at the University is the launch of the Laidlaw Undergraduate Internship Programme in Research and Leadership. This is an exciting programme that aims to equip students with the skills and values to become leaders in their chosen occupations beyond University. Students accepted onto the programme design, pursue and report on a research question, supervised by an academic in their School during the summer vacation. In addition, they complete two bespoke Leadership training weekends designed by CAPOD. The summer project lasts from 8 to 10 weeks and students are paid a generous weekly stipend. All elements of the programme are compulsory including the Leadership weekends. The award is open to matriculated undergraduate students in their penultimate year of study. 50 places are available in 2016, the second year of the programme.

6.2. Identification and dissemination of good practice

We have continued our regular and successful Dissemination Event in October with the biggest attendance so far in November 2015. For the first time, School Student Presidents were also invited. Regular fora for dissemination of good practice continue, with a deliberate intention to bring together research and teaching discussions. In addition, in May 2016 we have introduced a new Good Practice Exchange, an informal drop-in event which will showcase and share some of the projects and initiatives recently funded by our Teaching Development Fund and Enhancement Theme.

6.3. Enhanced role of Proctor's Office

Responsibility for postgraduate research students has been absorbed into the remit of the Proctor's Office, with a refresh of the PGRC which has this year processed a large amount of outstanding business on behalf of postgraduate research students.

6.4. Positive approach to widening participation

Work continues under the heading of our widening participation agenda, with outreach activities, summer schools, open days and partnership schemes with local schools. As ever, students are involved in our initiatives and are an immense credit to the institution. CAPOD have formed a closer relationship with Admissions staff and over the last year have helped support various outreach and WP initiatives. Spring 2016 saw a highly successful visit to the USA by the first students on the new First Abroad programme (a scheme to encourage Study Abroad among students from disadvantaged backgrounds).

6.5. Proactive engagement and representation

CAPOD's Head of Student Development and the Students' Association Director of Representation trialled a flipped classroom approach to class rep training in 2015/16 and following successful feedback will continue to use this method of training where possible.

6.6. Graduate identity and co-curriculum

A review of the St Andrews Award and CAPOD's Professional Skills Curriculum (PSC) during 2015/16 has led to a decision to incorporate successful aspects of the St Andrews Award into the PSC, giving a single award that students can pursue. Participating student numbers have increased with a flurry of reflective essays (the final aspect of the PSC award) being submitted during April.

6.7. Integrated student advice and support

The University is proud of its reputation for close personal contact between staff and students, and the excellent advice and support offered by our academic as well as our professional colleagues. The Advice and Support Centre (ASC) is a first class example of an integrated approach to answering questions and dealing with problems. In the last 18 months, it has increased its scope and enhanced its service by including staff from Residential and Business Services in its operation.

However, students have recently raised questions about the process of Academic Advising, which it appears has become poorly understood. During 2016/17, therefore, the University plans to release the Pro Deans (Advising) from other duties in order for them to focus closely on the review, redesign and re-launch of Academic Advising for the following academic year. This will be supported by a new online Advising system delivered under the programme of Senate Efficiency Review (SER) projects.

6.8. Promotion of equality and diversity

The University is pursuing the Athena Swan Silver Award with Academic Schools going for either Bronze or Silver. Various events have been held during 2015/16 to discuss equality and diversity, including a lecture on women in technology delivered by Professor Maria Klawe. In February 2016, staff and students united for St Andrews's first ever Pride March. Who Cares? Scotland training has been undertaken by senior staff across the University.

6.9. Student mobility

The University is putting an even greater emphasis on study, work and internships abroad, in recognition of the benefits that students receive from these opportunities. New developments in the collaborative BA (International Honours) programme have been approved, preparing the way for Degrees in Classics and Film Studies as part of this programme from 2017/18.

7. Recent developments at the University (outwith the above)

- 7.1. A new Principal was appointed in early 2016. Professor Sally Mapstone will join the University on 1 September 2016 from the University of Oxford.
- 7.2. The three key themes stated in the University's RA (streamlining and reducing bureaucracy; shared responsibility for educational excellence; effective student transitions) continue to guide projects in the enhancement of Learning and Teaching: examples of progress are the Professional Services relocation programme of work; implementation of completed SER projects; and formation and dissolution of short-life working groups to improve policy and processes. Recent short-life working groups have completed projects on Honours entry, academic alerts and clarifications or updates to policy and senate regulations.

- 7.3. Recent postgraduate work includes a new policy on parental leave, tidying up of postgraduate regulations and the formation of a working group that has led a very thorough and successful review of our processes for progress review.
- 7.4. A new Careers Adviser role has been created to focus on jobs in Asia and the taught postgraduate market, following identification of a gap in this area.
- 7.5. Capital Planning has focussed on upgrading teaching space as well as a number of improvements in extra-curricular space, e.g. new sports facilities, support for Music and the professional services relocation project at Guardbridge.
- 7.6. Introduction of an Independent Learning Week in Semester 1 2016/17 to allow students to consolidate their learning before further assessment.
- 7.7. The University Strategy has been finalised (at the time of the ELIR visits it had not been published) and has been in place for some months. Open meetings for all staff were led in February by the Acting Principal, to allow an opportunity for further explanation and questions. Actions arising from the strategy are moving forward swiftly across the institution.

8. Conclusion

The University welcomed the considered comments of the review team included in the Outcome and Technical reports. We have drawn on the detailed information provided in the Technical Report to construct our action plan and to assess priorities in moving forward.

We found the ELIR process to be particularly helpful on this occasion as the review team provided ample opportunity to discuss enhancement and innovation, having satisfied themselves with quality assurance aspects of ELIR in the early days of the process. This was helped in part by the requirement for a structured Advance Information Set, an innovation to the process that we found very positive.

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