Quality Enhancement and Standards Review

University of the West of Scotland

Review Report

March 2023

Contents

Introduction

This is a report of a review under the [Quality Enhancement and Standards Review](#) (QESR) method conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) as part of Phase 1 of the Scottish Quality Enhancement arrangements at the University of the West of Scotland.

The review took place in March 2023 and was conducted by a review team, as follows:

- Ms Amy Gallacher (Student Reviewer)
- Mr Paul Probyn (Coordinating Reviewer)
- Professor Valerie Webster (Academic Reviewer).

QESR is Phase 1 of a two-phase approach that enables the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to fulfil its statutory obligation under Section 13 of the *Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005* to ensure that provision is made for assessing and enhancing the quality of fundable higher education provided by fundable bodies for academic quality and enhancement between 2022-24. The second phase of QAA's external quality review arrangements starts in 2024-25 to coincide with the implementation of new tertiary quality arrangements.

The main purpose of this review was to:

- provide assurance about the provider's management of its responsibilities for academic standards to inform an enhancement-led full institutional review in Phase 2
- provide assurance about the provider's management and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities for students to inform an enhancement-led full review in Phase 2
- report on any features of good practice
- make recommendations for action.

About the University of the West of Scotland

The University of the West of Scotland (the University; UWS) was formally established in 2007 following the merger of the University of Paisley and Bell College. UWS inherited a rich history from the institutions that preceded it, including the Paisley School of Arts, founded in 1836. UWS comprises five campuses - four situated in the west and south-west of Scotland: Ayr, Dumfries, Lanarkshire and Paisley; and one in London. The London campus was opened in 2015, and now accounts for around 19% of the University's total student numbers.

In 2022-23, UWS had a total student population of 20,367 (headcount) of whom: 58% were undergraduate (UG); 32% were postgraduate taught (PGT); and 3% were postgraduate research (PGR). Of these, 13% of students were part-time; 8% were studying by distance learning; and 2% were studying with overseas partners. 66% of students were classified as home/EU students; 4% were from the rest of the UK; and 30% were non-EU.

Findings

From the evidence presented, the review team is confident that the University of the West of Scotland is making effective progress in continuing to monitor, review and enhance its higher education provision to enable effective arrangements to be in place for managing academic

standards and the quality of the student learning experience.

Good practice

The QESR team found the following **features of good practice**:

- **Strategic approach to widening participation:** The University's strategic approach and ongoing commitment to widening participation is fully embedded across the University at all stages of the learner journey.

- **Institution-wide, student-centred approach to policy and strategy development:** Students are at the centre of university decision-making and stimulate institutional thinking and planning at all levels. The approach to partnership is particularly positive in supporting the student experience across academic and professional services.

- **Student support;** The University's new one-stop shop approach by the Student Success Hub (SSH) not only responds to student enquiries but also uses an appointment referral system for students requiring specialist support and targeted intervention to prevent long-term disengagement. The SSH helps deliver timely access to appropriate student support services across the institution including academic, financial and counselling services.

Recommendations for action

The QESR team makes the following **recommendations for action**:

- **Training for student representatives:** The University should work with its Students' Union to make certain that all student representatives complete training, reflecting on the barriers of current arrangements. This will help ensure that student representatives are well-equipped to fulfil their responsibilities on relevant committees at school, divisional and institutional levels, and to better represent students.

- **Training for staff and students who teach:** By the end of the 2023-24 academic session, the University should introduce a clear institution-wide policy that ensures that all staff and students must complete appropriate training before undertaking teaching and/or assessment responsibilities.

- **Implementation of change:** In developing and implementing strategic enhancement initiatives, the University should develop an effective approach to the strategic management of change. This will help ensure planned implementation of identified initiatives take into account the balance between its ambition and the resources available to deliver them, considering feasibility of timescales and interdependencies between initiatives to enable effective implementation.

- **Strengthen the use of data in quality processes:** In continuing to embed and strengthen the use of data in quality processes, the University should ensure that all staff contributing to enhancement and annual monitoring activities have been trained. This will help ensure they can confidently use information supplied from sources such as the UWS Dashboard, to fulfil the expectations associated with these university processes.

Institutional approach to quality enhancement

Strategic approach to enhancement

1   The QESR team is confident that UWS has clear, effective strategic leadership and established systems in place to support the enhancement of learning and teaching, and the student experience. The team met with staff and students from across the University and considered a wide range of documentation including; UWS Strategy 2025 (launched in 2020), Learning and Teaching Thematic Plan, Curriculum Framework and minutes of key university committees which have institutional oversight for learning and teaching, quality and standards, and the wider student experience.

2   To support the work of Strategy 2025, UWS launched the Student Experience Project in 2021 with a series of workstreams. The work is led by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Students with a whole-institution approach taken to delivery through the committee structure, cross-university working groups, schools and professional services. A student-centred approach was clearly articulated throughout the evidence submitted and by the staff and students the QESR team met. The three key areas of strategic focus for 2022-23 are: Student Experience, Digital Transformation and Organisational Effectiveness. The team considers the student-centred approach taken by the University to strategy development, delivery and student success to be examples of good practice.

3   UWS continues to invest in a core aspect of its mission to widen access with success. UWS has exceeded its target to maintain the proportion of students from SIMD20 postcodes above 25% as shown by the 2021-22 figure of 30.7%. In addition, the University continues to attract a significant number of students progressing into higher education from local colleges on articulation arrangements. To provide a smooth learner journey for these students, a partnership-based approach is taken with local colleges. An example is the new strategic partnership with New College Lanarkshire (NCL) which has established a university campus within the college.

4   The University has developed and implemented a new UWS Model of Supporting Student Success underpinned by the streamlining of professional services and academic support through the creation of the Student Success Hub (SSH) and staff team. The new institution-wide Student Experience Programme (SEP) supports and operationalises the UWS Learning and Teaching Thematic Plan. Staff and students who spoke with the team were very positive in relation to the new and emerging multi-channel communications being implemented by the University with the nature and subject of communications determining the channel used (see paragraph 24). The QESR team considered that the University's strategic approach and ongoing commitment to widening participation was fully embedded across the University and provides evidence of **good practice** at all stages of the learner journey; examples include well-established collaborative relationships with schools and colleges and the university campus within a college setting to aid transition, the Student Engagement Analytics Tool, and adapting the teaching timetable to support widening participation students.

5   The University has developed a new Curriculum Framework in consultation with staff, students, academic schools and discussed at the Education Advisory Committee (EAC) before being formally approved and full implementation is planned for session 2025-26. A Curriculum Incubator project has been initiated to support intensive and fast-tracked multi-stakeholder programmatic design such as the institution-wide Academic, Professional and Personal Development (APPD) curriculum which is in the early stages of implementation. While the introduction of the APPD curriculum was welcomed and clearly understood by some staff and students who met with the QESR team, others were less

clear. The University should, wherever possible, ensure enough time between development and implementation to secure clear understanding of the scope and intended impact of strategic initiatives.

6   The University is implementing an ambitious programme of initiatives to enhance the student experience, including the Student Experience Programme, the development of the Student Support Hub and Team, the Curriculum Framework and the ASPIRE curriculum, while reviewing and refreshing assessment processes and annual programme monitoring, and continuing its work in areas such as the anti-racist curriculum. The QESR team learned of a number of examples where projects had experienced slippage, or implementation had been more rapid than the current resources could support, including the ASPIRE curriculum implementation, the anti-racist curriculum progression and the review of assessment. The team **recommends** that in developing and implementing strategic enhancement initiatives, the University should develop an effective approach to the strategic management of change. This will help ensure planned implementation of identified initiatives take into account the balance between its ambition and the resources available to deliver them, considering feasibility of timescales and interdependencies between initiatives to enable effective implementation.

7   The University engages fully with the sector Enhancement Themes which has had a positive impact on policy development, student support and the wider student experience. The current Theme of Resilient Learning Communities has informed the development of the University's curriculum framework and continues to inform other areas of work including the review and development of the revised Student Support Model and micro-credentials framework.

8   The QESR team learned that an Enhancement Theme lead has been appointed to improve institutional engagement and dissemination. The University takes a strategic cross-institutional approach involving staff and students in the development of new initiatives. A combination of student-facing professional services, academic schools and the recently-launched ASPIRE Modules (a suite of three modules to be embedded in all programmes from September 2022) aim to develop students' skills in both on-campus and online learning. The ASPIRE curriculum is a key objective of the Learning and Teaching Thematic Plan and the University has proposed the development and implementation of a new Cross-School Board with representatives from schools and central services to ensure a consistent institutional approach. Early feedback and reflection is already shaping future implementation. Monitoring of delivery and student experience will continue as the curriculum is adopted.

9   The University aims to further deliver its ambition to build broader direct engagement in Enhancement Theme activities as the new Directorates of Learning and Teaching Enhancement and Student Success (formed in 2022) are embedded.

10   The focus on enhancing learning and teaching and student experience has been accompanied by significant investment in infrastructure and the environment. This includes the launch of the Digital Transformation Project which aims to transform systems, data and learning environment for students and staff, use of technology to support flexible learning models, the partnership with a digital learning platform provider, and investment in research infrastructure - such as the Institute of Clinical Exercise and Health Sciences.

11   The QESR team learned of the University's strategic commitment to research and research-informed teaching. UWS submitted 279 staff to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2021 compared to 120 staff which were submitted in the 2014 REF. The University has invested Research Excellence Funding, University Innovation Funds and PGR income to build sustainable growth with a focus on excellence. A review of research

groups planned for academic year 2022-23 aims to inform further investment in areas of existing and emerging research strength. Students commented very positively on the support available and the developing research community.

12   At the time of the current QESR, there was no UWS policy requirement for staff or students who teach to complete training before commencing teaching and/or assessment. The QESR team learned that UWS is launching an Academic Professional Development Framework which aims to strengthen academic leadership across the institution. The team **recommends** that by the end of the 2023-24 academic session, the University should introduce a clear, institution-wide policy that ensures that all staff and students must complete appropriate training (or demonstrate they have achieved recognition through other routes - for example, Advance HE recognition) before undertaking teaching and/or assessment responsibilities.

Student partnership

13   The QESR team is confident that UWS has effective arrangements in place to monitor, review and enhance its approach to student partnership. The team considered the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA), the Student Mental Health Agreement, the Students' Union Annual Report and Strategic Plan, Annual Outcome Agreement, the UWS Learning and Teaching Thematic Plan 2020-2025, UWS Quality Handbook, Module Experience Questionnaires (MEQ) and National Student Survey (NSS) data, minutes of relevant institutional committees, and met with staff and students.

14   The QESR team found the University has in place policies and procedures to support the engagement and representation of students. The overarching framework for student engagement is set out in the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) which details the shared priorities agreed between the student body, by their sabbatical team, and UWS for the next academic year. The SPA is updated annually by the SPA Working Group with input from sabbatical officers, student representatives, Students' Union (SU) staff and UWS staff. Implementation of the SPA is coordinated by the Student Partnership Forum which is embedded in existing UWS committee structures to ensure effective oversight, support and dissemination of information between both organisations. In meetings with the team, student representatives supported the strength of institutional partnership arrangements and confirmed that UWS staff are very receptive to student input on new initiatives. The team identified as **good practice**, the institution-wide, student-centred approach to policy and strategy development. Students are at the centre of university decision-making and stimulate institutional thinking and planning at all levels. The approach to partnership is particularly positive in supporting the student experience across academic and professional services.

15   UWS has a clear approach to engaging undergraduate and postgraduate students in the enhancement of learning and teaching across the institution. Student representation is explicit in the membership of School Boards, Divisional Programme Boards, relevant UWS committees, and in enhancement and annual monitoring activities. During the QESR visit, student representatives indicated that their contributions are valued by staff members on these committees.

16   The SU Strategic Plan and Annual Report identify increasing student engagement with formal student representation structures as a key priority for the organisation. The QESR team learned that increasing student representative training attendance is essential to addressing this, as the SU has identified strong links between completion of training and effectiveness when collecting and addressing student feedback with staff and through Student Staff Liaison Groups (SSLGs). Given the role of student feedback in informing annual monitoring activities and the development of new UWS initiatives, the team

recommends that the University should work with its Students' Union to make certain that all student representatives complete training, reflecting on the barriers of current arrangements. This will help ensure that student representatives are well-equipped to fulfil their responsibilities on relevant committees at school, divisional and institutional levels and to better represent students.

17   Efforts to grow student engagement with the Students' Union have been effective as student participation in elections (both as candidates and in terms of voting turnout) and Student Council attendance has steadily grown. Despite this, recent institutional survey results indicate that students are still not clear on how the SU represents their academic interests and how the feedback they provide is acted upon. The University is encouraged to support the SU in disseminating information during induction to ensure student familiarity with school, divisional and SU representative structures; ensure that the link between any feedback provided and subsequent response following SSLGs is evident across all campuses and modes of study; and that students recognise how existing partnership arrangements inform development of strategic initiatives impacting and enhancing the student experience.

18   UWS has well-established and effective student support services. Building on the ELIR 4 recommendations, UWS has created a new department - the Student Success Hub (SSH) - which acts as a single point of contact for all student support queries and uses both learner analytics and engagement data to identify emerging student support concerns which then inform targeted interventions, where the team directly reaches out to students and liaises with academic staff in Schools. The QESR team learned that the University has strengthened this approach further by implementing a new appointment referral system between student support services, enabling reserved appointment slots to be offered to students identified as at risk of disengaging due to (emerging in-year/specific) support requirements. The University's new one-stop-shop approach by the Student Success Hub (SSH) not only responds to student enquiries but also uses an appointment referral system for students requiring specialist support and targeted intervention to prevent long-term disengagement. The SSH helps deliver timely access to appropriate student support services across the institution including academic, financial and counselling services. The review team considers the University's recognition of student support services interdependencies and pre-emptive approach to ensure timely access to specialist support appointments, to be a **feature of good practice**. The University should continue to foster strong links between the new SSH service and academic staff, and to develop its plans to further use learner analytics and engagement data to identify the longer-term impact of disengagement on student progression, including across widening participation groups.

Action taken since ELIR 4

19   The QESR team is confident that the University has clear processes in place to monitor and review the actions taken and those planned in response to the 2019 ELIR 4 recommendations. The team considered a range of documentary evidence, such as the UWS ELIR 4 Action Plan, UWS Follow-Up Report, Senate and Education Advisory Committee (EAC) Minutes, London Campus Follow Up, and met with staff and students. EAC has delegated monitoring of plans to Academic Quality Committee (AQC) where ELIR progress is a standing item. AQC reports regularly to EAC and Senate. The University Court also endorsed the UWS ELIR 4 Follow-Up Report.

20   ELIR 4 identified four recommendations, all of which have been progressed but are also still part of the University's strategic planning with a number of actions being taken forward in 2022-23. At the time of the current QESR, many actions were still being developed or were just being implemented.

21   UWS has progressed with its plans to change the model for the London Campus. A strategic presentation to Senate in October 2021 outlined the refreshed model - new campus, new partner and a diversified higher education portfolio - to attract students. The Students' Union and University have invested further in the London Campus funding a part-time SU officer for London and 15 academic posts working across all four schools. London students who met with the QESR team spoke positively of their experience and the Student Success Hub (SSH).

22   The recommendation about consistency of student support has been integrated into the new Student Experience Programme (SEP). Use of evidence has driven decision-making and further actions - for example, a decline in student engagement during the pandemic led to the University creating a Student Success Team to provide proactive guidance and support. The Student Success Hub is a one-stop-shop model with clear referral links to other departments, such as finance, wellbeing and academic schools. This has been seen as a very positive change by staff and students, allowing individualised, targeted support to be provided to students regardless of location. The University has not yet finalised its revised approach to personal tutoring which will see Personal Tutors being replaced by ASPIRE advisers. At the time of the current QESR, UWS was running with a dual model where some students had an ASPIRE adviser while others had a personal tutor (see paragraph 6 and 8). UWS will undertake further scoping work during 2022-23 as part of a three-year APSIRE implementation plan.

23   The University acknowledges that progress on the review of student-facing professional services has been slower than intended. Initial scoping work was undertaken in 2021 but following the QAA Focus On Professional Services Partnership Event in April 2022, a plan was then prepared by AQC and considered by EAC in May 2022. The University intends taking this work forward in 2023-24, including detailed consultation with professional services staff. The QESR team encourages UWS to ensure timely progress is made with this recommendation by the end of the next academic year.

24   UWS began responding to the student communications recommendation in 2020 through a working group which included staff, students and the SU. A set of principles was developed and approved by EAC in February 2021, to create a Student Communications Strategy, toolkit and good practice guides. The QESR team learned that students considered communications had improved considerably since the introduction of a multi-channel approach. This approach had also positively influenced staff communication.

25   In reviewing the evidence and speaking with staff and students, the QESR team is confident that the six commendations identified in ELIR 4 continue to be clear, strategic foci of the University with evidence of ongoing enhancement activity.

Sector-wide enhancement topic[1]

26   The QESR team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to monitor and review its approach to defining and delivering an effective and inclusive digital/blended offering. The team considered the UWS paper on 'The future of learning and teaching: defining and delivering an effective and inclusive digital/blended offering', the University's Resilient Learning Communities plans and reports, minutes from key institutional committees, and met with staff and students.

27   The QESR team learned that UWS continues to invest in its Digital Transformation

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[1] SFC Guidance on Quality 2022-23 and 2023-24

Project which aims to transform university systems, data and the learning environment. Strategic investment has been made to further enhance digitally-enabled learning and teaching. Ongoing developments in learning analytics and student engagement dashboards aims to create an institution-wide digital 'ecosystem'.

28   When the rapid pivot to online learning, necessitated by the pandemic, identified that measuring student attendance was no longer applicable, the University quickly developed a student engagement analytics tool. This tool brought together data from multiple sources including data from the digital learning environment and modules presenting data in a way that staff could identify when and where student engagement was declining. A student success team charged with calling all students identified as 'at risk' was then created. The success of this approach led to the design and launch of the new Student Success Hub and Team.

29   Considering the diverse student population, the University aims to deliver a hybrid student experience where students have easy access to learning online and on-campus. Departments/programmes have been given flexibility to implement the hybrid student experience locally; however, the approach has impacted on UWS being able to easily assure itself that a comparable student experience is achieved across all programmes. UWS is currently developing institutional guidance to support staff developing their programmes within a UWS framework. A 'digital first' approach is shaping the design of learning, teaching and assessment. UWS has invested in a learning management system to support flexible and inclusive learning. In addition, learning design that embraces diversity is one of the principles of the new Curriculum Framework.

Academic standards and quality processes

Key features of the institution's approach to managing quality and setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards

30   The QESR team is confident that the UWS has effective arrangements for the monitoring and review of its approach to managing quality and to setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards. The team considered the University's Quality Handbook, including its procedural frameworks for Enhancement and Annual Monitoring (EAM) and Institution-led Review (ILR); EAM reports, including divisional, school and institutional overviews; ILR reports and follow-up reports, and associated institutional-level overviews; institution-level analyses of external examiner reports and student feedback; papers and minutes from institutional committees responsible for quality and standards; and met with staff and students. The evidence considered by the team demonstrated robust processes that are implemented diligently, with a particular focus on enhancing the student experience.

31   The University is proactive in reviewing and developing its processes with the aim of enhancing their effectiveness. The Quality Handbook is reviewed annually. Annual institutional analyses of programme approvals, EAM, ILRs and external examiner reports are used both to enhance learning and teaching, and to make improvements to the underlying processes.

32   The QESR team found that the University's arrangements for managing quality and setting standards meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and align with the guidance issued by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) (paragraphs 41-44). The Quality Code and the SFC Guidance are fundamental to the University's approach. Procedures are clear and comprehensive, and supported by institutional guidance that promotes a consistent approach across the institution. They apply

to all forms of credit-bearing provision, including collaborative arrangements and distance learning, while retaining elements of flexibility - for example, to meet the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).

33   The University's EAM process is programme focused. It requires programme teams to reflect on student engagement, progression and achievement, development of the student experience, successes and challenges, and to detail action taken in response to comments from external examiners. Programme leaders are also provided with data on programme health (applications, offers, entrants); student success (retention and progression); student satisfaction (MEQs, NSS and SES (Student Experience Survey) data); and graduate outcomes. In the 2022-23 annual monitoring cycle, the University integrated Programme Monitoring Reports (PMRs) with programme-level NSS action plans. The University is encouraged to pursue this approach, to promote more consistent and effective action planning at programme level.

34   PMRs are synthesised into Divisional Summary Reports which are considered at School level, either at the School Board or in a discrete event, forming the basis of School reports which identify SMART targets and good practice for consideration at an annual institution-level EAM event. The University's approach to EAM was under review at the time of the current QESR, with a view to introducing a refreshed process from 2023-24. The team encourages the University to use this review to ensure that the extensive data at its disposal is used fully in programme monitoring, and that the opportunities annual monitoring provides for the sharing of good practice institutionally are fully exploited (paragraph 49).

35   The Doctoral College, overseen by the Doctoral College Board, is responsible for development of the postgraduate research environment across the University. Its responsibilities include monitoring PGR progression and completion. Although some PGR programmes such as the DBA and Professional Doctorate undergo annual monitoring and ILR, the PGR programme overall is not subject to annual monitoring, and the Doctoral College is not subject to ILR. The Doctoral College Board reports to Senate via the Research and Enterprise Advisory Committee. In reviewing its approach to annual monitoring, the QESR team would encourage the University to ensure that it has effective institutional oversight of the overall success of the PGR programme and the activities of the Doctoral College and Board.

36   ILR is conducted by panels that include internal and external academic peers and student members, in accordance with SFC expectations. The University follows a two-stage ILR process, with the first stage identifying key areas of focus for deeper consideration in the review visit, which itself normally occupies two days. Students are involved throughout the process. ILR reports reviewed by the QESR team demonstrated a robust, enhancement-focused process featuring clear recommendations for improvement, while the one-year follow-up reports illustrated effective action planning and reporting.

37   An analysis of the outcomes of the full set of ILRs, including institutional recommendations and identified actions, is considered annually by Academic Quality Committee, Education Advisory Committee and at the Institutional EAM Event. The QESR team learned that ILR processes were to be reviewed in 2022-23 with a view to identifying lessons learned from reviews conducted online during the pandemic and developing best practice for the future.

38   Assessment policies and regulations are kept under continuous review by EAC and by the Regulations Committee, which reports to it. At the time of the current QESR, the assessment handbook, procedure and associated guidance were to be reviewed as part of the Student Experience Programme, while the EAC had initiated a 'root and branch' review of assessment regulations, with a specific focus on progression requirements. A redesign of

the assessment regime in each module, to develop and adopt effective digital and authentic assessment and feedback systems, had been an intended element of the introduction of the AULA learning management system, but had not taken place and an alternative plan to achieve this had still to be devised. The University is encouraged to ensure there is clear oversight and coordination of these various processes, to ensure assessment processes remain coherent and robust.

39   External examiners are required to comment on alignment with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and comparability with provision at other higher education institutions. External examiner reports considered by the team were positive about the University's management of assessment, but have commented on the consistency of marking criteria and rubrics, and moderation processes. The QESR team encourages the University to assure itself that requirements in these areas are clear and understood by staff and external examiners.

40   Collaborative programmes are subject to equivalent quality processes to standard on-campus provision and follow the same regulations. For franchised provision, a Collaborative Annual Report (CAR) feeds into the Programme Monitoring Report, while for validated provision, a Programme Annual Report feeds into the Joint Programme Panel. Franchised programmes are also subject to ILR, while validated provision is considered through regular Collaborative Reviews. At the time of the last ELIR, the University stated its intention to consolidate its range of partnerships, and discontinue validation arrangements in favour of franchising. The QESR team noted that UWS was continuing to progress towards these goals.

Use of external reference points in quality processes

41   The QESR team is confident that UWS has effective arrangements in place to monitor and review its approach to the use of external reference points in quality processes. The team considered the mapping of the quality processes against the Quality Code, minutes from key institutional committees, and met with staff and students.

42   The QESR team found that the University makes effective use of external reference points in the management of academic standards through implementation in regulations, policies and procedures. The UWS Quality Handbook explicitly states how institutional practices, policies and frameworks meet sector expectations and are aligned to the Quality Code (paragraph 30). The team saw evidence of annual monitoring processes being reviewed in relation to the advice and guidance sections of the Quality Code and that mapping is kept under review to reflect progress on active projects.

43   UWS integrates the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF), the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and Subject Benchmark Statements in its procedures and approach to EAM. UWS makes appropriate use of external expertise in the development of new, and significant amendments to existing, modules and programmes through consultation with external experts. Reports from Institution-led Reviews reflect the use of external reference points and engagement with external expertise. UWS facilitates student engagement in quality and enhancement processes both directly, as members of ILR teams and through review visit student meetings, and indirectly through consideration of MEQ, NSS, UWS SES data and minutes from SSLGs.

44   The AQC and School Boards provide institutional oversight through annual analysis of programme approval, external examiner, ILR and PSRB reports, reporting recommendations to EAC and Senate where matters arise. When developing ILR and PMR self-evaluation documentation, programme teams are instructed to reflect on survey data,

SSLG minutes, external examiner reports and, where external requirements exist, reflect on outcomes from recent PSRB and accreditation reports. This ensures that external reference points are well-embedded in EAM processes and that existing programmes remain compliant with external requirements.

Use of data and evidence to inform self-evaluation and decision-making

45   The QESR team is confident that UWS has effective arrangements in place to monitor and review its approach to the use of data and evidence to inform self-evaluation and decision-making. The team considered the University's Annual Reports to SFC, institutional analysis of data on retention and progression, degree outcomes, complaints and appeals, use of data in annual monitoring processes, engagement with learner analytics to enhance student support offerings, and feedback from students and external examiners.

46   Institutional committees overseeing management of quality and standards - primarily, Senate and its standing committee, the Education Advisory Committee (EAC) and sub-committee, the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) - engage with data through consideration of annual monitoring outcome reports to inform amendments of UWS academic policies and regulations; and when reflecting on the impact of institutional strategies through consideration of league table performance and NSS results. The QESR team reviewed recent NSS, SES and retention trend analysis provided to Senate and confirm that the data was utilised to inform discussion and support reflection around the effectiveness of institutional enhancement and annual monitoring arrangements.

47   UWS engages with reports from the Senate Disciplinary Committee to provide oversight of complaints and appeals, and to identify barriers to good academic practice. This has resulted in the Academic Integrity Working Group proposing policy revisions to better support student and staff understanding of academic integrity and ensure alignment with the QAA Academic Integrity Charter.

48   The University undertakes appropriate consideration of institution-wide student feedback, in particular the NSS and the UWS SES, the analysis of which is used to identify institutional, campus-specific and School-specific trends in student satisfaction, which are then reported to EAC and Senate. Programme leaders are required to develop Programme Action Plans to address NSS student satisfaction feedback, the implementation of which is then monitored and reported through Divisional Programme and School Boards. The QESR team reviewed analysis of the most recent NSS survey results and confirmed that staff appropriately engage with data through consideration and identification of question and category performance trends across academic years; comparison against UWS programme averages; and usage of qualitative student comments to contextualise data and inform action planning.

49   A range of data is available through the UWS Dashboard for consideration in the University's key quality processes, primarily ILR and EAM. It was evident from the ILR reports and PMRs considered that Schools were able to access a range of data to support their self-evaluation. However, the QESR team learned that Schools recently raised data confidence concerns due to the accessibility of data available through the UWS Dashboard. Staff explained that the abundance of data and filtering options available can make engaging with data challenging. The team learned that UWS plans to deliver 'fixed core data sets', through the UWS Dashboard, for staff to consider when completing self-evaluation and to facilitate discussion between Schools. Given staff analysis and interpretation of data underpins enhancement and annual monitoring activities, the team **recommends** that the University should ensure that all staff contributing to enhancement and annual monitoring

activities have been trained. This will help ensure they can confidently use information supplied from sources such as the UWS Dashboard, to fulfil the expectations associated with these university processes.

50   Learner analytics, engagement data and student feedback, collected and analysed by the Student Support Hub, strengthens existing EAM arrangements as it supports the identification of trends resulting in non-retention and provides new opportunities to test the impact of UWS student support services. The team learned that the SSH intends to further develop its use of learner analytics and engagement data to strengthen staff understanding and support arrangements within Schools by highlighting the impact of the longer-term disengagement by students on progression and degree outcomes.