



# Quality Enhancement and Standards Review

Edinburgh Napier University

Review Report  
December 2023

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## 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 Edinburgh Napier University.

The review took place on 7 December 2023 and was conducted by a review team, as follows:

- Jeremy Bradshaw (Academic Reviewer)
- Liam Brady (Student Reviewer)
- Rhiannon Tinsley (Coordinating 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 Edinburgh Napier University

Edinburgh Napier University (the University) states that it is committed to: widening access to higher education; delivering graduates that are highly valued by employers; and building a research base that contributes to policy, business and innovation growth. The University's provision has an applied and professional focus that builds on strong links with the communities in which it operates.

The current academic structure was introduced in 2022-23 following the merger of two existing Schools and comprises The Business School (TBS); School of Arts & Creative Industries (SACI); School of Applied Sciences (SAS); School of Computing, Engineering & the Built Environment (SCEBE); and the School of Health & Social Care (SHSC).

In 2022-23, the University has a total student population of around 21,177 (headcount) studying at one of the University's three campuses in Edinburgh, online or through a transnational education partnership. The student population is split as follows: 13,988 undergraduates; 6,886 postgraduate taught; 303 postgraduate research. Of the 2022-23 student population, 6,142 were studying part-time and 2,826 were studying at the University's collaborative partners.

## Findings

From the evidence presented, the review team is confident that Edinburgh Napier University 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**.

- **The integration of the Enhance Curriculum Framework and Curriculum Management Environment:** The Curriculum Development Framework (ENhance) and the Curriculum Management Environment have an extensive reach and impact at all levels across the University, together with the evidence of the extent to which they are embedded in the University's processes to enhance the student experience (paragraphs 4-9).
- **The approach to student engagement/partnership:** This includes the use of Learning and Teaching Consultants and Student Quality Panel Members to ensure the student voice in decision-making processes; and the appointment of a new Head of Student Engagement and an Institutional Researcher for Learning and Teaching to strengthen the partnership between the student body and the University (paragraph 12).
- **Support for mental health:** The University's well-rounded, holistic approach to mental health support including investment in support services by increasing staffing, the increased support offered to students and staff, increased visibility, as well as working in partnership with Edinburgh Napier Students' Association to strengthen awareness of these services (paragraph 14).

## Recommendations for action

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

- **Postgraduate research students:** The University should make progress on and accelerate its actions in response to the ELIR 4 recommendations to develop an institutional approach to reviewing postgraduate research programmes and the wider student experience, ensuring that arrangements are in place for the next academic year. In addition, the University should put interim arrangements in place to capture the broader postgraduate research experience for existing students (paragraphs 20-21).

# Institutional approach to quality enhancement

## Strategic approach to enhancement

1 The QESR team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to monitor, review and enhance its strategic approach to enhancement. The team considered a range of documents including the Learning and Teaching Strategy, a description of the oversight arrangements for the Learning and Teaching Strategy, Outcome Agreement report to SFC, and minutes from meetings of key institutional committees with responsibilities for quality and academic standards, learning and teaching and the wider student experience. In addition, the team met with staff and students.

2 The University has effective and established systems in place to promote the strategic enhancement of learning and teaching, including a Learning and Teaching Strategy that links explicitly to the institutional strategy, focusing on the student experience, the quality of the curriculum, the University's academic signature, and its impact. The Strategy document includes detailed enabling objectives and a monitoring and evaluation scheme with targets and timelines. There are quarterly updates to the Education and Student Experience Committee, with reporting lines to other committees, including School Education and Student Experience Committees. Some strands of the Strategy have had their own project teams and reporting structure - for example, the Curriculum Enhancement Framework and the Curriculum Management Environment. Academic Board and Court monitor the key performance indicators. The most recent update report presents progress with the eight enabling objectives with each 'achieved to a significant degree'.

3 The QESR team heard that the University, through its core and underpinning strategies, aspires to enhance its reputation as an accessible, inclusive, student-centred, and applied university. It recognises that supporting student achievement requires an integrated approach internally between academic schools and professional services, and externally with various stakeholders. Furthermore, the University recognises the need to develop further high-quality taught provision that provides graduates and employers with the right skills for employment.

4 Central to the Learning and Teaching Strategy is the new Curriculum Enhancement Framework, called ENhance. The ENhance framework requires programme teams to review curricula to meet the four ENhance principles that support curriculum design. The principles are in alignment with the Employability Strategy and Student Futures - a multidisciplinary service to support professional development and prepare students for the workplace. Achievement of the ENhance principles is recorded within the Curriculum Management Environment which allows the University to report on progress against the strategic key performance indicators and provides greater transparency across the University.

5 The QESR team heard that the ENhance project has evolved since its introduction in 2021 and is now embedded into quality and standards processes. For example, Institution-led Review (ILRs) and mid-cycle review provide mechanisms for reviewing and making decisions on the extent to which ENhance principles are embedded in the curriculum.

6 Academic staff who met the QESR team were able to provide examples of ways in which University Strategy and the ENhance project had positively impacted on their teaching. Most programmes subjected to ILR in 2022-23 achieved the ENhance threshold for incorporating employability into the curriculum. For example, in the Business School the ENhance principles are shaping programmes, curricula, module outcomes, and assessment in response to industry feedback and needs. In the creative industries, the team heard of a focus on employability in module outcomes and wider activities. ENhance principles are

being embedded into the ethos of the Schools through the creation of School Academic Lead (Curriculum Development) roles. Reporting to the School Heads of Learning and Teaching, these roles provide expertise in curriculum transformation together with dedicated time and resource to facilitate ENhance activity within the Schools.

7 The launch of a new Curriculum Management Environment in 2022-23 is intended to provide a single authoritative source of data to support the deliverables described in the Learning and Teaching Strategy. To date, four ILRs have been conducted using data outputs from the Curriculum Management Environment. The QESR team heard from academic staff that the Curriculum Management Environment was bringing improved accuracy and accessibility of academic data, and simplifying the process of mapping courses and programmes to learning outcomes. An example from Engineering was the use of the Curriculum Management Environment to map professional, statutory and regulatory body requirements to learning outcomes.

8 Each School has an annual plan that sets out departmental strategies, actions and objectives which are aligned to the University Strategy. The Annual University and School Plans, available on the university website, demonstrate close alignment and show that the Schools have adopted the Learning and Teaching Strategy and have embedded it in their planning processes.

9 Together, the Curriculum Enhancement Framework (ENhance) and the Curriculum Management Environment are considered by the QESR team to be a feature of **good practice** with their extensive reach and impact at all levels across the University, together with the evidence of the extent to which they are embedded in the University's processes to enhance the student experience.

## Student partnership

10 The QESR team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to monitor, review and enhance its approach to student partnership. The team considered the University's Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) and progress report; key strategic documents - including the Learning and Teaching Strategy, SFC Annual Report and Outcome Agreement; and committee meeting minutes; as well as meeting with staff and students.

11 From meeting with staff and students and the evidence provided, it was apparent to the QESR team that there is a positive working relationship between the University and Edinburgh Napier Students' Association (ENSA). The SPA, which combines long-term goals with yearly objectives, closely links the two organisations together through a jointly agreed set of principles and the strategic objectives. The collaborative approach to enhancing the student experience is evident through the University and Student Association Forum (USAF), as well as student representation across different committees and working groups. The student experience is at the forefront of the work of the University and is highlighted as a key area in the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

12 The QESR team heard from students and staff about the scale of the work being done to improve the student experience. The student partnership agreement has been revised and a new Student Voice webpage has been created on the student intranet - MyNapier - to promote voluntary extra-curricular opportunities for students to engage in quality processes. The University has invested in this area by deploying students in a range of remunerated positions such as Learning and Teaching Consultants and Student Quality Panel Members to ensure the student voice is included in decision-making processes. These key roles are supported by the new Head of Student Engagement and the introduction of changes to the recruitment, training and support for all students undertaking a representative role, including

school and institutional-level committees, approval boards and institution-led reviews. Furthermore, the University has also appointed an Institutional Researcher for Learning and Teaching to strengthen institutional understanding of the student experience and to evaluate its approach to student engagement through evidence-based developments in this area. Work has also been conducted by ENSA to boost engagement among the student body with the number of student representatives increasing across the University. This increase in numbers has been supported by additional training for students as well as buy-in from key stakeholders such as School leadership, the Department of Learning and Teaching Enhancement (DLTE), and ENSA. The QESR team considered the approach to student engagement/partnership as a feature of **good practice** by the QESR team.

13 There is evidence of responsiveness to student feedback through various committees and working groups and from different student groups (ENSA representatives and DLTE student interns). One example of this is through the Blended Learning Working Group which makes use of student feedback through both ENSA representatives and DLTE student interns to develop a blended learning taxonomy and a set of principles for blended learning that are student-centred. However, the QESR team noted some variations in student engagement, such as the election of student representatives. In response, as indicated above, the University is aware and acting on this variation by investing in paid student positions as well as staff members to support these roles.

14 Recognising the increased demand for support, the University has invested in support services by increasing staffing, offering and visibility, as well as working in partnership with ENSA to strengthen awareness of these services. In meetings with the QESR team, students noted their positive experiences of pastoral support provided by the University. This included the Personal Development Tutor (PDT) role who reached out to students, and those studying on alternative pathways - such as Graduate Apprenticeships and transnational education - noted how they felt supported by the University and knew where to turn for help. Meetings with staff raised the work going on to improve mental health support including a Harm Reduction Short Life Working Group, Suicide Safer Steering Group, as well as the provision of staff development including mental health first aid for those who are frontline with students such as library staff. The University is taking a holistic approach to support student mental health and wellbeing by not just investing in a reactive manner to support those currently struggling with mental health issues, but by taking a more compassionate and inclusive approach to curriculum design by aiming to avoid assessment pinch points which may exacerbate mental health issues. Staff also mentioned a collaborative approach to utilising data to identify students at risk of withdrawal early on as way of supporting those who most need it (see paragraph 47). The QESR team considered the University's well-rounded approach to mental health support as a feature of **good practice** by the QESR team.

## Action taken since ELIR 4

15 The QESR team is confident that the University has effective arrangements in place to monitor and review its actions taken in response to the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR 4). The team considered the ELIR 4 Follow-up report, and minutes from key institutional committees, and met with staff and students. ELIR 4 identified eight areas for development. The QESR team saw from the follow-up report that the University had made significant progress in addressing all but one of the areas.

16 As described in the Student Partnership section of this report, since ELIR 4, the structures for student representation have been strengthened and reviewed to include representation for all modes of delivery, supporting the election of and training of student representatives (see paragraph 12).

17 The ELIR 4 team asked the University to establish a systematic and timely mechanism for reviewing support for students including those studying off campus. A thematic review of professional service support for students who study off campus identified examples of good practice in support for students studying online and highlighted some areas for enhancement - including ensuring that inclusive language was used in university-wide communications to recognise that not all students study on campus or have access to physical campus facilities, and to ensure that the support available for students who study online was explicitly stated. The subsequent arrival of the Covid pandemic meant that several of the recommendations of the review of student support were superseded by developments in university-wide practice in response to the pandemic.

18 The QESR team found that the postgraduate research culture has been enhanced by the establishment of a structured and longitudinal approach to researcher development. Postgraduate research students reported they have research development checkpoints every six months, which include a review of progress with training and any further requirements. Development opportunities are published at the start of each of six-month cycle. While many are geared to first-year students, there are others for later stage students.

19 In response to the recommendation about training for postgraduates that teach, a new mandatory course for students who teach has been introduced. At the time of the review, the course was in its third iteration. An associated student-led Microsoft Teams Space is currently being evaluated. Students and supervisors confirmed that the two-module mandatory training course is required before teaching. Completion of the modules is checked by the supervisor before teaching can start.

20 Changes to the ILR process for taught provision have been introduced as part of an annual review of the effectiveness of the Quality Framework by the Quality and Standards Committee. The procedure now includes a formal follow-up meeting a year after the review to ensure that progress continues to be made in addressing the recommendations and taking forward the commendations. A project is currently underway to review the ILR groupings to even out reviews within and across Schools. However, in terms of ensuring that the review of postgraduate study considers more fully the wider student learning experience beyond student progression and incorporates externality, there is no systematic ILR, or equivalent, process for postgraduate research programmes and practice varies across the University. The creation of a Doctoral College has been proposed by the University, recognising a need to provide a structured approach to support postgraduate research development. Once established, the QESR team was told that the Doctoral College will look at how best to evaluate the quality and standards of doctoral programmes.

21 The QESR team considered that there has been limited progress to develop an approach to institution-led review that includes reviewing postgraduate research programmes and the wider student experience. In light of this, the QESR team **recommends** that the University makes progress on and accelerates its actions in response to the ELIR 4 recommendations to ensure that arrangements are in place for the next academic year. In addition, the University should put interim arrangements in place to capture the postgraduate research experience for existing students.

22 The Quality Framework has been amended for 2023-24 to strengthen an integrated approach to professional services review within the existing annual monitoring and review and ILR approaches. There was a thematic review of global online support services in 2020 (see paragraph 17) and a summary report on professional services contribution to the quality of the student experience was presented to the Quality and Standards Committee in September 2023. Professional service requirements are now formally incorporated into ILRs.

23 One of the recommendations from ELIR 4 was to make external examiners' reports

accessible to all students. While the reports of external examiners are now available to students, there was limited awareness of the reports or the role of external examiners among students met by the QESR team. The team encourages the University to explore how this situation could be improved through its partnership with ENSA.

24 A thematic review of the English language entry criteria and proficiency of students on all transnational education (TNE) programmes was undertaken in 2020 and reported to the Quality and Standards Committee. Subsequent recommendations to ensure future student intakes have adequate language proficiency on entry, and to provide language support for existing students were taken forward by the Collaborative Provision Committee. Consistency has been established in the use of equivalencies of English language tests and IELTS. There is a requirement from the University to determine whether local tests are appropriate, by working with the English for Academic Purposes team.

## **Sector-wide enhancement topic**

25 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 QESR team considered the University's Enhancement Topic summary, the Digital Support Partnership report, the Blended Learning Short-Life Working Group report, and the Learning and Teaching Strategy as priority documents which consider this topic. The QESR team also met with staff and students.

26 Developing digital literacy is a clear priority for the University, with one of the principles of their ENhance programme being dedicated to this, as well as a commitment in the Learning and Teaching Strategy to 'build on digital education'. The ILR process since the pandemic has also been updated to include explicit consideration of the student experience of online teaching and learning.

27 The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the University in terms of realising its Learning and Learning Strategy but, following resumption of more normal activities in spring 2022, the University has started to apply what it learnt from the pandemic into its teaching practice, particularly from the Digital Support Partnership Project. The positive impact of this project, and the wider enhancement topic, is evidenced through resources for developing a student-centred online curriculum, clear expectations and guidance for staff, supported transitions into online delivery, shared practice forums, and better student engagement and experience.

28 The Blended Learning Short-Life Working Group is an example of supporting digital learning within Schools and working towards a university-wide set of underpinning principles for teaching staff to use when designing blended learning and teaching. Other outputs from the working group include a blended learning taxonomy for the University, a suite of resources, and development events for staff on blended learning. The first two of these outputs are housed on a Blended Learning website, and the resources and development events sit with the Learning Technology Team and the Department of Learning and Teaching Enhancement (DLTE). From meeting with staff, the QESR team considers that there is a robust set of training and workshops provided to upskill in this area, as well as forming communities of practice and sharing learning. The QESR team learnt that external examiners have also highlighted the approach to blended learning and accessibility as being positive with the use of a variety and range of learning and teaching methods.

29 While the QESR team found some examples of digital inequality for staff and students, it was clear from meetings with staff and students that the University is aware of this and actively working to improve parity of access to resources. When meeting with the QESR team, students noted good access to computer labs and IT resources, including laptop

loans, as well as online learning materials that were presented in an accessible manner. Staff highlighted the provision of IT resources, especially with respect to supporting the high numbers of non-traditional students enrolled.

## **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 University has effective arrangements for managing quality and setting, maintaining, reviewing and assessing academic standards. The team considered the University's Quality Framework and Academic Regulations, Institution-led Review reports; annual monitoring reports including module, programme and school-level reports; student feedback; papers and minutes from institutional committees; and met with staff and students.

31 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). Policies and procedures are monitored by the Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC) and reviewed annually. Policies relating to curriculum development and approval are aligned to the Quality Code, and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements, and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The University's Quality Framework provides advice and guidance on quality processes and the application of the University's academic regulations, and is subject to an annual review of effectiveness.

32 The QESR team considered that the Quality Framework provides detailed and comprehensive guidance on quality processes and is accessible to staff and students. In discussions with the QESR team, staff demonstrated an understanding of the key processes within the Quality Framework, and confirmed they were able to access information on the DLTE website and receive updates via School Academic Leads for Quality.

33 The remit of the Quality and Standards Committee (QSC), reporting to ESEC, is to oversee the quality and standard of all taught awards and credit-bearing provision through monitoring and maintaining academic regulations, and a coherent framework of internal quality assurance and enhancement procedures which take account of and meet external expectations. From the minutes available, it was evident that the Committee has appropriate oversight, and operates in accordance with its remit. This includes consideration of reports on Institution-led Review (ILR), school-level reports on accreditation and approvals, annual monitoring and external examiner activity, as well as reports from working groups.

34 The ILR process operates at the level of a programme or suite of cognate programmes, including all modes and locations of delivery, and leads to reapproval of the programme(s). It is effective in identifying both good practice and areas of challenge, as demonstrated through School annual reports and oversight by QSC. From 2022-23, the ILR process has included threshold decisions with respect to engagement with the ENhance curriculum framework. Discussions with staff confirmed that ILR is an efficient and effective mechanism for evidence-based decision-making in embedding the ENhance principles.

35 The University has explored different approaches to Professional Services Review (PSR) and decided to continue with an integrated approach, whereby the contribution of professional services is more explicitly discussed within annual monitoring and ILR processes. The Quality Framework was amended in 2022-23 to underpin this approach. QSC received a summary report on professional services' contribution to the quality of the student learning environment, based on ILRs in 2022-23, which highlighted strengths and

areas for development, cross-referenced with student survey outcomes. The QESR team considered this integrated approach to PSR to be proportionate and effective, and in line with current sector requirements.

36 Based on the evidence available, the QESR team is confident that the University is managing its arrangements for assessment and feedback effectively. The University keeps central oversight of external examiner reports through scrutiny by the Quality and Standards team, which provides an institutional summary report to QSC. External examiners were positive overall about the University's management of assessment and academic standards but raised some issues around consistency of feedback across modules, limited information on moderation processes, and variations in student performance across different modes/locations of delivery. The QESR team saw evidence in committee minutes of the University's effective engagement with the issues raised by external examiners and the establishment of working groups to explore issues in more depth (see also paragraph 43).

37 The University's approach to the management of quality and standards is the same for all programmes, irrespective of delivery mode or location. The QESR team saw evidence that all programme modes and locations of delivery are included within ILR reports and follow up, and annual monitoring reports. The University's Quality Framework expectations around externality in assessment processes are also embedded within all collaborative provision, as are student engagement and representation processes and structures.

38 The Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC) has oversight of all matters relating to collaborative provision, on behalf of ESEC and the Academic Board, and ensures that all proposals to deliver in partnership with another organisation are approved in accordance with the procedure set out in the Quality Framework. Collaborative programmes are scrutinised 15-18 months after the first cohort enrolment by a review panel independent of the parent School. However, no new collaborative programmes had commenced since early 2021 due to pandemic disruption, so no First Year Reviews had been undertaken.

39 The University's QSC had noted, in its analysis of good honours degrees in academic year 2020-21, that TNE students performed poorly in comparison with home students. Staff indicated they were aware of this attainment gap and identified a range of potential contributing factors. They were taking steps to address lower performance by offering TNE students extra support and more learning resources, and more applied forms of assessment. In addition, DLTE had created a staff development module for TNE partner staff. The QESR team considers that the University should continue in its efforts to take steps to close the attainment gap for TNE students and evaluate the effectiveness of the extra support offered to TNE students and staff.

## **Use of external reference points in quality processes**

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

41 The QESR team considered that the University makes effective use of external reference points in the management of academic standards through the implementation of its regulations, policies and procedures, as detailed in the Quality Code mapping document. This is a comprehensive document and is reviewed and updated annually. In addition to mapping university policies and practice to the Quality Code, the mapping document presents a reflective process that discusses the overall approach to meeting the expectation of the Quality Code, relevant ongoing enhancement activity, and consideration of the guiding principles in the advice and guidance in support of the Code. Each section has an

enhancement paragraph, which changes every year to refresh it and improve engagement among staff.

42 The University encourages industry and expert guest contributions to learning and teaching activity to enhance the student experience and play a role in preparing students for working life. The Quality Code mapping document emphasises the importance of externality through external examiners that go to Programme Assessment Boards, and the input of other external stakeholders to course design and development. The use of Employer and Industrial Liaison Panels is encouraged to support Schools in ensuring programmes meet standards and expectations and deliver high-quality graduates. While some disciplines, such as health and social care and engineering, already have close links with industry, the inclusion of industry or professional experts in ILR panels is not yet uniform practice. The QESR team encourages the University to increase the number of Employer and Industrial Liaison Panels across all disciplines.

43 The external examiner role provides important feedback and is a source of evidence to improve ongoing monitoring and review activity. A university-wide External Examiner Report Template promotes a consistent approach to gathering feedback. A short-life working group was established to review and reflect upon the external examiner life cycle, including reference to the External Examining Principles from QAA. It was expected to report to the Quality and Standards Committee in April 2023. However, the working group changed into an ongoing sub-group of the Quality and Standards Committee. The QESR team understands that this sub-group is yet to report its findings and academic staff were unable to describe any recent changes in external examiner practice. In terms of other external reference points, all credit-bearing provision at the University must be assigned an appropriate SCQF level; further, university regulations are informed by the Scottish National Frameworks for Qualifications. The Student Partnership Agreement aligns to the Core and Common practices and good practice described within the Quality Code and QAA's Quality Enhancement Framework, of which student engagement is a key pillar.

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

44 The QESR team is confident that the University 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 QESR team considered Institution-led Review (ILR) and annual monitoring reports, as well as evidence of use of data across committee meetings, and they met with staff and students.

45 Commended in ELIR 4 for its growing capacity to provide data to staff in an accessible format, the University has built upon and enhanced this work including embedding an institutional dashboard system into the annual monitoring process. The impact of this is evident with annual monitoring reports from 2019 showing fewer concerns regarding the availability and nature of data presented. However, the QESR team found some evidence that the extent to which the data resources are used and accessible by staff across the University is mixed, with one ILR report noting staff struggling with the systems in place.

46 Various sources of data including retention, progression, attainment and student satisfaction are used in the ILR process to ensure an evidence-informed approach to self-evaluation. However, with respect to data on attainment, there are poorer outcomes for those enrolled on TNE provision (45% TNE compared to 87.4% UK-delivered). Meetings with staff confirmed there is an awareness at the University that this is an area that needs to be addressed and work on it is in the early stages (see also paragraph 39).

47 The Contextual Admissions policy also uses data to support offers to applicants from

underprivileged and non-standard backgrounds. However, the QESR team heard that there have been some delays in implementation of the policy because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The team heard that the admissions process considers adjustments made at schools through teacher assessed grades and this has had an impact on the quality of the data needed for reviewing the policy. In another area, data are being used by the Student Success Group which was created to align the institutions' oversight of data, actions and impact. This group is looking at trends in the data on student withdrawal and working with Learning and Teaching staff to identify students at risk of withdrawal so that more proactive support can be provided.

48 The QESR team saw evidence of committees and working groups - including the Academic Board and Quality and Standards Committee - using data to support the University's reflective and evaluative approach. It was clear to the team, based on the evidence, that the use of data informs practice. Moreover, the student voice is key to this with the work of the Digital Support Partnership Project, for example, being informed by student survey data and student focus groups.

**QAA2817 - R13443 - Feb 2024**

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