# Application for Taught Degree Awarding Powers

Scotland's Rural College

Scrutiny team report

June 2023

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# About this report

This report reflects the findings of a team appointed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to conduct a detailed scrutiny of an application from Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) for the power to award taught degrees.

The application was considered under criteria approved by Government in 1999. In advising on applications, QAA is guided by the relevant criteria and the associated evidence requirements. QAA's work in this area is overseen by its Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP), a subcommittee of the QAA Board.

ACDAP's initial consideration of applications establishes whether an applicant has made a case to proceed to detailed scrutiny of the application and the evidence on which it is based. If satisfied on this matter, ACDAP agrees that a team may be appointed to conduct the scrutiny and prepare a report, enabling ACDAP to determine the nature of the recommendation it will make to the QAA Board.

Scrutiny teams produce reports following each of the engagements undertaken. The final report reflects the team's findings and is structured around the criteria contained in the 1999 TDAP criteria,[1] namely:

- governance and management
- quality assurance
- administrative systems
- academic staffing.

Subject to the approval of the Board, QAA's advice is communicated to the appropriate minister. This advice is provided in confidence. The minister determines whether it should be disclosed to the applicant. A final decision on an application, and the notification of that decision, is a matter for the Privy Council.

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[1] www.qaa.ac.uk//en/reviewing-higher-education/degree-awarding-powers-and-university-title/guidance-and-criteria/applicants-in-scotland

# Executive summary

## Governance and management

SRUC's governance, management, financial control and quality assurance arrangements are sufficient to manage existing operations and respond to development and change. The governing body is fully engaged and is both supportive but also critical when it needs to be. The strength of governance and management provides the necessary balance in oversight of the tertiary portfolio, estate and consultancy activities and has enabled the binding of a complex institution into a single and focused entity. There is a clear vision for the future which staff and students can recognise and to which they can contribute. The Students' Association, SRUCSA, enables the student voice to be heard at the highest levels of governance and management.

The mission, strategic plan and transformation programme are very strong drivers. The overall framework for academic and resource planning works well to identify resource needs and to match these with the overall mission. Governors and senior managers work effectively to set priorities in the face of financial and resource pressures. Financial controls are in place and operate effectively.

The Executive Leadership Team provides effective leadership of change and maintains an overview of all activity. It is strong in innovation, and in consulting and decision-making on aspects of change. The Academic Leadership structure is working well to achieve its aim for collective ownership of the institution at a time of change. Communication between groups and committees is good and they operate as an effective consultation network. The pace of change is carefully calibrated to ensure staff at all levels have opportunities to input and consider the impact of proposed changes. There is though, heavy reliance on a small number of key individuals in the academic leadership area and SRUC's wide range of ambitions means that human resources can be spread thin, resulting in slow progress on some areas of development, and new initiatives do not always have clear parameters for evaluation of success.

SRUC's higher education quality assurance arrangements are generally strong and contribute effectively to fostering an inclusive culture which supports and promotes staff and student understanding of, and engagement in the development of, quality assurance policies and systems, and the implementation thereof. Quality monitoring is taken seriously and works to identify areas where attention is required. The quality assurance arrangements are expected to enable SRUC to manage successfully the responsibilities associated with taught degree-awarding powers if its application is successful.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that Scotland's Rural College meets Criterion 1.

## Quality assurance

SRUC's quality assurance framework, embedded culture of self-assessment, and robust programme design, approval and review processes ensure that its programmes of study consistently meet stated objectives and outcomes, and that programme performance and associated support arrangements are carefully and regularly monitored. Self-assessment informs the development of programme, service and institutional-level quality enhancement plans which, in turn, inform annual reports submitted to external validating and funding bodies. Clear information and guidance on the quality assurance policies and procedures to be followed is provided for staff and students and is underpinned by the involvement of, and support provided by, SRUC's Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching and by staff with quality assurance responsibilities. SRUC uses ideas drawn from within and outside

the institution to inform strategic and operational developments, including the delivery and assessment of its provision. The quality assurance arrangements ensure that external advice is sought from external peers with appropriate academic and professional expertise and, where appropriate, from professional and statutory bodies. External examiners confirm that the standard of marking is appropriate.

SRUC has undertaken significant work to share and embed its Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2020-2025 which comprises two pillars (Learning for Change and Learning for All) and associated principles which, with attention given to mapping of a curriculum framework, underpin and reflect its strategic aims and ambitions. The collaborative ethos permeating the institution is visible through its chosen methods of implementing its learning and teaching enhancement strategy, the emphasis placed on dialogue and the integrated approaches adopted across its student support systems to provide tailored help to its students. Students are involved in review processes and procedures, actively contributing to refining processes and there is a shared understanding of curriculum aims and learning outcomes.

The learning and teaching infrastructure is monitored to ensure that curricula are aligned with the learning and teaching enhancement strategy and that staff are effectively supported. Careful attention is given to the academic and support needs of students studying off-site as well as on-site. Student support has been identified as a strength by external peers. SRUC's quality assurance mechanisms are effective in ensuring that standards of student achievement are defined and monitored to ensure that these are maintained at an appropriate level over time.

There are multiple strands of work, working parties and projects in place to help the institution to achieve its strategic goals while maintaining standards and enhancing the quality of the experience provided for students. However, the attention given to analysis is not currently translated to targets through evidence-based action planning or decision-making. In the absence of measurable targets and milestones of success, progress monitoring and evaluation is therefore not clearly defined in appraising the success of chosen approaches in achieving the institution's ambitions for learning and teaching and enhancing the quality of the student experience.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that Scotland's Rural College meets Criterion 2-8.

## Administrative systems

The institution's administrative systems are sufficient to manage its operations now and in the foreseeable future. The tertiary nature of SRUC shapes the administrative systems and processes, and the relative size, and in some cases relative youth of SRUC as a single institution (since the 2012 merger) all have an impact.

The establishment of a SRUC Registry in 2019-20 has improved the quality and speed of data to inform decision-making and provide timely and accurate information to satisfy academic and non-academic information needs. The Registry is a strength which provides strong leadership and enhancement in different areas of the institution's work. SRUC recognises that the provision of data is an area which requires further development and has plans to address this area with support from consultants. Student feedback has indicated that further work needs to be undertaken to improve timetabling so that students have sufficient time to plan how to accommodate other commitments that need to be scheduled alongside their study commitments. The institution is taking action to address this feedback and has plans to use expert help to secure improvements in timetabling. The student record

system is fit for purpose and SRUC has assessed that it will continue to be so until the end of the current contract in 2025. A longer-term view on future needs is to be taken closer to that date.

SRUC takes seriously the challenge of providing effective and comparable services in library, computing and student service areas at its different sites. Students appreciate the services available and there are plans for developments in all areas. There are particular strengths in student support services, although plans for a new strategy have taken some time to finalise. A revised model of business partner support by the Information and Digital Service team has worked particularly well. Library services are well liked and provision is good, although developments in this area are taking some time to come to fruition.

There is active work on aspects of equality across staff and student areas, all of which is taken seriously. There is particular focus on support for students progressing from further education to higher education, with good support for students with specific needs. There has been activity across several areas to address gender imbalance, with some success, although SRUC recognises a need to do more in this area. SRUC is committed to promoting a supportive, collegiate working environment which offers opportunities for professional development, both internal and external, for all staff in keeping with its approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that Scotland's Rural College meets Criterion 9.

## Academic staffing

Of the 138 academic staff who teach at SCQF Level 8 and above, 105 (76%) are qualified to postgraduate level and 32 (23%) hold professional qualifications. Differences in staff qualifications at each campus reflect the current level of qualifications taught at each site. The proportion of academic staff with teaching experience in other higher education institutions (22%), experience of curriculum development and assessment design (29%), and relevant experience outside higher education, for example, in professional practice (20%) is relatively low and does not represent a significant proportion in each case.

There are 31% of academic staff who actively engage with the pedagogic development of their discipline externally as members of subject associations or professional bodies, and staff contribute to academic publications. While 22% of academic staff working towards a postgraduate qualification does not represent a significant proportion, there are opportunities for staff to engage in pedagogic development, primarily through the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching and through external bodies including UHI and Stirling University programmes, which support the establishment, development and enhancement of academic staff competences. SRUC's target for 80% of staff to be registered on a Postgraduate Certificate in Tertiary and Higher Education by 2023 is not achievable given capacity issues. Overall, there is structured and supported professional development for staff across the institution.

Academic job descriptions are broadly comparable to those of similar higher education institutions. Staff maintain high professional standards, as evidenced through the feedback they receive from internal and external stakeholders. There is a clear process for annual appraisals through the Making Performance Matter process and information from this process feeds into staff development plans, with the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching being responsible for learning and teaching development activities within SRUC. Although the continuing professional development and career development needs of individuals are considered through the Making Performance Matter process, there are capacity issues associated with workload and with opportunities to access external

qualifications. Making Performance Matter completion rates remain low across SRUC and this is to be addressed under the People and Organisational Development Strategy (2023-2027).

SRUC gives careful consideration to feedback received from internal and external stakeholders and engages constructively with the feedback received. There is clear oversight and accountability for actions in response to external scrutiny activity involving external bodies including its validating partners, the Scottish Funding Council, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that Scotland's Rural College meets Criterion 10-12.

# Privy Council's decision

The Privy Council's decision is to award Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) taught degree awarding powers from 14 October 2024.

# Introduction

This report provides a summary of the work and findings of the scrutiny team (the team) appointed by QAA to review in detail the evidence submitted in support of an application for taught degree awarding powers (TDAP) by Scotland's Rural College (SRUC).

The application was considered by QAA's Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP) in September 2021, when the Committee agreed to proceed to the detailed scrutiny of the application. The team appointed to conduct the detailed scrutiny comprised Dr Anya Perera, Writtle University College; Professor Alyson Tobin, Edinburgh Napier University; Mr Peter Watson, University of the Arts London; and Mr Zachary Davis, University of St Andrews (scrutiny team members). The detailed scrutiny was managed on behalf of QAA by Dr Irene Ainsworth, Lead Quality Manager.

The detailed scrutiny began in November 2021, culminating in a report to ACDAP in June 2023. In the course of the scrutiny the team read a wide range of documents presented in support of the application. The team also spoke to a range of stakeholders and observed meetings and events pertinent to the application. The team held a planning meeting on 10 January 2022 and undertook a (virtual) visit to SRUC on 23 and 24 February 2022. It held a progress meeting on 19 July 2022 and met again on 10 January 2023 to plan for a team on-site visit to SRUC on 16 and 17 February 2023. The final meeting of the team was held on 1 March 2023. The team conducted 35 observations of events and activities at SRUC between February 2022 and January 2023.

## Key information about Scotland's Rural College

SRUC was created in October 2012 from the merger of Barony, Elmwood and Oatridge Colleges with the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC). SAC had been delivering degrees since 1972 and had been designated as a higher education institution since 2007/08. The merger reflects a longstanding ambition to secure taught degree awarding powers, research degree awarding powers and university status.

SRUC is a specialist higher education institution delivering tertiary education, research and consultancy. At the time of its application for taught degree awarding powers the institution had six campuses across Scotland: Aberdeen (Craibstone Estate); Riverside (Ayr) campus; Barony (Parkgate, Dumfries); Edinburgh (King's Buildings); Elmwood (Cupar, Fife); and Oatridge (Ecclesmachan, West Lothian) and plans to extend existing facilities at Inverness. The Riverside campus, which accounted for 8% of the student full-time equivalent population in 2020-21, was subject to closure at the time of the scrutiny following an assessment and analysis of the strategic fit of delivery infrastructure options considered as part of a review initiated by the current Principal on joining SRUC in 2016. SRUC also has six farms, 25 consulting offices, eight veterinary service units including a central laboratory, disease surveillance hubs and centres, six research centres, and a golf course.

Elmwood and Oatridge specialise in further education pathways, with higher education programmes currently only offered to Higher National Diploma level (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 8) at Elmwood and up to degree level (SCQF Level 10) at Oatridge. The Barony campus offers programmes and pathways from further education to degree level (SCQF Level 10). Aberdeen has a student population studying the full range of levels from National Certificate to doctoral level (SCQF Level 4-12). Edinburgh offers higher education provision to doctoral level while the Riverside campus provided opportunities to study to degree level (Level 10).

The retention and continuing development of SRUC's long-established further education provision is fundamental to its vision to be 'Scotland's Enterprise University at the heart of

our sustainable natural economy' with a mission of 'creating and mobilising knowledge and talent and partnering locally and globally to benefit Scotland's natural economy'. To support the SRUC vision, mission and specialism, the institution has developed faculty-based academic domains (Circular Economy (South and West Faculty), Planetary Health (North Faculty), and Science, Society and Business (Central Faculty)) to drive its education offer and shape the research agenda. The domains are underpinned by the principle that, while they are anchored in the geographic regions in which they sit, they are not defined by it.

SRUC employs approximately 1,200 staff and teaches approximately 3,500 students, who are split between further education (45%) and higher education (55%). At the start of the scrutiny, 1,864 or 1,547.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) students were registered on higher education programmes. A total of 152 full-time and fractional academic staff or 64 FTE staff out of an overall total of 465 (409.2 FTE) were teaching on higher education programmes. In addition, there were 270 full-time/fractional academic support staff (229 FTE) in total.

SRUC's validating bodies are the University of Glasgow, which has validated four taught master's degree programmes and 10 bachelor's degree programmes; the University of Edinburgh which has validated one bachelor's degree programme; and the Scottish Qualifications Authority which validates its further education provision. SRUC also partners with the University of Edinburgh in the delivery of eight MSc programmes. Although formally registered with the University which is responsible for student admissions and support to students on these programmes, SRUC staff also contribute to teaching and supervising these students who numbered 220 (by headcount) in 2020-21. In addition, SRUC delivers teaching in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh and Queen's Park, Glasgow.

# Detailed scrutiny of evidence supporting the criteria for taught degree awarding powers

## Governance and management

### Criterion 1: The institution's governance, management, financial control and quality assurance arrangements are sufficient to manage existing operations and respond to development and change

**Academic and financial planning, quality assurance, and resource allocation policies are coherent and relate to the institution's mission, aims and objectives**

1        The SRUC Board which sits at the apex of the governance and committee structure is responsible for ensuring SRUC's long-term sustainability and determines the institution's future direction. The institutional mission draws on reports compiled by an external economic consultancy, with portfolio development informed by external analysis conducted in May 2019 by appointed higher education consultants. The team heard that a Balanced Scorecard, developed in 2019, directs delivery of SRUC's strategic vision 'to be an enterprise university at the heart of Scotland's rural economy, with global reach and impact'. Providing an overview which includes the vision and mission, strategic priorities and results expected, business objectives (financial, customer-related, growth drivers, organisational capacity), performance measures, targets and initiatives, and the institution's values, the Balanced Scorecard allows the SRUC Board and the Academic Board, which is responsible for the academic work and standards of SRUC, to establish and monitor institutional progress.

2        The Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), a subcommittee of the Academic Board, is responsible for maintaining a strategic focus on SRUC's portfolio of programmes and advises the Academic Board on the development of the portfolio to best meet future needs. It receives and approves validation, revalidation and programme revision recommendations from the Programme Approvals and Academic Standards Committee (PAASC) (an LTC subcommittee). Academic planning in SRUC is a mixture of detailed annual planning at module and programme level, and broader long-term planning for new courses. The annual process is carried out by programme management teams who develop a curriculum plan outlining what will be delivered in the coming year; resource planning is done on the basis of this plan. New course ideas emerge both from the bottom up and top down: subject-level discussions can lead to ideas which are developed for exploration at boards of studies and at the same time there is a leadership portfolio development group which also generates plans. In both cases, exploration of initial ideas, known as 'ideation', leads initially to a concept note before a full business case and a programme progressing to validation.

3        SRUC is a complex organisation with multiple streams of income and expenditure (further education, higher education, research, consultancy). It has clear financial planning and control mechanisms in place which are implemented at executive level in an appropriate manner. An overview of financial planning and control is taken by governors through the Finance and Estates Committee, the Audit and Risk Committee, and the SRUC Board with financial information clearly differentiated for the various strands of activity so that it is possible to scrutinise rises and falls in income and expenditure in each area. Observations of these committees showed that governors pay appropriate attention to their role in scrutinising proposed budgets, and closely monitor three-monthly budget reports during the year. There is an appropriate delegation of responsibilities from the SRUC Board to the Finance and Estates Committee, and to the Audit and Risk Committee. For example, there are plans to create a Spin Off Company, Agrecalc, to further develop this environmental

audit tool developed by SRUC for the market. A detailed plan was brought to the Finance and Estates Committee, where members queried the plans and explored the implications in detail, the next step was consideration by the full SRUC Board.

4       SRUC's finances during the period of scrutiny have been impacted by Covid and inflation, with a reduction in income and rising costs, and the outturn for the year in 2020-21 was a marginal surplus, and less than forecast. A deficit budget was set for 2022-23 (- £0.6M) but cost increases and reduced income have made a larger deficit likely (at the time of writing). Another deficit budget is provisionally planned for 2023-24 (circa - £2.5M) before a return to surplus in later years in a 10-year plan considered by the SRUC Board in March 2022. Expansion of activity and income targets are ambitious and there is a danger of these being missed in the current financial climate. The scrutiny team considers that the SRUC Board and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), comprising the Principal and Directors, are very alive to these risks and that cost control and reduction is the focus of a continuous dialogue. Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities to hold executive leaders to account for current and future financial plans and take this responsibility seriously. There is a long-term estates rationalisation plan, and the closure of the Riverside Campus in Ayr is part of that plan. SRUC's view is that reserves and cashflow are strong enough to support high capital costs in 2022-23 and that the longer-term plan will be financially secure.

5       The scrutiny team found that, at both governance and executive levels, there is a good and open flow of information, and that committee and reporting structures operate effectively to exercise financial control. SRUC has an ambitious change and growth strategy that might lead to SRUC doing too much too soon, such that academic delivery is affected. The team particularly pursued this point with SRUC Board members and was reassured that the SRUC Board had the appropriate powers and was prepared to use them if differences emerged on financial plans between the SRUC Board and the ELT. For example, the Finance and Estates Committee expressed concern about the 2021-22 outturn being lower than forecast at its meeting in May 2022 and flagged that the forecast due at its next meeting would be where the next exploration of this would occur.

6       SRUC's higher education quality assurance framework is robust and has been developed over time to provide assurance to both the SRUC Board and the Academic Board, which is responsible for SRUC's academic work and standards, and for ensuring that quality and standards are being maintained. Annual reports to the validating universities which are presented to both the SRUC and Academic Boards include an overview of the year; outcomes of quality assurance activities including validation/revalidation, Institution-Led Review (ILR), annual monitoring, accreditation and other external review activities; information on student recruitment, outcomes and learning experience on the validated provision; staff changes, development and pedagogic research projects; and a summary of successes, areas for improvement and future planning. SRUC also provides reports to the Scottish Funding Council on ILR activity conducted each year which are signed off by the SRUC Board. Observation of an ILR in March 2023 demonstrated the rigour of the process, and the scrutiny team considers that, if taught degree awarding powers are granted, the current arrangements are appropriate for the overall management and discharge of these powers.

7       Given the complexity of SRUC with multiple activities and income and expenditure streams, the financial planning and allocation models need to be strong, and the scrutiny team gained an understanding of how these work in practice through observation of key executive and governance groups and committees including the Programme Approvals and Academic Standards Committee; the SRUC Board; the Finance and Estates Committee; and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The SRUC Board delegates responsibility for the development of strategy, goal-setting, and oversight of operational plans to the Principal who is supported by other ELT members including the Chief Academic Officer/Academic Director;

the Director of Commercialisation and Innovation; the Director of Finance; the Chief of Staff/Director of Professional Services; and the Director of Marketing, Digital and Communications. Meeting weekly, the ELT has a remit to assist the Principal in the development and implementation of strategy, operational plans, policies, procedures and budgets; monitoring operating and financial performance; the assessment and control of risk; and the prioritisation and allocation of resources. ELT+ meetings, which have a strategic focus, are held on a monthly basis and include ELT members, Deans, the Registrar, Heads of Function and the Information and Digital Services Group Manager. The team's conclusion is that these structures are extensive, have been carefully developed over time, and work effectively to understand the need for resource in the context of particular parts of the organisation's operations and to track spending.

8        The scrutiny team observed meetings of the Academic Leadership Team (ALT) (which has a remit to assist the Academic Director in leading and managing academic and veterinary services within SRUC), the Senior Leadership Team (comprising senior leaders from SRUC's academic, commercial and professional divisions responsible for the operationalisation of institution-wide strategic priorities) and a Student Support and Services Board of Studies. The overall structure appears complex, although care and thought has been put into creating a structure which brings the right leaders together for the right functions, while avoiding siloed thinking due to geography, specialist subject areas, and further education, higher education, research and consultancy. The team's overall conclusion is that this new structure is working well to achieve its aim for a collective ownership of the institution at a time of change. At times, the team found it hard to see where actual decisions were taken, as many groups and committees seemed to be taking initiatives started elsewhere and applying their views or noting for implementation. However, communication between groups and committees is good and they operate as an effective communication and consultation network. The volume of change appeared high at SRUC during this period of scrutiny but, in observing these changes in progress, the team saw that the pace of change is carefully calibrated to ensure staff at all levels have a chance to input and consider the impact of the forthcoming change on them.

9        In the course of the scrutiny period the team saw the progress of a number of initiatives that had been mentioned in SRUC's Critical Self-Analysis. While there is a lot of change in train, SRUC takes care to get the right advice (externally where appropriate), and to consult with staff over developments. However, implementation of initiatives does take some time, and the pathway to full implementation was sometimes unclear, with uncertain measures in place to judge the success of some plans, and delays by lack of staff or funding quite common. For example, the planned creation of a Library Users' Group identified in May 2022 was not yet in place by February 2023. A group was set up to develop a Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy in 2021, but the strategy itself was still being finalised as this scrutiny ended. The annual appraisal process improvements to create Making Performance Matter (which includes the identification of professional development needs) have been appreciated by staff but take-up remains poor (although many staff seem to do it but not upload paperwork to the system, making tracking of take-up difficult).

10        The overall framework for academic and resource planning works well to identify resource need and match that with the overall mission of SRUC. The mission, strategic plan, and transformation programme are very strong drivers in SRUC; with a relatively small number of higher education programmes this means senior leaders are very much in touch with programme-level developments and what they contribute to the strategic development of the institution. Senior leaders also ensure a focus and coherence between further education and higher education, research and consultancy activity.

**There is a clarity of function and responsibility in relation to governance and management systems**

11      The SRUC Board Handbook sets out clearly the remits, structures and responsibilities of the SRUC Board and its committees and includes the remit and duties of the ELT. An Academic Governance Handbook and Terms of Reference of the boards, committees and groups involved in the governance and management of the institution set out clearly their remits. The Academic Board takes an overview of all higher education activity and considers much of the detail of academic quality and standards governance (the Board also covers further education matters). Four committees (Ethics, Innovation and Knowledge Exchange, Learning and Teaching, and Research) report directly to the Academic Board. The Board also receives minutes from a further five committees, namely the Animal Experiments and Social Science Ethics Committees (reporting to the Ethics Committee); the Programme Approvals and Academic Standards Committee and the Student Support and Engagement Committee (reporting to the Learning and Teaching Committee) and the Doctoral College Committee (reporting to the Research Committee). Boards of Studies are responsible for the maintenance of academic standards, quality assurance and enhancement within their academic areas.

12      Unusually, the Principal does not chair the Academic Board but is a member: SRUC's view on this is that the arrangement allows the Principal to bring a broader overview, as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and, as the CEO is always in attendance, the scrutiny team agreed there is little practical impact. The team noted, however, that the SRUC Board Handbook included reference to the Principal as Chair of the Academic Board. The SRUC Board considers that it has responsibility for quality and standards and delegates this authority to the Academic Board. During the period of scrutiny, the Academic Board maintained an overview of a comprehensive programme of higher education development activity, while also maintaining its normal functions looking at quality and standards reporting. The Academic Board reports to the SRUC Board and the team's tracking of typical agendas and reports that are brought to the SRUC Board showed that these are sufficiently detailed to inform discussion and decision-making by the main governing body and include, for example, reports from the Principal and ELT, Academic Board reports and minutes, annual quality enhancement plans and the annual reports to the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

13      Other bodies forming part of the executive and operational management of SRUC include the Transformation Steering Group, which is used as the vehicle for governors and management to progress and scrutinise the ambitious programme of change, the Transformation Portfolio Group, which is responsible for monitoring progress in the development of the portfolio in line with strategic objectives and resolving portfolio level issues, and Faculty Programme Boards, which oversee and provide stewardship of programmes and are accountable to the ELT. Major developments, such as the creation of a Veterinary School, are monitored, scrutinised and ultimately approved at SRUC Board level. Normal cyclical operations are scrutinised in line with sector practice with the SRUC Board and its committees receiving financial and operational reports on a regular basis.

14      The scrutiny team found evidence of the SRUC 'self-critical academic community' in SRUC's quality assurance processes, including monitoring and review activities. While formal academic committees include dialogue and critique they are, in the main, focused on progressing enhancement and change initiatives. The self-critical aspects are more in evidence at Boards of Studies and at focus groups set up to comment on specific aspects of developments.

**Across the full range of activities, there is demonstrable depth and strength of academic leadership**

15    SRUC has been undergoing a transformation programme which has restructured the way in which the organisation operates, including executive posts and leadership teams and structures. The new structures are helping to bind SRUC together into a single organisation and avoid what might be a natural tendency to a more remote and siloed approach, which was recognised by SRUC as a problem. The restructuring has been underway for a number of years pre-scrutiny and the scrutiny team observed the new structure in operation and questioned senior staff on its effectiveness. The extent of the institution's ambitions places heavy reliance on a small number of key academic leaders, and leadership capacity has been identified as a target within the SRUC Strategy. The Leading Our Future Programme is a key part of the Leadership Academy established by SRUC in 2019 to develop the institution's leadership capability and capacity. The first cohort started in August 2019 and, since then, 53 people have been on the programme. Each cohort includes a mix of academic and professional services staff, broadening participants' perspectives and providing shared learning opportunities that help to support confidence-building. Development days are also run for the Executive and Senior Leadership Teams. Both in the approach to change, and in its implementation, the team found evidence of careful planning, good change management, and effective review and learning. The Executive Leadership Team provides effective leadership of change and maintains an overview of all activity. The Leadership Academy programme has supported the development of academic leadership capacity and capability to enable SRUC to realise its ambitions.

16    The Academic Leadership Team (ALT) supports the Academic Director in managing and leading the academic division and includes Faculty Deans; the Heads of Research, Veterinary Services, Learning and Teaching; the Academic Manager; Head of Knowledge Exchange; and the Registrar. Deans and Faculty Leadership Teams are responsible for the leadership and management of the implementation of institutional and academic strategies and priorities at faculty level. Faculty Leadership Teams comprise the Faculty Dean, Heads of Department, Academic Liaison Managers and Heads of Faculty Administration. The Deans are members of PAASC and Heads of Department are members of the LTC, thus providing them with additional cross-institutional perspectives. The Student Support and Engagement Committee (SSEC) includes Head of Department, Academic Liaison Manager and Programme Leader faculty representation. The Heads of Research and of Learning and Teaching sit on each other's committees and the Heads of Department, Knowledge Exchange and Impact, and Veterinary Services sit on the Research Committee. To facilitate cross-division working, staff from other services, the SSEC and PAASC also include representation from Information and Digital Services (IDS) and Marketing on the SSEC and Marketing on PAASC. Introduced in 2018-19 following the restructure of the academic division into three faculties, the cross-faculty and subject-based Boards of Studies are chaired by Heads of Department. The cross-faculty Student Support and Engagement Board of Studies, created in 2020-21 is chaired by an Academic Liaison Manager and includes leaders from across SRUC's academic and professional divisions. These arrangements enable the individuals involved to gain wider institutional perspectives and to develop academic leadership skills.

**Policies and systems are developed, implemented and communicated in collaboration with staff and students**

17      SRUC embarked on its transformation programme with the full knowledge that structural and other changes would need full engagement with staff and students if the institution was to be successful. Staff and students who met the scrutiny team indicated that, although the change programme was at times challenging, they always felt fully engaged, and time was taken to consult staff and students and listen to their views. The team looked at this at all levels in SRUC: from classroom-based lecturer, through academic leaders, to executive leadership team members and governors as well as students, and was reassured that the approach was both genuine and effective. Staff have been subject to a rolling programme of change over the past few years and SRUC carries out regular staff pulse surveys, both on general and specific topics, to monitor the impact of these changes on staff. The ALT maintains an overview of surveys and makes decisions about topics to be progressed, for example wellbeing, through self-selecting groups of staff, sponsored by the ALT. The team heard that the Spring 2022 focus on wellbeing was a specific response to the findings of previous surveys about the impact of Covid on staff.

18      The institution is committed to working with students as partners and there has been student representation on the SRUC Board since 2012. The Student Liaison Committee, which is co-chaired by a SRUC Board member and a SRUCSA (Students' Association) representative, enables the SRUC Board to hear and be aware of students' views. Students are also represented on key academic governance committees. Supported by SRUC and still evolving, SRUCSA has expanded in recent years and moved from two to three full-time sabbatical officers, and from one to two full-time development staff. Class representatives also enable the student voice to be heard in the development of policies and systems. The scrutiny team found that SRUCSA provides a vehicle for the student voice to be heard at the highest levels of governance and management, and that governors and management go out of their way to ensure a student view is taken on all initiatives. For example, students had made their views known about a proposed overhaul of the timetabling structure and had engaged in discussion with staff about this. The team also heard that student interns employed by CELT had contributed to the further development of annual monitoring reporting.

**The institution's mission and associated policies and systems are understood, accepted and actively applied by staff and, where appropriate, students**

19      The development of the SRUC Mission and Vision (refreshed in 2020) and the Strategic Plan was supported by an extensive process of consultation and clarification with staff and students. As previously noted, the associated transformation programme has led to many changes in recent years and the scrutiny team paid particular attention to how well embedded and understood the various changes were by staff at various levels. Developed as a mechanism to facilitate monitoring of institutional progress in delivering to the Strategic Plan, the Balanced Scorecard which provides an 'at a glance' view of the interrelationships between all aspects of the institution's work and how they fit together to achieve SRUC's strategic aims, has served a broader integrating purpose across the institution. For example, it is used as a reference tool to inform decision-making to ensure that activities undertaken through, for example, the performance review process, enable individual and institutional objectives to be aligned.

20      Staff have been involved in developing and trialling a curriculum mapping system, and they (and students) have been involved in the development of Covid-related policies and processes, as well as in the implementation of Moodle Standards and Classroom Capture processes and in the development of assessment and feedback policies. Communications with staff on the mission, policies and systems that apply to SRUC also contribute to

ensuring staff understanding, acceptance and application. Communication takes a variety of forms including regular and recorded live briefings with the ELT, weekly blogs, conversations between staff and managers as part of the Making Performance Matter (performance review) process and through the opportunities provided by the establishment of the Leadership Academy. The team heard and observed in the course of the scrutiny that senior leaders go out of their way to engage with staff on the development and implementation of policies and systems and consult and inform staff on major developments. Staff appreciate this and understand the vision and the reasons behind changes. Opportunities to enable students to understand the University's mission and associated policies and systems are understood at institutional and programme level through SRUCSA's involvement in the academic governance of the institution, through student liaison groups and through the class representative system.

**The institution is managing successfully the responsibilities vested in it pursuant to the grant of degree awarding powers, or by its validating university**

21      SRUC has had devolved responsibility for developing, approving and revalidating its own programmes for over 20 years. Its relationships with its validating universities are therefore long-standing and it has been co-managing its responsibilities for academic standards and quality in that time. The relationships are marked by a high degree of trust, but nevertheless all the appropriate formal mechanisms of meetings and reports are maintained. Comprehensive annual reports are considered and approved by the Academic Board and then the SRUC Board before submission to the universities. Annual meetings are held with the validating universities and observation of the annual meeting between SRUC and the University of Glasgow showed comprehensive and robust questioning from the University and a good dialogue about current issues.

22      A letter of support for SRUC's application for taught degree awarding powers received from the University of Edinburgh indicated that the University currently accredits a BSc degree programme that is delivered wholly and independently by SRUC and that the University and SRUC jointly deliver taught and research degrees. The letter noted that SRUC has been working towards degree awarding powers for more than a decade and, in recognition of SRUC's increasing maturity, in 2010 the University's validation agreement with SRUC was changed to an accreditation agreement under which SRUC has devolved responsibility for academic standards, and quality assurance and enhancement processes, including gathering and responding to student feedback on the quality of the programmes accredited by the University. The letter further confirmed that SRUC has a positive and effective partnership with SRUCSA and works to continuously enhance the student experience.

23      A letter of support from the University of Glasgow which validates 14 taught undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes at SRUC also attested to SRUC's development as a mature and responsive higher education institution and commented on the productive and positive working relationship established between SRUC and the University. The letter confirmed that SRUC has successfully complied with the University's requirements and those of other external stakeholders to which SRUC is accountable. The letter indicated that, as a validation institution with accredited status from the University, SRUC has been judged to have in-depth academic experience and success as a provider of higher education and that, in addition to the validated provision, a joint teaching arrangement had been developed in the field of Animal Nutrition, with SRUC providing teaching to a University MSc programme. In addition to the teaching links, the letter referred to the strong research links that exist between SRUC and the University's College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences. The letter also indicated that SRUC takes account of the University's admissions and recruitment policies in the recruitment of PhD students and noted collaborations between SRUC and the University on research projects.

24      The positive comments received from the two universities were borne out in the team's consideration of the evidence provided by SRUC, in the team's observations of different activities, including meetings of a range of bodies and stakeholders involved in the governance and management of SRUC; validation, revalidation and review activities; examination boards; and staff development. They were further confirmed through the meetings held with governors, senior leaders and managers, teaching, support services and administrative staff, and with students.

**The institution's operational policies and systems are monitored, and it identifies where, when, why and how changes might need to be made**

25      SRUC's approach to risk management has been evolving. A review by KPMG in May 2021 concluded that the approach to risk management was 'relatively immature' and the changes put in place as a result have created a more professional and comprehensive structure, drawing together 11 departmental risk registers into a common format, and creating a new executive Risk Management Group to focus on this area (previously only the ELT considered risk management). While there is work still to be done, the identification of the issue and progress made gives reassurance that the approach to risk management is on the right track.

26      The SRUC Board's Audit and Risk Committee maintains an overview of the Risk Plan and has received regular updates on the development of the risk framework. The Committee sets the schedule of internal audits, advised by the appointed auditors but approved by the Committee. This schedule includes a rolling cycle which covers key support and administrative systems such as statutory returns and is comparable with what would be expected in other higher education institutions. Reports are received and the Committee questions executive leaders closely over both the initial findings and subsequent actions. A particular focus of this scrutiny has been on the complexity and range of SRUC, covering many areas that other higher education institutions would not have. A risk here would be that the risk focus, and related audits, would be light in higher education areas. However, the scrutiny team found this was not the case, and the focus on the risk plan, internal audit schedule, and Audit and Risk Committee proceedings does seem appropriate for an institution seeking taught degree awarding powers. During the scrutiny period SRUC was developing its approach to business continuity and carried out a review with the support of an external consultancy which will lead to a new approach being implemented in summer 2023. While this is a new approach, SRUC has continued with the existing arrangements.

**There is demonstrable information to indicate continued confidence and stability over an extended period of time in the institution's governance, financial control and quality assurance arrangements, and organisational structure**

27      While SRUC has been undergoing structural and other changes over the past few years, the major changes have nevertheless been in place for a year or more before this scrutiny started and have remained stable since that time. The arrangements for governance and financial control have not really changed greatly and have been in place for longer. The arrangements for quality assurance have been adapted and developed over a number of years, and the organisational structure changes were an early part of the transformation programme initiated in 2017. The observations undertaken and evidence provided constitute a substantial body of evidence of the operation and outputs from these arrangements and can provide confidence in the arrangements.

**Governance and management: Key strengths and weaknesses**

28      Governance arrangements at SRUC are strong, with a fully engaged Board which is both supportive but also critical when it needs to be. There is much about SRUC which is a matter of balance given the tertiary nature of the institution with strong provision in further

education, higher education and research, plus a substantial estate and consultancy operation, and spread across Scotland. The scrutiny team wanted reassurance that the governance arrangements were able to provide that balance and take on the added responsibility of discharging taught degree awarding powers; the team's conclusion is that the governance arrangements are suitable for this task and are able to focus on the matters in hand, be it addressing issues or supporting enhancements.

29      Financial controls are all in place and operate effectively. While SRUC is going through a period of financial difficulty this has in fact given the scrutiny team an excellent opportunity to see these arrangements in practice. The team concludes that the actions by the executive leadership, and scrutiny by governors, demonstrate the strength of these arrangements. There is continued resource pressure, and the impact of Covid and then inflation is felt by SRUC as it is by all UK institutions. Resource pressures mean choices have to be made in terms of priorities, and the good executive and governance relationships established work effectively to set those priorities. However, the team noted some areas of development that have taken some time to come to fruition, which is sometimes due to lack of available resource.

30      The executive and management arrangements at SRUC reflect the nature of the institution and are not directly comparable with those for Scottish universities. The strengths of these arrangements are in binding a complex institution into a single and focused entity and providing a clear vision for the future which all members of SRUC, both staff and students, can recognise and to which they can make a contribution. However, the wide range of ambitions means that all staff, both at executive and other levels, are busy and spread a little thin. There is heavy reliance on a small number of key individuals in the academic leadership area. Management is strong in innovation, and in consulting and decision-making on aspects of change. However, implementation is less strong, with slow progress on some initiatives observed, and there are not always clear parameters for evaluation of success.

31      Quality assurance arrangements reflect a mixture of SRUC's own design and the requirements of its validating universities. They are generally strong and work effectively. The quality assurance framework including the arrangements for setting and maintaining academic standards are solid and are likely to continue to be so should taught degree awarding powers be granted. Quality monitoring is taken seriously and works to identify areas where focus is needed although addressing and fixing issues can, depending on their nature, take some time, but this is no fault of the quality assurance arrangements as such.

## Quality assurance

### Criterion 2: The institution has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for establishing its academic objectives and outcomes

**The institution's programmes of study are offered at levels that correspond to the levels of the overall qualifications framework for higher education**

32      As a tertiary institution SRUC runs programmes of study at multiple levels in its specialist areas. Higher education programmes are often taken up by SRUC students who have studied at further education levels, and the differentiation in levels is an important exercise for SRUC. Staff reference the relevant external frameworks and subject benchmarks and, for Higher Nationals, the requirements of the awarding body. Notably at SRUC there is a check on the learning outcomes of proposed programmes by the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT), both for robustness and to check that the level is appropriate. CELT's involvement and the quality assurance mechanisms that SRUC has in place are underpinned by clear information and guidance on the policy and

procedure to be followed. This ensures that the mechanisms are consistently applied, and that academic objectives and outcomes are set at levels that correspond to the levels of the overall qualifications framework for higher education.

**In seeking to establish, and then maintain, comparability of standards with other providers of equivalent level programmes, advice is explicitly sought from academic peers in other higher education institutions and, where appropriate, professional and statutory bodies**

33      SRUC sets academic standards for its validated degree and postgraduate taught provision with reference to the UK Quality Code, the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications for UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) and through its programme development and approval process which involves the development of programme aims, learning outcomes and content set out in programme and module specifications. Programmes are subject to revalidation every six years to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose. The programme development and approval, and subsequent revalidation, processes involve external input to ensure that the standards set are comparable with those of other higher education institutions and that they continue to be so over time.

34      The scrutiny team observed a validation event (which also included accreditation with the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons), a Programme Approvals and Academic Standards Committee meeting, the Institution-Led Review (ILR) of Horticulture and Landscape, three examination boards (MSc Organic Farming, MSc Agricultural Professional Practice and BSc Applied Animal Science ) and read external verification/examiner comments and responses made to them. These activities confirmed that SRUC seeks advice from external peers in other higher education institutions and from professional and statutory bodies in establishing and maintaining comparability of standards with other providers of equivalent qualifications and that action is taken in response to advice received.

35      Academic standards are confirmed and assured by assessment design and delivery, moderation processes and the use of standardised grade schemes and by external examiners who perform the role of assessment moderator rather than the final arbiter over individual assessment judgements. External examiners engage in discussions with programme teams throughout the year and at examination board meetings, they report on standards and their views are sought as part of the ILR and revalidation processes. SRUC also benchmarks itself against a range of national and international institutions with a similar subject base. As such, because of the unique nature of SRUC, there is less use of direct comparisons across the Scottish higher education sector. However, SRUC is accountable to its validating partners for ensuring that the standards achieved on the higher education provision it offers are set and maintained at a level that is comparable to other providers of higher education, and its annual reports to partners include commentary on standards. The 2019 ELIR Report also confirmed that SRUC has effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience, as judged by academic peers from other higher education institutions.

## Criterion 3: The institution seeks to ensure that its programmes of study consistently meet stated objectives and outcomes

**Self-assessment is integral to quality assurance and the management of the institution**

36      The team observed self-assessment mechanisms in action at programme level through annual monitoring reports, annual quality dialogue meetings, Boards of Studies meetings, self-evaluation documents supporting the periodic ILR process, and an observation of an ILR. SRUC operates a six-year schedule of review for closely related subjects to mirror the restructured subject remit of Boards of Studies, allowing two areas to be examined each year. An annual report on ILR activity is submitted to the Scottish Funding Council and annual reports are submitted to the validating universities leading to the formulation of an institutional-level quality enhancement plan. These internally driven approaches articulate with, and support, SRUC's claim to have an embedded culture of self-assessment.

37      SRUC is aware of inconsistency in the quality of course annual monitoring reports and a review of the annual monitoring review process by student interns led to recommendations on a minimum requirement for completion as well as the provision of examples of good practice to showcase what is expected from programme teams. The use of live data has been identified as a priority theme in the 2022-2023 Institutional Quality Enhancement Plan and SRUC has been working on the further refinement of data reports that can be used by programme teams to inform the completion of annual monitoring and ILR reports. Emphasis thus far has been placed on a data hub dashboard for admissions and financial information rather than a learning and teaching focus, with identified resourcing needed to advance this.

38      A summary of themes arising from annual monitoring reports with their embedded course data enables the Academic Board to identify trends and cross-institutional priorities. This is in addition to the reflective annual report required under current partnership arrangements, on programme outcomes/performance data submitted to the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow. A vertically aligned annual monitoring review process from annual monitoring at programme level through to annual monitoring at institutional level illustrates SRUC's integrated approach to review and enhancement.

39      SRUC places great emphasis on annual quality dialogue meetings between Boards of Studies and a panel comprising the Head of Learning and Teaching, Registrar, Academic Director, Quality Assurance Lead, Academic Enhancement Leads (Staff Development and Student Journey) and a SRUCSA Sabbatical Officer, each of whom take a lead in preparing for and chairing one of the meetings. The meetings contribute to formulating monitoring and quality enhancement plans (which are not limited to academic areas but also include student support and services) for the relevant Board of Studies and serve to embed reflection, drawing on staff input across all levels of provision. This enables Boards of Studies to have oversight of standards, quality assurance and enhancement, fulfilling their remit for their areas of responsibility. Such meetings are attended by staff operating at different campuses for closely connected subject disciplines.

40      Quality dialogue events observed demonstrated a well-established ethos of critical self-assessment but are resource-intensive, requiring investment in time by the parties involved. The dialogue events draw on a prerequisite, evaluative programme-level annual monitoring report, with discussions themed to relate to key performance indicators. The annual quality dialogues interrogate operational detail and are preceded by an overview presented by the Chair of the Board of Studies who is responsible for collating subsequent actions in a quality enhancement plan. In turn, these plans feed forward to institutional

enhancement. Such approaches to self-assessment, in tandem with review of wider support services, and an imminent evaluation of the effectiveness of the Academic Board, show that there is a well understood culture of reflection and critical appraisal that also provides a mechanism to identify enhancement and good practice against stated objectives. Actions from internally conducted review processes, together with reviews completed by external bodies, are collated to identify areas for development in the institutional quality enhancement plan.

41      A paper on the Quality Enhancement Plan, considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee in October 2022, showed that student interns employed by CELT had undertaken a review of the annual monitoring process leading to revisions and recommendations to address inconsistency in annual report completion, data analysis and data presentations, with adjustments to the annual monitoring template and updated progress towards SMART actions. These actions had been taken in response to variability in the extent to which annual monitoring reports were completed and led to a recommended minimum requirement for completion and examples of good practice to be provided to showcase and provide further guidance on what is expected from programme teams. In considering staff members' familiarity with goals and identified actions in the institutional QEP, the team noted that a Learning and Teaching Committee sub-group views and updates SRUC's QEP prior to the Committee's meeting, with dissemination tasked to Heads of Department.

42      While the team saw evidence of detailed data analysis in the form of a Student Voice Mapping Report, annual reports to SRUC's partner universities, Student Surveys and in monitoring and review activities, subsequent action planning and target setting do not uniformly adopt a data-informed approach. SRUC recognises that evidence-based actions require further development and has appointed a Data Officer who works across both the Registry and CELT teams. SRUC sees the Information and Digital Services team and the appointment of a Data Officer as a way of developing data packs that can support preparatory work by teams working towards imminent ILRs. Data reports have been provided centrally for over six years but with the introduction of the new Data Officer (Translation), the data report provided in 2021-22 was enhanced. At the August 2022 celebration of learning and teaching event, the team viewed progress on a data visualisation project for staff to access fuller live data sets, for example, student performance, retention, and student survey results.

43      There are well understood self-assessment mechanisms in place that are core to appraisal for both internal and external use. At modular or unit level, student views are canvassed through online module evaluations via the VLE with a summary report provided as feedback to students. There is also an internal Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey (SSES). The team heard in annual quality dialogue meetings and in analysis of a student voice project that the level of student engagement with such online surveys varies by programme. Face to face conversations with student groups in tutorials, student liaison groups, classes and focus groups are cited as preferred means of canvassing views from students enrolled on some programmes, and this was also reflected in students' responses to the team. Student feedback features in all monitoring processes with a mapping exercise focused on the student voice.

**Ideas and expertise from within and outside the institution, on programme design and development, on teaching, and on student learning and assessment are drawn into the institution's arrangements for programme approval and review**

44      The approach to programme development is governed by SRUC's mission to be an enterprise university at the heart of the sustainable natural economy in Scotland and programme development is aligned to this strategic intent. The potential for internal and

external collaboration is used to determine future portfolio decisions. External engagement with Skills Development Scotland examined the policy and economic context of the land-based sector to precede formulation of SRUC's 2030 Vision, helping to shape the decision-making framework for SRUC portfolio development. Decisions on future portfolio expansion and development are based on criteria such as demand, sustainability and fit with mission and are overseen by the Portfolio Review Steering Group chaired by the Academic Director.

45      The redesigned process of programme approval and redevelopment involves four main phases, namely: the idea for new or redesigned provision; concept note, supported by market data providing key information to establish whether to proceed to the next phase; the business case providing further information on the provision and associated resource requirements; and the approval event. The process shows that programme proposers are expected to consult with sector-relevant bodies and engage with external expertise and internal staff including CELT, Marketing and Communications and Admissions, and the Quality Assurance Team and the relevant governance bodies as part of the programme design and development process.

46      SRUC has been proactive in ensuring strong representation on the advisory panel for the 2023-24 QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Food and Consumer Science. This work corresponds to the ILRs for related subjects and updates to the benchmark statements in relation to education for sustainable development. The team heard that staff are encouraged to be external examiners and contribute to external sector developments to bring back good practice to inform the development of SRUC provision attesting to the institution's openness to consider and adopt new ideas from elsewhere.

47      The team considered the use of internal and external expertise in challenging course design, monitoring performance level metrics of existing courses and evaluating the effectiveness of SRUC's provision from validation through to institutional and annual monitoring and review. Staff spoke of the importance of industry liaison,  as evidenced in industry stakeholder engagement events which considered curriculum and assessment in Higher National Agriculture provision and Honours level assessment for the BSc (Hons) Environmental Management.  The team reviewed revalidation and review documentation and observed an ILR demonstrating the use of external academic and industry panel membership. The team also reviewed reports encompassing broader aspects such as the student voice and postgraduate research, and observed the student support services ILR, which included internal and external staff, as well as student involvement which served to inform development of different aspects of the institution's work.

48      In observed Quality Dialogue meetings, teams were asked to expand upon and contextualise observations made by external examiners. Annual programme reports detail staff, student and stakeholder feedback and detail in-year actions and future plans as part of the critical evaluation. Boards of Studies monitor and reflect on cognate areas using data and progress against Key Performance Indicators. External examiner reports, programme team responses and actions are collated and presented to the SRUC Board with overarching themes considered by the Academic Board and PAASC. Noting the emphasis that teaching teams place on their industry links to inform course development and delivery and the engagement of students in the institution's arrangements for programme approval and review, the team concluded that ideas and expertise from within and outside the institution on teaching, and on student learning and assessment are drawn into SRUC's arrangements for programme approval and review and that a culture of self-evaluation is embedded across SRUC.

**Staff are informed of, and provided with guidance on, the institution's policy and procedures for programme design, monitoring and review**

49      Programme development, updating and approval is driven by SRUC's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2020-2025 and the three faculty academic domains: Circular Economy (South and West Faculty); Planetary Health (North Faculty); and Science, Society and Business (Central Faculty). The institution's policy and procedures for programme design, monitoring and review are clearly set out in a SRUC Education Manual which provides a central reference point and repository of information for staff, including templates and guidance to ensure a shared understanding of expectations.

50      SRUC's Curriculum Review (2021-24), extended to July 2025 to accommodate longer time frames than initially anticipated, aims to ensure that the pillars and principles of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2020-2025 are embedded in practice. Curriculum Review Strand Leads are responsible for leading the review and embedding a SEEDABLE (Sustainability, Enterprise, Equality and Diversity, enabled by Active and Blended Learning) curriculum. Staff resources on the SEEDABLE approach includes a curriculum framework and accompanying background information to support teams through curriculum review. Updates on curriculum review have been disseminated by the Head of Learning and Teaching to staff by blogs, briefings, videos on the SEEDABLE curriculum and through a bespoke intranet page. In the first curriculum review cycle (involving Agriculture and Business Management), SRUC identified that Review Leads required more support at the action planning stage of the process following the audit and evaluation phase. The use of briefings, process guides setting out expectations and away days aims to embed a shared understanding of the review process and its links to the learning and teaching strategy.

51      The review process itself incorporates mandatory staff development delivered by Curriculum Review Strand Leads, specifically the Head of Learning and Teaching, the Director of SRUC's Enterprise Academy for the Rural and Natural Economy, and a Senior Digital Learning Officer. Operation of the first cycle saw variable staff attendance at sessions (25% to 90%) and Heads of Department have been tasked with ensuring this work is prioritised. A certificate of completion is issued to staff to ensure full understanding of the review process and its aims, Boards of Studies are briefed and Review Leads receive bespoke training. A Curriculum Review Update presented to the Learning and Teaching Committee in October 2022 reported that review team members were to receive a full induction to the process in September/October 2022. Staff who met the scrutiny team demonstrated that the process of curriculum review is well understood. Curriculum design has traditionally been undertaken using spreadsheets and documents. Curriculum mapping software has been trialled on higher education programmes with a view to establishing a more effective and time-saving approach for staff involved. The use of this software was paused in light of feedback received as it did not bring the anticipated benefits. However, the project was restarted in July 2022 as a BSc (Hons) Veterinary Science/Veterinary School focused project and once implemented successfully by the Veterinary School it is anticipated that it can be used to inform developments on other SRUC programmes.

**The institution's strategies for teaching, learning and assessment relate to its stated academic objectives and learning outcomes**

52      SRUC's vision for 2018-2023 is to be a unique, market-led and mission diverse 21st century rural university, driving the future needs of a dynamic, innovative and competitive rural sector in Scotland and solving the biggest global agri-food challenges. .To do this, the institution has shared values encapsulated in its RISE (Respect, Innovation, Support, Excel) acronym which entails respect for everyone's contributions, innovation for success, support of each other and excelling in everything that is undertaken. The 2020-25 Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy has two pillars 'learning for change' and 'learning for all'

with five principles within each, implemented through seven work streams including awareness, dissemination, academic development and curriculum review. The team reviewed progress of the action plan and saw evidence of dissemination of the strategy through learning and teaching staff development and the embedding of the strategy in policy and academic development plans and activities. SRUC's Curriculum Review seeks to help embed the principles and pillars of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy through the implementation of the SEEDABLE Curriculum, thus realising SRUC's vision to be a tertiary enterprise university for the 21st century centred on the natural economy. The aim is to equip students with the necessary skills and attributes required for a fast-changing sector.

53       The SEEDABLE curriculum is seen as a distillation of SRUC's Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy facilitating integration of its aims (Sustainability, Enterprise, Equality and Diversity, enabled by Active and Blended Learning). CELT has played a pivotal role in ensuring that the programmes SRUC offers enable stated academic objectives and learning outcomes to be achieved and the SEEDABLE curriculum framework to be embedded through the provision of ongoing support for staff, including assessment design, assessment audits and calibration events. Staff are signposted to a dedicated intranet where criteria against which programmes are benchmarked are housed. The team heard that CELT has helped programme teams to consider the alignment of practice to strategy with attention given to inclusive assessment tools and assessment load. The team concludes that SRUC's strategies for teaching, learning and assessment relate to its stated academic objectives and learning outcomes.

**There is a close interrelationship between academic planning matters and decisions on resource allocation**

54       There is a close interrelationship between academic planning and resource allocation, as shown through the programme development and design process and the need to present a concept note and a sound business case to proceed to the next stage of the approval process. Capital investment requests are presented to the Executive Leadership Team or the SRUC Board, as appropriate, following prior consideration by the Transformation Portfolio Group. This was illustrated through the business case for the REAL project (Arcade and library) linked to defined targets on student satisfaction and aspirations for learning spaces, the concept for a vertical farm development and an appraisal of options given in the business case for development of the South West campus. Requests for staffing resources are considered by a panel that may require a business case with the ELT holding an overview of vacancies. The scrutiny team saw evidence of the expedited implementation of SRUC strategy to meet the needs of learners through COVID-19 and realise operational priorities. The team heard that the Estate and Property Strategy is being progressed, working through each faculty in turn, to mirror strategic priorities alongside projected student numbers, and saw evidence of farm usage monitoring to inform a five-year operational plan incorporating the proposed veterinary school needs.

## Criterion 4: Programme performance Is carefully and regularly monitored

**Responsibility for amending/improving new programme proposals is clearly assigned and subsequent action carefully monitored**

55       Reporting to the Academic Board, the Portfolio Review Group, chaired by the Academic Director, is responsible for overseeing the relevance and manageability of the programmes offered and for ensuring that the portfolio of provision continues to fit with the strategic direction of SRUC, and that it aligns to market and industry demand. The Programme Approvals and Academic Standards Committee (PAASC) is responsible for overseeing the operational implications arising from strategic decision-making. PAASC

uses the Portfolio Review Framework to guide its decision-making process on portfolio development with resulting recommendations to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

56      Responsibilities for amending and improving programme proposals are clearly defined with Boards of Studies and PAASC playing a central role while the Transformation Portfolio Group monitors progress and delivery of the portfolio, resolving issues and escalating matters to the ELT as required. CELT is responsible for checking learning outcomes to ensure that they are robust and that programmes are offered at the right level, reflecting external reference points including the FHEQ, PSRB requirements, and Subject Benchmark Statements, as appropriate. Boards of Studies are responsible for making the necessary revisions arising from programme approval events. Programme development teams produce action plans emanating from validation and review activity in the form of an action plan one year on after an ILR and validation, which is subject to monitoring and approval by PAASC. The Programme Amendments Process, which distinguishes between major and minor amendments, shows that Boards of Studies are responsible for approving minor amendments within their cognate subject areas and they are required to submit a summary of minor changes to PAASC for noting. Where Boards of Studies deem a major change is required, these are discussed with external examiners and PSRBs and submitted to PAASC for consideration. The team found that responsibility for amending and improving new programme proposals is clearly assigned and subsequent action carefully monitored in accordance with SRUC's quality assurance framework.

**Close linkages are maintained between learning support services and programme approval, planning and review**

57      The approval of concept and business case stages for new programmes requires teams to identify all resources required to support students and to liaise with support teams. Teams reflect on student support as part of their self-evaluation of programmes and support services are subject to ILR in the same six-yearly cycle as programmes in the published schedule. The production of a self-evaluation report before, and an action plan following, an ILR and the annual monitoring process and production of QEPs, enable attention to be given to learning support needs throughout the lifecycle of programmes. The annual quality dialogue meetings also provide opportunities to reflect on the interrelationship between learning support services and programme, approval planning and review. As part of SRUC's NSS analysis, a separate report is compiled for student support focusing broadly on academic support and learning communities by campus, subject level, gender, age, disability and index of multiple deprivation. The Student Support and Services Board of Studies (SSBS) reports to the Student Support and Engagement Committee (SSEC) and, through the Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board, to the SRUC Board, thus ensuring awareness of student support needs at all levels of the governance structure. The SSBS provides an overview of support service delivery and brings together membership across the breadth of support service provision in all campuses. SRUC recognises the need to develop strategic oversight of its widening access and participation work with coordination of its current work to ensure full compliance with the Scottish Funding Council outcome agreements and the work of the Student Support and Services Board, programme approval and graduate outcomes. The team found that close linkages are maintained between learning support services and programme approval, planning and review.

**Clear mechanisms exist for assigning and discharging action in the scrutiny, monitoring and review of existing programmes**

58      The Education Manual provides details of monitoring and review from unit /module review through to annual programme, Board of Studies monitoring, and institutional periodic review. The process is documented, with self and peer-led critical reflective processes integral to many monitoring and review mechanisms. Programme management teams are

responsible for programme monitoring and review and for the production of annual monitoring reports accompanied by quality enhancement plans linked to institutional key performance indicators. These reports feed into Board of Studies reports which are informed by and are developed in the light of annual quality dialogues. Boards of Studies are responsible for monitoring quality enhancement plans for their areas of responsibility and for ensuring that actions have been clearly assigned and progressed. Where provision spans faculties, the Boards of Studies involved review programme management team reports in their designated subject grouping and produce and monitor progress through an action plan for their area using SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) actions.

59      PAASC monitors outcomes and actions arising from annual monitoring. Although Boards of Studies play a central role in monitoring and review, the team found a lack of target or data-led action planning at this and other levels within the institution. The use of data continues to be a focus in SRUC's QEP but the team noted that close working between the Registry and additional Information and Digital Systems (IDS) appointments have resulted in improvements in data reporting that include live reports from the student record system and the provision of data sets to programme teams ahead of annual monitoring.

60       Programme Leaders are responsible for responding to external verifier (for Higher National provision) and external examiner reports and are required to indicate in their annual monitoring reports how comments received have, or will be, addressed. The Registrar scrutinises and collates external examiner reports relating to the validating universities and summaries of reports received from external verifiers and examiners are considered by PAASC which reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee, reporting in turn to the Academic Board. The annual reports to the validating universities presented to the Academic Board indicate any issues raised by external examiners and how these have been, or are to be, addressed. These mechanisms enable different parts of the institution to identify actions for which they are responsible as well as actions that require escalation to different levels of governance and management.

**Coherence of programmes with multiple elements or alternative pathways is secured and maintained**

61      The programme design and review processes have been designed to ensure programme coherence on programmes with multiple pathways through mapping programme aims and outcomes, learning activities and assessment methods across all pathways forming part of the established validation and review processes. SRUC acknowledges that its current process of curriculum and assessment mapping for which it has developed a curriculum and assessment map template can be resource-intensive and it has piloted a software solution with veterinary and animal science programmes to establish the academic robustness and cost-effectiveness of such an approach. The team found that the robust nature of the phased programme design, development and approval process and the documentation required as part of the process, which includes programme curriculum and assessment mapping activity, enable the coherence of programmes with multiple elements or alternative pathways to be secured and maintained.

**Clear mechanisms are employed when a decision is taken to close a programme or programme element, and, in doing so, the interests of students are safeguarded**

62      Programme suspension and withdrawal policy and procedures are in place and published in the Education Manual. Programme suspension with a pause in recruitment is more common than programme withdrawal and mainly attributed to poor recruitment. The suspension process is initiated by the delivering 'department'/team in consultation with the Dean and is received by PAASC. The team examined SRUC's statement on teach out of one University of Glasgow validated postgraduate programme (by part-time distance

learning) and noted that students had been supported during this teach-out period, with regular email and online tutor support.

## Criterion 5: The effectiveness of the institution's learning and teaching infrastructure is carefully monitored

**The effectiveness of teaching and learning is monitored in relation to stated objectives and learning outcomes**

63        In recent years SRUC has placed greater emphasis on the design of module descriptors coupled with detailed scrutiny of the link between learning outcomes and assessment method and size during validation and revalidation, following the proposed introduction of a revised course design and revalidation process presented to PAASC in January 2020. The proposal noted that the process adopted by SRUC followed approaches common to the sector but that it lacked strategic and supportive activities used elsewhere to ensure the constructive alignment between programme design, learning and teaching and the strategic plan. Following revision of the programme design and approval process and, triggered by student and external examiner feedback on assessment, a review of assessment and feedback approaches was undertaken in 2020. Actions taken included a reduction in word counts required for each module, staggering of modules according to level and revised internal monitoring processes.

64        An updated Programme Design and (Re)validation Procedure was published in September 2020 and a minor update, making Equality Impact Assessment a mandatory part of the process was made in July 2022. This involves the provision of programme design support from the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) to design teams on programme contextualisation, learning outcomes, assessment design and learning and teaching approaches aligned to SRUC's learning and teaching enhancement strategy. Programme teams are required to complete a curriculum and assessment map to demonstrate that all learning objectives and outcomes are fully covered by assessment. To strengthen capacity in the Learning Design team, five members of CELT have been identified to undertake a 'train the trainer' programme. This work runs in tandem with curriculum review activity, supporting teams to align curricula with the learning and teaching enhancement strategy and the SEEDABLE Curriculum Framework which is viewed as a distillation of the strategy and which, coupled with staff development, forms a key part of the Curriculum Review process. The team observed the foundations of this approach in a March 2022 ILR and heard from staff on the work being undertaken to support teams in reviewing and mapping their curricula.

65        The substantial work undertaken on embedding the learning and teaching enhancement strategy and accompanying framework contrasts with results received in the National Student Survey (NSS) for the overall dimension of 'teaching on my course'. SRUC was below benchmark in 2020, 2021 and most recently in 2022, although the team noted there is some variability by campus. The NSS (and Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey) (SSES) results are scrutinised by the Academic and Executive Leadership Teams and discussed with Boards of Studies at the Annual Quality Dialogue meetings. CELT provides optional support for Board of Studies discussions with facilitated workshops to support the learning and teaching dimensions of the NSS. Relevant sections of results are scrutinised at the first Student Support and Engagement Committee and Learning and Teaching Committee meetings of the academic year. Peer observation of teaching also provides opportunities for staff to receive feedback on the effectiveness of teaching and learning and enable any common emerging issues for further development to be identified. A summary report of external examiners' comments presented to PAASC in October 2020 noted a common theme to emerge from external examiners' comments related to the positive learning experience and high levels of support and engagement from staff.

**Collections of books and other materials contained in, or directly accessible through, the institution's library/learning resources centre are adequate to facilitate the programmes pursued by students in the institution**

66      Academic teams liaise with library services during the design process to ensure resources are identified in the business case with provision monitored through reading list software, a reading list policy, the library user group, student usage and analysis of NSS outcomes. The Student Support and Services Board of Studies provides an overview of library and learning resources available to students. In keeping with SRUC's plan to have devolved and equitable support at each campus, each has its own library managed by a professional faculty-based librarian: there is a Library Services Lead who coordinates activities with student training to promote information literacy services provided across SRUC.

67      Students told the team that library and learning resources are readily accessible and that students also have access to the validating universities' library facilities, with e-books and online training available on SRUC's learning platform. The team's review of a log provided on the use of the library helpline and on the training offered and the student support self-evaluation document (November 2022) provided for ILR purposes demonstrated that students are able to access the library and learning resources they need and that the resources are adequate.

**Action is taken to maintain and enhance quality and the role of staff and students in this process**

68      SRUC aims to engender a collaborative and inclusive approach to quality maintenance and enhancement. Staff have been part of workshops in the development of policies and systems including the learning and teaching enhancement strategy and curriculum review. Staff and students have opportunities to provide feedback to maintain and enhance quality, and the institution is responsive to feedback received, for example, feedback from Chairs of the Boards of Studies led to annual quality dialogue meetings being brought forward from October to September with a view to informing the development of Board reports and QEPs. Implementation of the first cycle of curriculum review has resulted in an extended time frame for completion in the light of experience to allow full participation and training for staff in response to feedback received from staff. In 2020-21, a proposal on timetabling was considered by the Academic Board which led to student concerns being raised and further development and review of timetabling being undertaken. Student feedback was subject to a full review in 2020-21 giving rise to seven sub-projects.

69      The scrutiny team found evidence of a collaborative and inclusive culture in action through its review of learning, teaching and assessment adaptations made in response to COVID-19, observations of Learning and Teaching Committee meetings in October 2022 and January 2023, a celebration of learning and teaching event which showcased outputs from projects, CELT workshops, ILRs and quality dialogue meetings. Staff commented positively on the collaborative nature of support provided by CELT in engaging teams to scaffold and embed learning and teaching procedures and activities serving to maintain and enhance quality.

70      A SRUC People Strategy Development document explained that the People Strategy was developed to support SRUC's vision (launched in 2018) 'to be a unique, market-led and mission diverse 21st Century rural university'', underpinned by a business strategy indicating what needed to be done and a people strategy to enable strategic goals to be delivered. The People Strategy which focused on three areas (People, Culture and Leadership) was informed by staff views obtained through survey and workshop activities. A

People and Organisational Development Strategy 2022-26 was developed in 2022 and staff views on emerging themes have been sought.

71      SRUCSA's Constitution and Operating Procedures state that 'SRUCSA shall work in partnership with SRUC to maximise the student experience of all SRUC students' which it does, for example, through the governance and management structure; fortnightly meetings of the SRUCSA co-presidents (of which there are three) with the Academic Director and Principal; the Student Liaison Committee which is co-chaired by a SRUCSA co-president and a member of the SRUC Board, through the class representative system and through such means as its own annual survey (Speak Week) which provides another student feedback mechanism. SRUCSA representatives also take part in all self-assessment processes including chairing annual quality dialogue meetings. SRUCSA presents at every Academic Board and reports annually to the SRUC Board.

72      The Student Liaison Committee (SLC) provides a direct link offering meaningful dialogue opportunities between the SRUC Board and SRUC's student community. Student Liaison Groups also exist to provide feedback mechanisms at subject level and have been used by students to raise the need for more statistical support, especially regarding qualitative data, for example, leading to an additional session on data analysis being arranged. Students contribute to the self-evaluation required as part of the ILR process and participate in the review event with at least one student serving on the review panel. SRUC collates the student voice through MyVoice, surveys, annual monitoring and ILRs. A paper on Student Voice Mapping presented to a January 2021 meeting to the Student Support and Engagement Committee made a number of recommendations relating to the student voice, and observation of a June 2022 SRUC Board meeting indicated that there is scope to improve the student representative culture at SRUC.

73      The priority given to student representation and engagement was noted as a positive practice in both the 2014 and 2019 ELIRs, but the scrutiny team noted that there is variability in participation in feedback procedures. There was an 11% improvement in NSS response rates in 2021 followed by a decrease in 2022 although this was above the sector average. To improve student engagement emphasis has been placed on enhancing students' sense of belonging and community evidenced through a student journey project, although the team heard that the student response to a survey on belonging was poor. Staff and students who met the team indicated that any lack of student engagement could be attributed to the fact that students preferred to speak direct to their course tutors in the event of any issues arising from their experience of the provision offered and this often elicited a more immediate response.

**Students are advised about, and inducted into, programmes and study and account is taken of different students' needs**

74      Start dates across programmes were standardised and induction was conducted online due to COVID-19. An online module served as a one-stop shop for all information students would require before starting or resuming their studies. Guidance was provided to staff to help build online communities. One-stop shop student support teams, managed by Academic Liaison Managers (ALMs) have been established within the faculties, bringing together teams of education, pastoral and funding student support tutors as well as careers advisers and counselling professionals. Opportunities are provided for students to confidentially declare specific needs before and on enrolment to enable them to be supported through their studies. Student support teams work with the ALMs and teaching staff to assess students' specific support needs and support plans are put in place and shared with relevant staff. ALMs meet student support team members regularly to review cases and demand for services. Case conferences involving student support team members and a student's year tutor may also be held for complex cases to review progress and any

issues arising and future action which may involve external agency support. Students confirmed that tutors are proactive and approachable.

75 Student induction has been formalised to incorporate an induction checklist, to be completed by year tutors, to ensure that new students are introduced to all relevant services and policies and that different students' needs are considered. A standardised induction is provided to all students and has a suggested programme that is signed off by the year tutor. The standardised induction was recognised as a strength in the 2017 ILR of support services. Since then, induction has evolved drawing on a cross-institutional approach incorporating online interactive packages. The Student Support and Engagement Committee (SSEC) considers the outcomes of induction surveys used to evaluate induction satisfaction. The start of the 2022-23 academic year was overseen by a steering group which included SRUCSA, Information and Digital Services (IDS), admissions, CELT and marketing representation. A report to the November 2022 SSEC meeting, which included feedback on induction survey responses, indicated that respondents had given induction a rating of four out of five and had found the induction process to be smooth, simple and effective. Planning for the start of the 2023-24 academic year is underway.

76 Staff and students told the team about weekly check-ins and the personal support provided for students. The support individual students receive was commended in the 2019 ELIR Outcome Report. Guidance on compiling programme handbooks is in the Education Manual and year tutors share programme handbooks with students at induction. SRUCSA has created short videos to introduce students to key policies and procedures and Information and Digital Services staff have been working on supporting students. NSS satisfaction data is analysed in relation to student profiles and needs, with analysis of additional questions on welfare support to suit individual needs and career steps. This sits alongside a separate Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey report examining aspects such as student perceptions of staff support on their progress. Observation of the Student Support Services Board of Studies in June 2022, the Student Support Services ILR in December 2022, and consideration of the Student Support Services Self-Evaluation Document confirmed that students are advised about, and inducted into, their programmes of study and that account is taken of different students' needs.

**Means exist for identifying good and poor practice and for disseminating and implementing improved operational methodologies**

77 Enhancement is core to the learning and teaching enhancement strategy and the institution's approaches to quality are designed to identify, disseminate and build upon existing good practice. Annual monitoring and periodic review, building on monitoring and review at programme and discipline level, are used to identify good practice and address weaknesses. Annual monitoring reports are required to detail good practice at all levels from modules to student liaison, survey data through to examination boards. Annual quality dialogues are central to the process of self-reflection and contribute to the development of quality enhancement plans, enabling the identification of cross-institutional themes. Boards of Studies' annual reports reflect on key performance indicators, strengths and areas for improvement. Examples of externally and internally directed enhancement themes have included resilient learning communities and embedding data-led monitoring.

78 The Principal's Teaching Innovation Fund (PTIF) supports projects that develop innovative pedagogy and/or relate to research into teaching and learning practice with priority given to projects that can have an impact at institutional level or higher. The 2021 PTIF invited applications that would address the implementation of the new Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, with a particular focus on embedding good practice in digital learning; creative approaches to assessment and feedback; and working with SRUC's learners as partners in learning, teaching and curriculum design. Bids that included student

input were especially invited. Successful applicants were required to produce interim reports, a final report for CELT and deliver best practice workshops with relevant outputs as part of ongoing staff development.

79      Staff development and shared learning opportunities through, for example, Heads of Department and Programme Team Leads forum meetings help to identify and disseminate good practice and this activity is supported by CELT activities and events such as the celebration of learning event and CELT workshops on, for example, assessment and feedback, and digital learning. SRUC has undertaken significant work to share and embed its learning and teaching pillars (Learning for Change and Learning for All) and 10 principles which include working with learners as partners and building learning communities, with attention given to mapping of a framework that underpins and reflects its strategic aims and ambitions. The collaborative ethos permeating the institution is visible through the implementation of its learning and teaching enhancement strategy, the emphasis placed on dialogue and the integrated approaches adopted across its student support systems to provide tailored help to its students. Students are involved in review processes and procedures, actively contributing to identifying good practice that can be shared more widely. There are multiple strands of work, working parties and projects in place to disseminate and improve operational methodologies.

## Criterion 6: The academic and related support requirements of students studying off-site are taken into account

**Clear and understood arrangements exist for monitoring the opportunities and achievements of those of the institution's students studying outside the institution, including those outside the UK**

80      SRUC has supported students to study abroad through the 2014-2020 ERASMUS+ exchange programme through bilateral agreements with 15 EU institutions providing opportunities for students in their third year of degree-level studies. Studies to be undertaken were agreed taking account of academic level, credit, subject and student aspirations, and students completed an ERASMUS Learning Agreement. SRUC also provides financial support to, and maintains contact with, students undertaking a summer internship at the University of Arkansas. These agreements are underpinned by memoranda setting out clearly the responsibilities of the institutions and students involved, such as access to facilities, visa requirements and tuition fees.

81      The Education Manual includes the work experience placement procedure setting out the responsibilities of academic liaison managers, placement supervisors and students and describes how the strategy is to be implemented for off-site students. The procedure ensures that mechanisms are in place to monitor health and safety aspects, opportunities available and student achievement on placement. The Critical Self-Analysis stated that the placement policy is due for an update to reflect changes in the faculty structure, embed improvements in practice and consider amendments to streamline the placement process. This review, which is overseen by the Learning and Teaching Committee, was in its early stages at the time of the scrutiny. A bespoke work placement procedure, aligned to the requirements of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, is in place for the Veterinary Nursing provision to ensure that placements are arranged within approved training practices. Students are supported in their placement by a named clinical coach who is required to complete clinical coach training with SRUC. Supported by the relevant year tutor, they also attend tutorials, discuss their experiences with peers and sit examinations on campus.

82      Students studying off-site confirmed that they feel supported by SRUC staff and commented that they have easy access to student support, library and careers services with provision being equivalent to students studying on-site as they can access all digital library

resources. Where digital resources are not available, support staff confirmed that all student support services can be accessed online with off-site students being offered virtual meetings, as required, and the library providing post out services to off-site students. The team concluded that clear and understood arrangements are in place to monitor the opportunities and achievements of students studying outside the institution, including those outside the UK.

83      The class representative system covers off-campus students and feedback from students is collated through elected class representatives, questionnaires, the Student Liaison Committee and Student Liaison Groups. Programme leads design social elements into group activities for off-site students to foster community-building. These activities have a focus on coursework, skills development and on-site visits. Additionally, programme leads make use of the online platforms used by SRUC to provide spaces for off-site students to interact with one another which are well received by off-site students.

## Criterion 7: Standards of students' achievements are maintained at a recognised level and there is a strategy for developing the quality of academic provision

**Through its assessment practices, the institution seeks to define, monitor and maintain its academic standards**

84      Academic standards are confirmed and assured through the institution's assessment design, delivery and monitoring/review processes. The Assessment Policy is designed to ensure a consistent approach to assessment across programmes and campuses in line with the requirements of SRUC's awarding bodies, validating universities and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, as well as UK Quality Code guidance. It sets out SRUC's assessment procedures and expectations, including the need for assessment at programme, year of study and unit/module levels to be an integral part of programme design, and assessment to be aligned to intended learning outcomes. The Assessment Policy and detailed guidance and information on assessment procedures is made available to staff through the Education Manual.

85      A design narrative template has been developed for the validation of new programmes to enable design teams to outline their proposed approach to learning, teaching and assessment and explain why the approach taken is appropriate for the programme(s) proposed. Programme teams are required to complete a curriculum and assessment map which involves defining teaching activities, learning outcomes and the means by which these outcomes are to be assessed, using a template provided for this purpose.

86      Boards of Studies are responsible for the maintenance of academic standards within subject areas, monitoring assurance activities through, for example, consideration of internal annual programme monitoring reports and external examiner reports. Boards of Studies act as platforms for sharing of good practice within faculties between programmes, for example, types of novel assessment developed during COVID-19. They also have responsibility for approving minor changes (up to 20% of a programme or 50% of a single year) to assessment in a validated programme while major changes are required to follow the major programme amendments process requiring approval from PAASC.

87      Verification and moderation requirements and associated templates are documented in the Education Manual. Pre-assessment verification for degree and postgraduate programmes requires external examiner approval and, for Higher National awards (up to SCQF Level 8 HND level), approval of assessment tasks is undertaken by academic staff. For undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, external examiners are involved in post-assessment verification while the Scottish Qualifications Authority and other

awarding bodies are responsible for external verification up to HND level (SCQF Level 8). The team's review of revalidation documentation for a degree programme showed that the external examiner was engaged in pre- and post-assessment moderation as required by the institution's policy. The team also noted that external examiners contribute to examination boards and provide end-of-year reports giving feedback to inform the development of annual programme review reports. External examiner comments at one examination board meeting observed noted good practice going beyond SRUC's minimum moderation requirements; clear discussions between first and second markers; and moderation reports, which showed clearly how final grades were determined and suggested enhancement in relation to assessment.

88      SRUC provides detailed annual reports, containing an overview of all relevant annual monitoring processes, validation/revalidation and ILR outcomes, to the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow, providing the basis for discussions with, and feedback from, the universities. This also enables the parties involved to compare assessment outcomes and academic standards with those of other higher education institutions. Observation of the annual meeting with the University of Glasgow showed detailed discussion of the annual report submitted by SRUC including a focus on student performance. The team found that the assessment practices the institution has put in place enable it to define, monitor and maintain its academic standards arrangements.

**The institution's assessment criteria and practices are communicated clearly to students and staff**

89      Students are provided with information relating to assessment criteria, policy and procedures during induction and at the start of each module/unit. Programme handbooks issued to students also provide information on assessment types and submission procedures in addition to an initial assessment schedule, which is required under the Assessment Policy (published in the Education Manual). Guidance on the content of programme handbooks is also included in the Education Manual. Students indicated that they know where to find relevant policy information and who to contact if they have any questions about assessment. They also commented on the usefulness of having early sight of the assessment schedule as this allowed them to identify any instances of overlapping assessments to be addressed at the start of the semester.

90      Student Liaison Committee meetings act as a platform for disseminating any proposed changes to policy and procedure, including proposals for changes to the examination diet and assessment types. In one observation of an SLC meeting, SRUC informed students about a delay to examination diets for the academic year 2023 due to the withdrawal of emergency COVID-19 measures by a validating partner which required additional time to finalise examination procedures. Students were receptive to this feedback and engaged positively with SRUC on the delayed schedule, with detailed discussions on preferred types of examinations (such as 24-hour take home assessments).

91      As part of the curriculum framework, programmes are expected to address six criteria for assessment and feedback, including the need to support the development of students' assessment literacy 'preparing, engaging and supporting them through the assessment process, ensuring expectations are understood by all and facilitating their self-efficacy'. Through the SEEDABLE curriculum, the design and development of new assessments must consider active and blended approaches, and opportunities for real-world assessment types, alongside student partnership in assessment feedback processes. The SEEDABLE curriculum documentation is detailed and provides implementation guidance to staff.

92    New staff receive an induction which includes an introduction to quality assurance and the Education Manual, which includes detailed information and guidance on assessment and assessment approaches to be implemented. New staff are also supported by a New to Teaching Toolkit. Staff responsibilities for assessment are set out in their role remits. Staff are updated on amendments to assessment policy and procedures through quality roadshow activity previously and, more recently, for amendments to the internal verification and degree assessment and reassessment procedures, through staff development delivered remotely with recordings available for staff who missed the live events. A quality calendar has been developed to enable staff to undertake assessment administration activities such as pre- and post-assessment verification/ moderation, entering results on the student record system and sampling plans.

**The institution assures itself that its assessment practices fully cover all declared learning objectives and learning outcomes**

93    Curriculum and assessment maps must be completed as part of the revised programme design and approval process to ensure assessment practices cover all learning objectives and outcomes at programme level with module/unit specifications demonstrating that individual assessments cover module/unit outcomes. Assessment practices are adapted, where appropriate, to ensure learning outcomes on a range of programmes are met, such as in the case of more vocationally orientated programmes for which more traditionally focused assessment types would not be appropriate. Currently curriculum mapping is undertaken using a more traditional method using spreadsheets and documentation. SRUC is looking to move towards a more constructive and streamlined approach to programme development through use of a curriculum mapping tool in order to improve efficiency and accuracy for more complex programmes. This project, which started in March 2021, is still ongoing following a recent pilot within Veterinary Nursing.

94    The ILR process and (re-)validation processes include a focus on ensuring that assessment practices are programme appropriate and fully cover learning objectives and learning outcomes. Programme teams are required to indicate the use made of QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and Characteristics Statements, if appropriate, in designing curricula. Staff members have experience of Subject Benchmark Statement development as well as engagement with other relevant external bodies and are able to draw upon this wider engagement to ensure that learning objectives and outcomes are appropriately aligned and assessed.

95    A graduate outcomes survey report (June 2020), the annual report (2021-22) to the University of Glasgow, the team's discussions with SRUC staff and observation of the annual meeting between SRUC and the University of Glasgow (January 2023) confirmed that SRUC analyses graduate outcomes data to check that students are achieving the declared learning objectives and outcomes expected of graduates. This data is analysed as part of annual monitoring and ILR processes. All staff have access to graduate outcome data and Boards of Studies have overall responsibility for addressing potential issues.

**External peers are engaged in the institution's assessment processes**

96    All completed verification/moderation forms are made available to external examiners or to the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) external verifiers (for HN provision). SQA undertakes annual external verification involving delivery staff, internal verifiers and, where possible, students. External verification reports are shared with the individuals involved in the visit and copied to the Chair of the relevant Board of Studies. External examiners for degree awards are nominated by programme teams, considered by PAASC and approved by the relevant validating university. The Education Manual indicates that, in addition to contributing to decisions on awards and progression, external examiners

have a role to play in advising on matters such as academic rigour, comparability of standards, the role of particular modules in the curriculum and coherence, and vocational focus. The external examiner role is that of assessment moderator rather than final arbiter over individual assessment judgements. They are engaged in the development and moderation of assessments throughout all programmes. Observations of examination board meetings showed that external examiners provided constructive comments and contributed well during examination board meetings ensuring confidence in assessment outcomes.

97      The views of external examiners are also sought as part of the ILR and revalidation processes. External examiner reports are discussed at programme management team meetings and programme leaders respond in writing to the reports. Annual monitoring reports include explanation of the way in which external examiner comments have, or will be, addressed. All external examiner reports are collated with overarching themes identified for discussion at PAASC. Highlighted issues are circulated to Heads of Department and are used in annual reports submitted to the validating universities. These reports and associated action plans are discussed as part of SRUC's annual meetings with its validating universities, providing opportunities for further external comment. The scrutiny team found from a collation of external examiner reports and annual reports submitted to the validating universities that appointed external examiners are drawn from a range of higher education institutions.

**Consistency is maintained between internal and external examiners' marking**

98      SRUC's policy with regard to verification and moderation requirements is clear and followed by academic staff, as noted through observations of examination board meetings, with staff often going above the minimum moderation requirements due to small student numbers on programmes. Consistency between internal and external examiners' marking is maintained through post-assessment verification of SQA units and moderation of degree modules. Standardised forms are used to check the validity and sufficiency of assessments. Post-assessment moderation requires internal markers to indicate how any initial discrepancies in marks were resolved; however, examples of internal/external post moderation forms and observations of examination boards showed that these cases were rare, indicating that staff are well informed on issues relating to assessment marking. Where non-teaching- focused staff, for example consultants and industry staff, are involved in marking assessments, stricter moderation requirements are in place and all scripts are moderated to assure the quality of marking. Academic staff understood the assessment policy and implemented this as expected. Observation of examination boards confirmed that there is consistency between internal and external examiners' marking.

99      The verification/moderation procedure requires a review of a sample of assessed student work across all delivery campuses to ensure consistency in marking throughout the delivery team. Master's/honours level projects have a separate process in place which is detailed in the Education Manual. Double marking of dissertations is undertaken with the (coordinating) module leader and the relevant programme leader determining the most appropriate second marker and a check of all marked dissertations by an impartial individual, normally the module leader for the programme (the coordinating module leader where a programme is taught at different campuses or the programme leader). For programmes taught across campuses, the coordinating module leader may act as second marker to ensure uniformity of approach. The internal moderation process is expected to lead to marks being agreed but, on an exceptional basis, if marks cannot be agreed, the individual marks will be sent to the external examiner with an explanation of the reasons for the lack of agreement.

100     The scrutiny team noted the additional time required to moderate student work and the pressures this can place on staff, particularly if cohorts grow in size. Moderation reports

are made available to external examiners and these reports are discussed in detail at annual examiner board meetings in conjunction with the external examiner. A synthesis of external examiner reports for 2019-20 considered by PAASC in October 2020 noted that the high standard of assessment moderation was one of the themes appearing in the reports. A summary of external examiner feedback for 2021-22 considered by PAASC (November 2022) also identified effective internal moderation as one of the four themes to emerge strongly from the 12 external examiner reports received.

**The reliability and validity of the institution's assessment procedures are monitored and assessment outcomes inform future programme and student planning**

101     In June 2020 the Learning and Teaching Committee considered a proposal regarding an assessment and feedback review, and scoping of the assessment and feedback areas requiring development was undertaken. Following the meeting a workshop was held with the Academic Leadership Team; discussions took place with the quality assurance lead and with lecturers; and a desk-based review of the current assessment and feedback policies and processes in light of sector best practice was undertaken. Given the lack of capacity of staff to engage in full-scale development activities at that time, it was agreed to focus on four priority areas (assessment design, mitigating circumstances, feedback, and marking) and four key actions (the development of an online assessment and a feedback toolkit for staff; a revised mitigating circumstances policy; the design and roll-out of marking calibration workshops; and updating the Education Manual) for 2020-21.

102     Annual monitoring processes reflect upon assessment processes and outcomes and issues are addressed in quality enhancement plans, developed at programme level, Board of Studies level and at institutional level. PAASC considers an overview of all external examiner reports and minutes of the Boards of Studies. These reports and minutes together with validation/revalidation and ILR reports enable SRUC to secure an institutional-level overview of all assessment activities and related actions, enabling a cross-programme approach to identify areas for improvement and good practice.

103     The overview of external examiners' reports for 2019-20 considered by PAASC in October 2020 showed that examiners found the assessment moderation process and quality of feedback provided to students to be of a high standard. However, in the same year, one external examiner fed back on two key concerns relating to an overreliance on essays and examinations, and the possibility of one module being marked too generously. This feedback resulted in the Programme Leader liaising with the Head of Learning and Teaching who conducted an analysis comparing grades allocated and grade distribution within the programme which identified potentially problematic modules and led to a review and revision of module assessment undertaken and bespoke staff development for the programme delivery team. This demonstrates effective monitoring of the reliability and validity of SRUC's assessment procedures and has led to further refinement of the assessment approach on the programme in question. Observation of an examination board meeting also indicated that the use of post-moderation forms provided a useful means to feed forward into future modifications and revisions to assessments in the following year.

104     Areas of good practice are disseminated to staff through, for example, programme leads forums, Board of Studies meetings and through activities hosted by CELT, which provides workshops for staff, informed by staff demand and strategic objectives, on improving assessment and feedback. These workshops aim to share good practice identified within SRUC on assessment types and approaches and enable cross programme and subject discussions; for example, discussion of ways to ensure all students participate in group activities through peer assessment. The scrutiny team noted that staff who attended these workshops were engaged and contributed effectively to group discussions.

**Students are informed of the outcomes of their assessment**

105     Assessment outcomes and feedback are recorded in the student management information system, and students can access their results directly via the MySRUC online platform following approval from the relevant Examination Board. Staff make it clear to students that grades are not finalised until after the Examination Board has met following external moderation. The timeline for the process of uploading student results is outlined in the Quality Calendar and all staff and students who met the scrutiny team were aware of this process and students knew how to access feedback on their assessment and the outcomes of their assessments.

**Information on assessment outcomes is given to students in a timely manner**

106     The feedback policy is outlined in the Education Manual. SRUC policy sets out a four-week timeline for student grades and feedback to be returned to students. Students confirmed that they generally receive feedback on their assessments within this timeline. Teaching staff told the team that students are informed of any delay in the provision of feedback and the reason for any delay, for example staff illness. Students respected the fact that unforeseen circumstances may lead to delays in feedback and assessment outcomes being provided.

107     The scrutiny team saw the use of a feedback tracker by staff to ensure all students receive feedback on their submitted work. Where issues with late feedback occur, programme leads are responsible for following up with the relevant staff member. Students indicated that issues with regard to timely feedback had occurred in the past; however, improvements have been made following the assessment and feedback review in 2020-21 in the wake of a 2020 NSS score of 57.18% being recorded for assessment and feedback, resulting in an improved score of 67.91% in 2021. However, a 1.2 percentage point decrease to 66.71% was recorded in the 2022 NSS against a benchmark of 70.99% which is still below benchmark.

108     A paper on the SRUC QEP considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee in January 2023 noted that the Academic Board had requested the inclusion of assessment and feedback as a key area arising from the annual quality dialogues and, if excluded, the reason for this to be fed back to the Board. The paper indicated that significant progress has been made in terms of reducing assessment burden and improving timeliness of results, as evidenced by feedback received through external examiner reports. It was noted, however, that assessment and feedback continued to be a focus for teams and was being addressed through (re)validations and additional activities including staff development, assessment resources and audits. The Learning and Teaching Committee noted that there were no significant delays in the provision of timely feedback.

**Constructive feedback is given to students on their performance**

109     The Education Manual indicates that staff use standard assessment submission and feedback forms on all programmes to provide consistency in approach. These forms identify learning outcomes achieved and provide a summary of feedback to students who are required to sign these forms to confirm they have read the feedback and that they have been given an opportunity to discuss this further with relevant members of teaching staff. Beyond the standardised forms used for submitted coursework, observation of CELT workshops in August 2022 indicated that SRUC staff use a range of other feedback mechanisms depending on assessment type, both in person and digital, for example, video walkthroughs are used by staff for design-based assessments. External examiner reports note the high quality of feedback that is provided to students on their assessments. CELT workshops provide opportunities for staff to share good practice on giving students

constructive feedback and an observation of the workshops provided an opportunity to hear discussions of 'real world' feedback, mirroring that which would be found in the workplace, for example, real time, one-to-one and audio recorded feedback.

110     Students recognise different methods of receiving feedback, which are outlined in SRUC's Education Manual. They confirmed that the feedback they have received on their performance has been useful, enabling them to improve for future assessments. They also stated that they are given opportunities to meet staff to discuss feedback in greater detail, as needed.

## Criterion 8: Effective action is taken to address weaknesses, promote strengths and demonstrate accountability

**The institution adopts a rigorous approach in response to matters raised through self-assessment**

111     The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2020-2025 directs enhancement activities with a focus on implementation through curriculum review, academic development and new course development. Many of these activities are ongoing and no major work to measure impact has been undertaken. Annual quality dialogues and programme monitoring processes include consideration of areas of good practice and challenge. They enable delivery teams, managers and senior leaders to reflect on performance and outcomes at programme, Board of Studies and institutional level, drawing on student progression and widening access data, student feedback and survey results, and external examiner feedback to inform quality enhancement plans (QEPs) at the different levels of operation. Progress on actions in the QEPs is reviewed throughout the year.

112     Since the 2014 Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR), actions have focused on academic governance and critical refection at all levels of the institution from programme level upwards, culminating in a positive outcome in the 2019 ELIR. An action planning group reporting to Academic Board was formed to monitor and respond to recommendations from the 2019 ELIR. There has been a continued focus on academic governance that has continued to evolve as refinements have been made to ensure informed debate on academic matters relating to learning and teaching and the wider student experience. Progress has also been made to ensure greater consistency in the timeliness of assessment feedback provided to students and turnaround of assessment feedback, the use of data to enhance the student experience, and enhanced careers advice for students.

113     SRUC's Institution-Led Review (ILR) processes cover both academic and support services in addition to thematic reviews. These internally driven reviews enable self-reflection of current practice at SRUC through the development of a self-evaluation document. Review panel reports include areas of good practice and recommendations which lead to the development of action plans. PAASC considers one year on updates to confirm that satisfactory progress has been made on actions arising from ILRs. The team noted from its scrutiny of a September 2018 review on postgraduate research programmes, the associated report, and action plans, and from observation of ILRs for Horticulture and Landscape and Student Support Services that SRUC's response to matters raised through self-assessment is rigorous. Overarching themes arising from monitoring and review activity relating to, for example, facilities, timetabling and staff development are considered by the Academic Leadership Team and the Academic Board given the wider institutional implications.

**Actions are regularly monitored to ensure the maintenance of quality and standards**

114      Actions arising from external verification and examiner reports must be addressed by agreed deadlines and recommendations must be considered through the annual monitoring and QEP processes. PAASC is responsible for monitoring the status of conditions and recommendations made and for ensuring that appropriate action is taken in response. PAASC submits annual summary reports and its meeting minutes to the Learning and Teaching Committee, thus enabling the committee to have line of sight of feedback received to inform the continued maintenance of quality and standards. External examiner feedback is also summarised in annual reports submitted to the validating universities and is discussed at the joint annual meetings between SRUC and its partner universities.

115      Programme teams are encouraged to reflect on programme performance against key performance indicators through their annual monitoring reports. In November 2020 the Academic Board agreed to incorporate a special measures process into annual monitoring to strengthen the process. This involves the classification of programmes into three categories (Active Monitoring, Local Enhancement, and Recognised for Excellence) based on five criteria (student satisfaction; retention; success/completion; external reports; and student numbers). Scrutiny of meeting papers and observations of Boards of Studies meetings confirmed that progress in relation to QEPs is reviewed. The institutional QEP is a collation of areas for development and actions arising from a range of sources including review and engagement activity and academic dialogues. It is strategically focused with topics covering, for example, staff development, digital learning and student voice. Observations of the Academic Board in February 2022 and the Learning and Teaching Committee in October 2022 and in January 2023 showed discussion of, for example, the impact of the transformation portfolio work on programme staff and the management and understanding of data for decision-making. Year-on updates submitted to QAA Scotland on actions taken as a result of ELIR recommendations provide an opportunity for the institution to reflect on progress and assess impact.

**Feedback from students, staff and external interest groups is secured and evaluated and clear mechanisms exist to provide feedback to interested stakeholders**

116      Results from the National Student Survey (NSS), student satisfaction and engagement surveys (SSES), module evaluations, and postgraduate research experience surveys (PRES) are scrutinised at the relevant Board of Studies, Student Support and Engagement Committee (SSEC), Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board and enable SRUC to better understand the student experience and to identify areas for improvement. MyVoice, available year-round with feedback ensured, is used to garner student views anonymously. Student feedback is triaged to the relevant people for follow up and common themes are identified for action with monitoring provided by the SSEC. In addition, SRUC is developing an internal survey to capture feedback from students who are not eligible for external surveys such as the NSS, the PRES and the SSES to ensure full coverage of the student population.

117      SRUCSA, the Students' Association, also gathers student feedback through elected student representatives who sit on key committees, such as the Learning and Teaching Committee, SSEC, Boards of Studies and the Student Liaison Committee and who can therefore directly engage with staff on policy and programme development. Student feedback is included within ILR documentation and students meet ILR panels as part of the process. Student representatives are valued by SRUC staff, and observations of a Student Liaison Committee meeting in November 2022 and the Student Services ILR in December 2022 showed that their feedback is taken on board to drive enhancement.

118     Following the formation of CELT a new student journey team was created within CELT in 2020. This team undertook a project mapping and evaluating student voice activities culminating in a report and recommendations to the SSEC in January 2021 and the development of a student voice project plan in March 2021 with reports made to the SSEC. The institutional QEP recognises that there are concerns about low student engagement with opportunities to improve student feedback in some areas, noting in particular poor response rates to the SSES. Action taken to elicit greater student engagement in providing feedback has included a formal survey period, a reduction in the number of surveys presented to students, and the creation of a portal directing students to the appropriate end-of-year survey. The student journey team has taken a lead in coordinating student feedback from surveys such as the NSS and work to strengthen student engagement is ongoing. As part of the digital strategy, feedback from students and staff has informed priorities and the customer voice has been identified as a key feature for the future alongside internal and external surveys, with results communicated via emails and Student Liaison Committee meetings.

119     Feedback from staff is obtained through the academic governance and management structures in place, through staff forums and networks (for example, the programme leaders forum), annual quality dialogues and through annual monitoring reports and quality enhancement plans highlighting areas of good practice and concern. Where issues are identified, actions are incorporated into the relevant QEP and escalated elsewhere within the institution, as appropriate to the feedback provided by staff. The institution is committed to forging strong industry links given the nature of its provision and staff have close engagement with relevant industries and are able to provide feedback to inform programme development. The contacts staff have established with industry provide opportunities for staff to engage in industry-based continuing professional development (CPD) activity which complements the CPD activities available in-house. The Making Performance Matter (annual performance review) process also provides opportunities for staff to feed back on needs identified. In addition, an example of a professional discussion report demonstrated constructive interaction between the peer observer of learning and teaching and the individual observed, which enabled consideration of strengths and areas for development in enhancing learning and teaching.

120     SRUC receives feedback from external bodies through, for example, annual peer review by Landex (a Land Based Colleges and Universities Aspiring to Excellence subscriber organisation), which provides the institution with feedback and recommendations. These recommendations are reviewed with each visit to ensure continued development. Where relevant, programme accreditation is sought, for example, Veterinary Nursing by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and Rural Business Management by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, providing the institution with external feedback on programme quality. SRUC is accountable to a range of other external stakeholders including the Scottish Qualifications Authority, the Scottish Funding Council, its validating partners, and it is subject to review by QAA Scotland. It provides annual reports to external stakeholders and responds to external feedback through formalised annual reporting systems and through responses to validation, review and assessment.

**Use is made of feedback at departmental, programme or programme-element level**

121     Module leaders discuss the outcomes of student module/unit evaluations with their line managers to review performance and highlight good practice. They then close the feedback loop through summarised reports on actions taken in response. Discussion of module evaluations is a standing item at Student Liaison Groups (involving termly meetings of class representatives, year tutors and programme leaders) and at programme management team meetings. In response to student feedback in 2018-19 indicating that students would prefer to feed back during, rather than at the end of a module/year, to enable any changes required to be implemented during their studies, the institution piloted mid-module feedback on two programmes which had underperformed in NSS satisfaction ratings. Two student interns were employed in 2019-20 to evaluate the mid-module survey and its overall viability and use. Their report, which was shared with relevant teams across the institution has led to the adoption of mid-module in addition to end-of-module surveys on some programmes.

122     A detailed breakdown of the NSS results is created by the student journey team, cross-referencing across campuses, by subject, age, gender, disability and by index of multiple deprivation. Where performance is poor, for example within one HND programme, additional actions were taken. The scrutiny team learned that one of the issues identified by students concerned opportunities for more practical work to enable them to apply their learning and, in response, staff are giving attention to implementing real-world assessments. The HND programme has undergone a complete overhaul and has been replaced by the HN Next Generation pilot. Progress within the HND will be addressed through the ongoing review of the HN Next Generation pilot which will be used to assess the impact of actions taken and drive the development of the programme. These processes provide the institution with module and programme-level feedback and feed into different levels of quality enhancement planning. Wider issues to be addressed, for example the use of student retention data in quality assurance processes, were discussed at the Learning and Teaching Committee in October 2022 as part of the institutional quality enhancement plan. Discussion of the paper and observation of this meeting demonstrated a lack of live data in place for capturing information on student withdrawals, reasons for leaving, retention data and trends across programmes with committee members commenting on the need to be able to access live data.

**External views and involvement are sought in programme design and review, teaching and learning**

123     BSc Veterinary Nursing Validation documentation (March 2018), an Agriculture Revalidation panel report (February 2018), Horticulture and Landscape ILR (March 2022) documentation and observation of the ILR showed the effective use made of external academic and industry expertise, as well as students' views, to inform programme design, monitoring and review. Students told the team that they have opportunities to engage with external stakeholders through the approaches taken to learning and teaching as the institution makes use of visiting lecturers who can provide an industry perspective. The team also noted an example of an Organic Farming module that had been redeveloped in collaboration with an external examiner that had brought a wider context to student learning, with a focus on the relationship of farming to society more widely, and updated assessment types to reflect this.

124     Where relevant, programme accreditation is sought, for example Veterinary Nursing by RCVS and Rural Business Management by RICS providing the institution with external feedback on programme design. Accreditation visit reports also provide opportunities for staff to engage with externals in sector-relevant associations, professional bodies, industry networks and other academic institutions. Annual peer review reports by Landex have

provided the institution with recommendations, for example supporting practitioners in developing online learning and managing student expectations during assessment periods. These recommendations are reviewed with each visit to ensure continued development.

**Information arising from feedback is disseminated within programmes across the institution**

125     NSS programme packs providing detailed analysis of student survey results are provided to programme teams for comment and such analysis and staff responses form part of the annual monitoring process. Additionally, each module has an evaluation survey with results provided to the relevant programme team. The team noted that programme teams have opportunities to share good practice through various common interest forum meetings and some staff have taken a lead in sharing good practice in CELT workshops. Boards of Studies provide a forum for cognate subject groupings and their terms of reference require the Boards to consider feedback, quality enhancement and themes arising from annual monitoring for subjects within their areas of responsibility. The Boards are required to identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement to inform staff development priorities.

126     NSS programme packs are also provided for CELT, student support and SRUC, providing the means to ensure comprehensive coverage of programme-specific student support and other issues raised by the feedback received. By these means, the institution is able to identify areas of strength that can be shared more widely across the institution as well as areas for development, and the extent of developmental activity required. As part of a Scottish Enhancement Theme initiative, Registry ran a project to scope out a mid-module survey, providing institutional-level recommendations to enhance the student experience focusing on methods for providing feedback to students and optimal timing of the survey to maximise engagement. An evaluation of mid-module surveys has been undertaken by CELT and shared with programme teams across the institution for adoption or not, as determined by staff and students.

**The effectiveness of student advisory and counselling services is monitored and resource demands arising from such activities are considered and acted upon**

127     The Student Support and Engagement Committee (SSEC) (a committee of the Learning and Teaching Committee) is responsible for oversight of the non-teaching experience of SRUC students. The SSEC reviews student evaluations and survey outcomes and reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee. The 2019 ELIR commended the student support systems, especially for mental health. Students have year tutors who act as the first point of contact for issues that may impact on learning. Resource needs are identified at an early stage in the programme design, development, and revalidation process and curriculum design teams are required to liaise with student support teams during the business case stage and document student support needs stage. Once approved, programmes are subject to annual monitoring and review activity which includes a focus on student support and resource needs.

128     Student support at SRUC has been developed to provide a one-stop shop support team managed by Academic Liaison Managers (ALMs) who work with student support tutors and academic teams to ensure students are assisted through their studies equitably across faculties. While the nature of separate campuses leads to slight variation in implementation, equitable resources for all student support provisions (for example, Library/IT/Careers) are available at each site. Analysis of data in the NSS programme pack for student support (2022) enables SRUC to identify any differences in the level and nature of support for students.

129     Chaired by an ALM, the Student Support and Services Board of Studies (SSBS) was established and became fully operational in mid-2021. In addition to the ALMs (who also participate in annual quality dialogue meetings), the Board membership includes representation from Student Support Tutors (Education and Pastoral), Careers, Library Services, SRUCSA Development, Information and Digital Services, Student Journey and Digital Learning. The SSBS was subject to SRUC's annual monitoring and ILR processes in 2022 which showed that effective arrangements are in place for supporting students and are underpinned by critical self-reflection of provision which enables recommendations for enhancement of services. The team found that the governance arrangements, and the restructuring of the student support services that has taken place since 2019, enable SRUC to effectively monitor all student support services, including student advisory and counselling services, and to consider and act upon service-related resource needs.

**Effective means exist for encouraging the continuous improvement of quality of provision and student achievement**

130     The QEPs collate areas for development and actions from a range of sources including self-evaluation, external and peer review and quality dialogue meetings. The QEP for 2020-21 noted that annual monitoring reports identified assessment and feedback as problematic, with particular problems around assessment overload and bunching, the quality of feedback and feedback timeliness. This led to a review of assessment and feedback in Autumn 2020-21 leading to four actions including the development of an online assessment and feedback toolkit for staff; the revision of policies, including the creation of a reasonable adjustments policy, the development of a fitness to study policy, and the revision and centralisation of a mitigating circumstances policy; the design and roll out of marking calibration workshops; and minor amendments to the relevant section of the Education Manual. Staff development on what makes good feedback was offered in the Autumn of 2020-21, building on earlier development provided in 2019-20. The 2021-22 QEP noted that annual monitoring report feedback identified the need to upgrade teaching facilities, resources and practical spaces. This has led to a review of the facilities and resources available and investment to refresh and develop facilities aimed at improving facilities and ensuring these are up to date with industry standards.

131     An example of an annual programme monitoring report form included data on admissions and enrolment, withdrawals, results and awards progression, any resits required and first destinations. An emphasis on data-led enhancement is being sought through revisions to the functionality of its management information system although this work is ongoing. A Student Ratio by Unit of Learning (SARU) Report enables staff to examine achievement on an individual module/unit basis and this, coupled with student feedback through module/unit reviews and Student Liaison Group (SLG) meetings, contribute to informing future programme planning and amendments to provision. There is still work to be undertaken with regard to data, for example in its availability/accessibility, before a data-led approach is achieved. However, the team noted from the Student Support Services self-evaluation document for its ILR in December 2022 that the Registry and CELT had recently appointed a 1.0 FTE Data Officer (Translation) to work in collaboration with CELT (0.5 FTE) and the Registry (0.5 FTE) to support data monitoring and trend analysis more closely and to support teams to gather and collate data more effectively.

132     Staff teaching awards are in place to recognise excellence in learning and teaching, with nominations by staff and students. An anonymised selection of teaching award nominations highlights areas of commendation and good practice among staff, with examples including building online communities and engaging with digital and blended learning. Based on its review of the evidence available, the team formed the view that effective means are in place to secure the continuous improvement of the quality of provision and student achievement.

133      SRUC has clear and consistently applied mechanisms for establishing academic objectives and outcomes aligned to the learning and teaching enhancement strategy, which is aligned, in turn, with the University's strategic objectives. Academic planning and subsequent programme design and development involve early and high-level evaluation and scrutiny of resource needs. Programmes of study are subject to detailed and rigorous quality assurance arrangements, including careful and regular monitoring of programme and student performance, which serve multiple purposes. The arrangements include the use of internal and external stakeholder contributions to programme design, development and (re-) validation and review involving staff of the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching working with staff and students to ensure that learning, teaching and assessment cover all intended learning objectives and outcomes of a programme, and that student achievement is maintained at a level that is recognised by external peers.

134      Curriculum and assessment mapping activity undertaken as part of the quality assurance processes enables the coherence of programmes with multiple elements or alternative pathways to be secured and maintained. The use of external expertise in external examination and verification processes ensures that programme standards are comparable with those of other providers of equivalent level programmes and consistently meet stated objectives and outcomes. External examiners have commented positively on the consistency of internal and external examiners' marking. Where an external examiner has raised an issue, prompt action has followed to address the issue, and remedial action has been taken.

135      The quality assurance processes are underscored by a culture of self-assessment. Clear and detailed information on the institution's policy and procedures for programme design, monitoring and review, and on assessment criteria and practices, coupled with support from the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching is available to staff and students to ensure a shared understanding and the consistent implementation of the policy and procedures. Observations and meetings with staff and students showed that quality assurance processes are implemented as intended and are effective. Responsibilities of the different parties involved in amending and improving programmes are clear and actions to be taken are monitored in accordance with the quality assurance arrangements set out in the Education Manual through the academic governance and management structures established.

136      Close linkages are maintained between learning support services and academic planning and review in line with the institution's learning, teaching and assessment strategy and there is close collaboration between staff involved in teaching and those involved in supporting students presenting a range of needs. The commitment to student support is evident in the institution's establishment of the Student Support and Services Board of Studies which is subject to the same requirements for annual monitoring and institution-led review as those of the academic subject boards of studies. This enables senior leaders to maintain oversight of the interrelationship between academic and non-academic student support needs for students studying on and off-site; identify good and poor practice; and monitor the effectiveness of the learning and teaching infrastructure. The institution's experience of withdrawing from one of its campuses demonstrated the care with which the process has been managed to ensure that the interests of students were safeguarded.

137      The combination of robust quality assurance mechanisms, including the development of quality enhancement plans, and governance and management arrangements, serve to identify areas of strength and weaknesses at different levels within the institution and enable SRUC to demonstrate accountability to its stakeholders. The team found that, while the institution demonstrates that it is aware of its strengths and

weaknesses, action is not always taken to address weaknesses in a timely manner, as in the case of the use of data to inform academic performance.

# Administrative systems

## Criterion 9: The institution's administrative systems are sufficient to manage its operations now and in the foreseeable future

**The institution's administrative support systems are able to monitor student progression and performance and provide timely and accurate information to satisfy academic and non-academic information needs**

138      A project on improved data quality and reporting has been ongoing since 2014 following feedback from that year's ELIR. The ELIR report (2019) noted business information improvements made but recommended that SRUC should continue to enhance the range of data sets available to inform academic quality monitoring and decision-making. SRUC's one year on report 2020 indicated that the creation of the SRUC Registry and the Registry's close working relationship with Information Digital Services (IDS) had served to accelerate the project and improved the quality, speed and understanding of higher education provision information requirements, allowing better data to be provided to support decision-making. SRUC recognises that there is still some way to go in the provision of data and has active plans to address this area, including support from consultants to help build a roadmap of areas to improve.

139      Data reporting on student enrolment, retention, progression, achievement, and destinations, as well as internally and externally generated survey data, is now more streamlined and accessible for annual and periodic monitoring. The student record system supports the student administrative journey processes; a range of data to track and monitor student performance is used, and the system provides the basis for statutory returns. Students' results are recorded in this system and students access results directly via SRUC's e-learning platform for in-year module results and MySRUC for end-of-year results; students were happy with this access to results which works well. While the system has been assessed as fit for purpose at present and up until the end of the current contract in 2025, a longer-term view will be taken on future needs closer to that date. Staff receive reports from the system on key performance indicators, including retention and success, which show three-year trends, and this is reflected in commentary in annual monitoring reports.

140      Timetabling is carried out at faculty level with an advance timetable issued in August. However, students reported that, although there is a timetable at the start of the year, it generally does not contain all the details they need and they receive clarifications closer to the actual events, with a lot of changes in the early part of semesters. NSS scores on timetabling vary with students commenting that timetabling was inconsistent and SRUC is keen to address this through a project on timetabling: there are plans to bring in some expert help to evaluate the current arrangements and devise a plan for improvement.

**The institution provides access to comprehensive library and computing services, support and demand for which is regularly monitored and, where appropriate, improved**

141      SRUC's library provision is necessarily scattered geographically, but it is SRUC's aim and ambition to have a consistent service in operation. There is a strategic aim to achieve much of this through more digital content and the use of reading list software. A new library management system was implemented in July 2022 and reading list software has been introduced, although active use of this is somewhat limited at present. Some of the

planned integrations have had to be delayed a little because of the need to minimise disruption with staffing issues arising from staff leave and the loss of a staff member for whom a replacement was sought.

142     A paper presented to the Student Support and Services Board of Studies meeting (June 2002) referred to an ambition to set up a SRUC Library Users' Group following SSEC approval of the plan in May 2022. At the time of the second team visit in February 2023, this group had not yet been formed. An example business case template provided showed that details of any additional demand on library resources required should be provided and that design teams are requested to indicate that library staff have been consulted and the date of consultation, to ensure that the impact of new developments and plans are built into validation. Campus library teams provide online guides, online training and local training plus personal support. Training is focused on library inductions at the start of the year, but sessions are also run on topics such as referencing, finding information and literature searching. There is a good level of usage of the online guides with over 60 now offered across a range of topics. Students are generally happy with the library provision and the training and guides available and were particularly appreciative of the active support available during COVID, which included books being posted to students' home addresses.

143     Until 2020, resources for student-facing computer facilities were controlled by the academic division. Since then, IDS and CELT have worked together to determine priority requirements and submit a joint funding proposal. The team supporting information and digital needs now uses a business partner model to ensure a good level of service is informed by user needs in line with an IDS review project plan. Business partners hold regular meetings, including with SRUCSA and make a specific effort to attend events and meetings to get to know staff and student needs. This is working well to address issues and feed into more general developments. For example, issues and suggestions raised about MySRUC have been picked up and addressed. Monitoring of the student experience of information and digital services is done in part via a monthly Student Experience Group and a survey which has shown an increase in satisfaction in this area. Students confirmed that they know where to go for IT and systems support, and they appreciate the high quality of support given. Improvements have been made to the set-up and support for e-learning in recent years, which again students appreciate.

**The institution provides high quality and confidential support services for students and staff**

144     The Student Support and Engagement Committee monitors the support services which include Student Support Tutors (Education and Pastoral), Careers, Library Services, SRUCSA Development, Information and Digital Services, Student Journey and Digital Learning. Students are encouraged to confidentially declare specific needs to enable the institution to support them throughout their learning journey. SRUC developed a Healthy Learning and Wellbeing Strategy in 2017. To support the aims of this strategy, 37 staff have undertaken in-person Mental Health First Aid training. In addition, an employee assistance programme providing a 24-hour support helpline and an online mental health tool enable staff to access the right support when needed. A usage report (December 2020) showed that the service was widely used in the period from March to November 2020.

145     Students were very appreciative of the level and quality of support on offer, which many had used. While these services are comparable with those across the sector, the distributed nature brings its own challenges and some benefits. SRUC actively seeks to ensure comparability of provision, no matter what the location, and provides services at a distance where appropriate. Students value these opportunities but also tend to use local staff where they can and indicated that the support they receive is very good, with very dedicated staff going out of their way to help students. Academic Liaison Managers told the

team that they work with Support Services on individual student needs and take an overview of the overall demand for services.

146    Support Services, as with many SRUC services, take part in Institution-Led Review (ILR). Following a major review in 2017, the services were subject to an ILR in December 2022. These reviews have provided opportunities to take a wider look at the services provided through self-analysis, which is subject to peer review, with panel reports identifying areas of strengths and actions leading to action plans. The self-reflection and willingness to listen and learn to help develop the service resulted in a commendation in ELIR 4 (2019) on action taken to support mental health. In response to student feedback through Speak Week 2020-21, the Executive Leadership Team determined that there would be a review of this area to include sector benchmarking leading to a newly agreed Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. While this work was launched in July 2021 with the aim for a new strategy to be in place in 2022-23, a January 2023 update on progress indicated that data collection, evidence gathering and liaison with internal and external sources had taken place to inform the new strategy, but the group was just concluding its work in Spring 2023 as the scrutiny was drawing to a close.

**The institution achieves equality of opportunity in its activities**

147    Given the tertiary nature of SRUC, the profile of students is unique, with features such as a strong widening access mix, many students progressing from further education to higher education within SRUC, and a complex mix of entry and exit points. Staff are provided with good data and information on both individual students and the cohort profile for programmes. Student transition is well supported and staff access data on students with particular needs, and academic liaison managers and support services staff told the team that they reach out to such students before the students start. Examples of programme annual monitoring reports and QEPs and Board annual monitoring reports and QEPs include data on students by a range of profiles and prompts staff to consider and comment on these. Scrutiny of the notes of one annual quality dialogue meeting (September 2020) demonstrated that the data in such reports contributes to inform discussions in these meetings. More broadly, the Student Support Services team carries out its own annual monitoring that includes evaluations of the various support schemes in place for students with particular characteristics.

148    SRUC actively seeks to promote equality, and the scrutiny team observed discussions about some of the activities in this area, such as a move to achieve a gender balance on recruitment panels. There is a strong commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) which is embedded in governance structures with coordination and discussion at the EDI Committee and comprehensive monitoring of both staff and student data, and a dedicated post supporting this work. SRUC has been monitoring and has taken action in a range of areas to address gender imbalances in some programmes with some success, such as a rise in female students on Agriculture and Rural Business Management. Work targeted at staff, for example Menopause Awareness training for staff and managers run in Autumn 2022, is also under way or planned. SRUC is committed to the Athena Swan charter (a framework used to support and transform gender equality within higher education and research). While there has been a focus on EDI over the past few years actual solid progress has been slow, and the application for an Athena Swan Bronze Award (made in 2021 and revised in 2022) was not successful. Nevertheless, SRUC remains committed to achieving the Athena Swan award and is making progress in other areas. A Short Life Working Group has been established to review the application and action plan to ensure that the plan is better aligned to the charter and institutional equality outcomes.

**The institution has in place effective and confidential mechanisms to deal with all complaints regarding academic and non-academic matters**

149     The complaints procedure complies with Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) regulations. The Registrar and Secretariat are responsible for the complaints process and the Registrar manages academic-related complaints. Prospective complainants are encouraged to approach their ALM or service provider (for example, halls of residence manager) in the first instance to secure local resolution. Where complaints are raised there is a formal review of these at programme level through a prompt in the annual monitoring template. Students indicated that they are aware of the complaints procedure which is contained in the Education Manual and while they do use the formal systems, most issues appear to be resolved informally at a local level, as shown by an example review of complaints 2018/19 considered by the Student Support and Engagement Committee. The team found from the review that appropriate and effective action was taken both to resolve the individual complaints and to address any underlying problems, including through the provision of staff development and the issue of further guidance to staff and students. Notwithstanding the low overall volume of complaints, SRUC has been taking steps to ensure that staff understand the process and how to use it.

150     Occasionally, a complaint will be an academic or admissions-related appeal and the institution's processes for both types of appeal are included within the Education Manual. Academic appeals involve a two-stage process, involving students appealing to programme management teams in the first instance, followed by appeal (if dissatisfied with the initial response) to either the Academic Appeals Subcommittee of the Learning and Teaching Committee or, for University of Glasgow registered students, an Academic Appeals Committee established by SRUC and the University. A paper on Academic Appeals during 2021-22 considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee in October 2022 noted that four appeals relating to University of Glasgow validated programmes had been lodged, three of which were upheld and one was ongoing while in 2020-21 five appeals relating to the University of Glasgow provision had been received, of which one was upheld and in 2019/20 four appeals had been received relating to one Higher National programme which had been effectively resolved.

**The institution's administrative staff are given adequate opportunities for professional development**

151     The re-focus on staff development provided by the new People Strategy, in development during the period of this scrutiny, sets out various aspects of the institution's ambitions for all staff. Observation of a Senior Leadership Team meeting demonstrated that SRUC is aware of the particular challenges of attracting and retaining professional staff, and of keeping staff who have worked at SRUC for some time up to date in terms of their skills and abilities. The Leadership Academy established by SRUC provides a means to address staff training needs and the professional development opportunities afforded by the Leadership Academy were appreciated by staff who spoke of the benefits derived from the initiative. In addition, administrative staff participate in internal groups which focus on specific matters of shared interest.

152     Professional development opportunities are also supported through SRUC's membership of Advance HE, the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE), the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), QAA Scotland and other external organisations. External training has been provided for faculty administrators who have received professional development from colleagues at another college, and conference attendance and professional qualifications are also supported. Administrative staff take part in the annual review process, Making Performance Matter (MPM), which is used to identify professional development needs. There is good

take-up of opportunities ranging from day courses in general support staff areas, and specialist focus training in professional areas, through to support for Higher National, degree and master's level study. Staff find the GAPS Forum (for guidance, academic and pastoral support staff) a useful place to meet (monthly) and address issues and hear about good practice across SRUC.

**Administrative systems: Key strengths and weaknesses**

153      The scrutiny team focused on the arrangements in place for the operation of taught higher education provision while being aware that, in practice, the same arrangements cover further education and research students. The tertiary nature of SRUC shapes the administrative systems and processes, and the relative size, and in some cases relative youth of SRUC as a single institution (since the 2012 merger) all have an impact. The relatively recent creation of a single Registry team is a strength which is providing strong leadership and improvements in many areas. There is work yet to do, such as in timetabling and in relation to data, to enhance the institution's ability to monitor student progression and performance to satisfy academic and non-academic needs but even here existing arrangements are supported and scrutinised, while awaiting more ambitious plans.

154      The institution provides students with accessible library, computing and student support services and routinely monitors them to ensure that these services continue to meet student need and demand. SRUC takes seriously the challenge of providing effective and comparable services in library, computing and student service areas on a distributed network of sites. Students appreciate the services available and there are plans for developments in all areas. There are particular strengths in student support services, although plans for a new Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy have taken some time to finalise. A revised model of business partner support by the Information and Digital Services team has worked particularly well. Library services are well liked, and provision is good, though developments in this area seem to take some time to come to fruition.

155      There is active work on aspects of equality across staff and student areas, all of which is taken seriously. There is particular focus on support for students progressing from further education to higher education, with good support for students with particular needs. There has been activity across a number of areas to address gender imbalance, with some success, although SRUC recognises a need to do more in this area. Staff have access to appropriate support services, and all have opportunities to undertake internal and external professional development aligned to the institution's strategic objectives.

# Academic staffing

## Criterion 10: The qualities and competences of staff are appropriate for an institution with taught degree awarding powers

**A significant proportion of the institution's academic staff have higher degrees and relevant professional qualifications**

156      The scrutiny team analysed staff data provided from April 2021, which was subsequently updated in a September 2022 spreadsheet, together with copies of CVs for 123 of the 138 academic staff listed in the September 2022 spreadsheet. The data relates only to those academic staff teaching on higher education programmes (SCQF Level 8 and above (FHEQ Level 5 and above)). Of the CVs provided, 57 were comprehensive with the remaining 66 containing limited information primarily from the management information database used by SRUC. The majority of academic staff teaching on programmes at SCQF Level 8 and above have postgraduate qualifications as detailed below:

- Of the 138 academic staff teaching at SCQF Level 8 and above, 58 have PhDs, and a further 47 are qualified to SCQF Level 11. Therefore 76% of these academic staff are qualified to postgraduate level.

- A further breakdown of the 47 staff holding SCQF Level 11 qualifications found that 24 are qualified to master's level in their subject discipline (including MSc, MBA, MA, MPhil, MRes) and the remaining 23 staff are qualified to degree level (SCQF 10) in their subject but hold a postgraduate teaching qualification at Level 11 (PGCert, PGCE, PGDip) with two also holding relevant professional qualifications (Registered Veterinary Nurse) (RVN).

- While noting that there is a difference in postgraduate subject/teaching qualifications, there is a majority (total of 82 staff or 59%) of the 138 academic staff holding a postgraduate qualification within their subject discipline (either master's or PhD).

- There are 32 academic staff with professional qualifications including in the areas of accountancy (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants), veterinary (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery, RVN), horticulture (Diploma), and equine (British Horse Society coaching, instructor) of which 11 do not hold a postgraduate qualification. This means that 23% of academic staff hold a professional qualification and 67% (total of 93 staff) hold either a postgraduate qualification or a professional qualification.

- Most academic staff are qualified at a higher or equal level at which they are teaching, with four academic staff teaching above their level of qualification, three of whom are registered veterinary nurses and meet the professional requirements of the RCVS.

157    Academic staff generally teach to a level to which they are qualified, with some exceptions where some staff holding postgraduate teaching qualifications do not have a subject-level postgraduate qualification (that is, MSc, MPhil). While most of the teaching at master's level (SCQF 11) is delivered by staff with doctoral qualifications (78.4% of SCQF 11 teaching) or a master's in their discipline (a further 10.8%), the remaining master's level teaching (10.8%) is currently being undertaken by academic staff qualified to degree level in their subject and holding a postgraduate teaching qualification. At honours degree level, 48.6% is delivered by staff with doctorates, 21.6% by staff with subject-level master's and 29.7% by staff qualified to degree level in their subject but who have a postgraduate teaching qualification. At ordinary degree and HND level (SCQF Level 9 and 8 respectively) the majority of teaching is delivered by staff with degrees (52.9% and 22.9% respectively).

158    Further analysis of academic staff qualifications illustrates a marked variation between SRUC campuses. The majority of SRUC staff with PhDs are located in Edinburgh (69% of all staff with doctorates) with 53% at the Edinburgh campus and 14% at the nearby Roslin Institute (a research institute in Edinburgh) all of whom contribute to teaching. Of the remaining staff with doctorates, 16% are located in Aberdeen at the Craibstone campus and 5% are located at each of Barony, Oatridge and Auchincruive (that is, 15% of total doctorates located across these three campuses). No Elmwood staff have doctorates, while one staff member at the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE), who teaches at SRUC, has a doctorate. This distribution partly reflects the programmes taught at each location, Elmwood and Oatridge teaching up to SCQF 8, Barony to Level 10, and Craibstone and Edinburgh up to doctoral level. There is also a variation in campus distribution of staff with subject-specific Level 11 qualifications (master's) with 28% based at Edinburgh, 20% at Craibstone, 16% Elmwood, 12% Barony, 8% Oatridge and further staff at RBGE and Kindrogan Field Centre with master's qualifications.

159     The total number of academic staff at SRUC, including those teaching at further education level, rose from 461 to 480 (headcount) between 2017-18 and 2021-22. Hence the above analysis of 138 staff represents a minority of academic staff overall. The overall staff profile for SRUC staff teaching at higher education levels meets the criterion, with a majority of academic staff teaching at Level 8 and above having postgraduate qualifications. The differences in staff qualifications at each campus reflects the current level of qualifications taught at each site.

160     SRUC developed new 'academic job families' in 2019 that were shared with staff in July 2021, further developed and shared again in April 2022 when staff were informed which job family they would be migrated onto. Migration was implemented in August 2022 as a step towards the future consolidation of further and higher education staff onto a single academic contract. The academic job families documents cover roles from Teaching Instructor/Research Assistant, Lecturer (Grades 3 and 4), to Senior Lecturer/Reader as well as technical posts. Lecturers at both grades 3 and 4 may be appointed onto Learning, Teaching and Scholarship or Research and Teaching contracts and are required to be qualified to SCQF Level 12 '(Doctorate or similar) (or equivalent qualification)' or to have "extensive teaching or industry experience equivalent' to SCQF Level 12 or 'relevant professional specialist qualification (for example, MRCVS, MD, LLB) and postgraduate specialist qualification in a relevant discipline or equivalent experience'.

161     While these academic job families are broadly comparable with those of other further education and higher education organisations, the team found that 'equivalent experience' lacked definition within the documentation. In practice, according to additional evidence provided by SRUC, it interprets 'equivalent experience' to mean more than five years in a senior position in industry (that is, senior researcher in industry or senior knowledge exchange and training role), to be equivalent to a doctorate, in which case advice would be sought from Human Resources, in discussion with the relevant Dean, to assess the equivalence. However, this is not explicit in the staff recruitment or job family documentation. Additionally, professional doctorates would be accepted and, while there is no direct mapping onto SCQF Level 12 criteria, there are points within the recruitment process at which equivalence is considered, from the composition of the interview panel through the selection criteria and competence-based interviews.

162     The team learned of difficulties in recruiting academic staff in a number of subject disciplines, particularly where professional and/or applied expertise is required. There is no overarching strategy for academic staff recruitment in terms of the proportion of staff at each level of seniority (lecturer, senior lecturer, professor) or of staff on teaching, research and teaching contracts but there is an ambition to grow the number of students at taught postgraduate level with an associated growth in staff numbers. SRUC has a high level multiyear financial plan that outlines planned growth in student and staff numbers. It is currently undertaking a portfolio review which, together with the introduction of the workload allocation model, is intended to 'help refine staffing requirements'. At a local level, staff requirements are discussed during the annual planning round, and this provides Deans with opportunities to request funding according to needs, although there is no indicative staff-student ratio for taught programmes.

163     Staff retention data provided in March 2023 showed that academic staff retention has been in decline, falling from 90% in 2017-18 to 87.92% in 2021-22 with turnover of 10.9% compared to 9.2% across Scottish higher education institutions. The main reason given by staff for leaving (2020-22) is the lack of training and development opportunities (32% of leavers). The team noted that the new workload allocation model is to be used for understanding staffing needs for planning purposes and the latest People and Organisational Development (POD) Strategy (2023-2027), which was made available to the team in March 2023, includes an objective aimed specifically at reducing staff turnover at

one to three years' service, namely, 'Early Career Development- identifying and developing a career development path for entry level talent'.

164      There is nothing in the POD Strategy aimed at raising the level of qualifications of academic staff. The ambition to grow student numbers through international student recruitment and increased PGT programmes would be expected to require additional staff recruitment but there was no indication that this was being planned alongside programme development although the international strategy is still at a very early stage in its development. Given that the workload model has only just been introduced, it is not yet clear whether there is capacity among the current staff to deliver additional programmes. In the absence of this data, the lack of any strategic approach to staffing or of any indicative staff-student ratio or plan for staff qualifications/training, it is unclear whether SRUC has the capacity or expertise to significantly grow its postgraduate taught or international provision.

**A significant proportion of the institution's academic staff have teaching experience in other higher education institutions**

165      The Critical Self-Analysis stated that just over half of the academic staff recruited over the last three years have teaching experience in other higher education institutions. From the analysis of staff CVs available to the team, six of the 23 teaching staff recruited in 2020-22 have had lectureships and teaching experience in other higher education institutions. A further four gained tutoring experience during their PhD or postdoctoral posts at other higher education institutions prior to appointment at SRUC.    A further two staff had prior experience of teaching at another further education college.  Out of 138 academic staff, 30 (that is, 22%) have experience of teaching at another higher education institution before working at SRUC. Through current partnerships with Edinburgh University, a number of SRUC staff have current experience of teaching on their programmes. A further seven staff have served, or are serving, as external examiners at another higher education institution (BSc and MSc programmes). The team heard examples of how teaching staff have used their experience as external examiners to advise colleagues of good practice seen elsewhere. The team considered that this does not represent a significant proportion of academic staff with teaching experience in other higher education institutions.

**A significant proportion of the institution's academic staff have experience of curriculum development and assessment design**

166      Data presented in the staffing spreadsheet shows that, of the 138 staff listed, 40 staff have experience of taught programme curriculum development, with 38 of the same staff having experience of assessment design for taught programmes. The team considered this to be a relatively low proportion for an institution with responsibility for designing and delivering degree programmes although a number of the 138 staff are teaching HND courses with specified curricula.

**A significant proportion of the institution's academic staff have relevant experience outside higher education, for example in professional practice**

167      Analysis of staff CVs, discussions with the Academic Director and the Academic Manager, together with the latest (September 2022) staff spreadsheet show that a total of 16 staff are actively involved as professional practitioners, a further six engage in consultancies, and five are engaged in creative work relevant to the discipline that they teach. This makes a total of 27 out of 138 staff who are currently engaging outside of higher education. This figure does not include staff who had professional practice experience before joining SRUC (32 have professional qualifications) but the team noted that many of these staff are required to continue engaging with their profession (for example, veterinary nursing) to remain

registered. The team considered that the figure of 27 out of 138 current staff engaging with professional practice is relatively low given the applied nature of SRUC's provision.

## Criterion 11: The institution's staff are actively engaged with the pedagogic development of their discipline

**A proportion of the institution's academic staff are active in subject associations and relevant professional bodies**

168　Academic staff are involved in a number of external organisations. A total of 44 staff (31%) are members of subject associations or professional bodies, ranging from the Association of Applied Biologists, Institute of Landscape Architects, Royal Geographical Society, and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

**A significant proportion of the institution's academic staff participate in professional development schemes**

169　Thirty-one academic staff teaching on higher education programmes (22%) are working towards a Level 11 postgraduate qualification, 44 staff have attended an external conference or subject network, 24 at national and 20 at international level, with 23 staff presenting conference papers. Veterinary nursing staff are required by their professional body (RCVS) to participate in continuing professional development (CPD) to maintain their registration while other staff have had opportunities to undertake CPD through a range of programmes offered by CELT, as described below.

**There are institutional and local level strategies of staff development designed to establish, develop and enhance staff competences**

170　Professional development opportunities for staff are provided both within and outside of the institution. With restructuring, responsibility for development has been devolved, with CELT responsible for professional development relating to learning, teaching and the student experience; faculties taking responsibility for supporting subject-related development, non-pedagogic research and researcher development; Human Resources providing support and guidance to divisions and line managers; and Organisational Development leading on organisational goals such as MPM and leadership development through the Leadership Academy.

171　Academic and professional development needs for new staff are identified through induction with guidance and a checklist provided for employees and managers. Teaching-related CPD is organised through CELT and an Academic Staff Development Framework describes in-house professional development activities which CELT can deliver based on principles and contexts outlined in the Framework. CELT also provides bespoke training to support programme delivery staff, as required. Staff can apply for funding to gain external qualifications through a Sponsored Education process. Applications are signed off by the appropriate cost centre manager and line manager and submitted to Organisational Development. There is no automatic entitlement for funding and selection is according to institutional priorities, as recognised through the Balanced Scorecard. Academic and professional development needs for new staff are identified through induction, with guidance and a checklist provided for employees and managers. The overall approach is set out clearly in the Academic Staff Development Policy together with allocated responsibilities for each role holder/department from individual staff through to line managers and those with institution-level responsibilities.

172　To lead the development of pedagogically focused academic staff, a new post of Academic Enhancement Lead (Staff Development) was created within CELT in 2019. This

role also involves evaluating programmes of pedagogic-related development and working with Human Resources and Organisational Development. Institutional and local-level strategies and policies for staff development set out aims to establish, develop and enhance staff competences. Responsibilities are assigned to those leading the individual strategies. A People Strategy was introduced for 2018-23 with broad aims to review values and behaviours; introduce Above and Beyond Awards for staff; review the annual review process; and introduce a Leadership Academy. Most of these aims have been achieved although mentoring, and talent and succession planning have been carried over into the People and Organisational Strategy (2023-27). This strategy sets out a further ambition to develop an overarching staff development policy that includes KPIs 'to ensure equality of access, work with institutional functions to develop qualification/experience frameworks - supporting both minimum qualifications and progression' although no specific timescales are indicated.

173     The Above and Beyond Awards, which recognise contributions from academic and professional services staff and the Leadership Academy were established in 2019 and that same year a review of the previous staff appraisal system led to its replacement by Making Performance Matter (MPM), an annual performance management process, which identifies staff needs with a key aim of aligning the role of individual employees with the institution's strategic aims. Measures for 'Formal Academic Development' are included in the Balanced Scorecard and CPD requests are prioritised according to institutional priorities as recognised through the Scorecard, with clear targets for staff to achieve teaching qualifications (as described below paragraph 181). The Academic Staff Development Policy, described in the Education Manual includes reference to evaluating the impact of staff development opportunities on the student learning experience but the team saw no evidence to show that this has been completed.

174     Participation in MPM is recognised as being relatively low, inconsistent, and in some cases ineffective, as reported to the SRUC Board with 34% of staff recording their discussions in 2019. The team noted too that there was little evidence of MPM being considered through the promotions process. The People and Organisational Development Strategy (2023-27) aims to embed MPM and improve completion rates through a focus on 'discussions incorporating both performance and development elements'. The team noted that no timescales were included in the strategy, nor did it include any SMART objectives although it did include some open-ended objectives such as the 'development of a workforce/succession planning strategy' and 'development of an overarching SRUC Staff Development Policy' with no mention of allocation of responsibilities or 'ownership' of any of the objectives.

175     Leadership capacity is identified as a target within the SRUC Strategy. The Leadership Academy, run by Organisational Development, provides in-house leadership training for academic and professional services staff. The programme is delivered through a series of workshops, together with self-study, experiential learning, psychometric profiling, and one-to-one coaching. An update on the Leadership Academy shows that participants create their own action plan to become a 'more impactful leader'. While no specific targets are given within the strategy, there is a general aim of increasing the completion rates for staff participating in the training. Staff apply to Organisational Development for places on the Leadership Academy programme with a supporting reference from their line manager but there does not appear to be an institutional strategy for identifying potential leaders or priority areas where leadership capacity needs to grow.

176     The update on the Leadership Academy indicated that the first cohort of staff participated in the programme between August and December 2019 and that six programmes have run since 2019 with a total of 53 participants (including the February 2022 cohort). Places are limited to 12 participants in-person and to 10 when it moved online

during Covid restrictions. A Leadership Alumni community has been established for past participants. Participants are encouraged to discuss outcomes with their line manager and to continue to have development discussions as part of the MPM process.

177     Professional development is supported through membership of professional bodies (paid for by SRUC) including institutional membership of Advance HE, membership of the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE) for Academic Liaison Managers and funding is provided for staff to attend conferences. Staff are supported to attend learning, teaching and student experience-focused conferences, for example, the Advance HE annual conference, student mental health conference and the QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes conference as well as participating in the Scottish Academic Leadership Programme and Advance HE's Enhancing Programme Leadership Course and Aurora programme. Professional development may also be organised for teams, as well as for individuals. For example, Registry staff participated in a week of training from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), and faculty administrators were given support for monitoring the progress of modern apprentices.

178     Academic staff were aware of the opportunities for training and CPD and were able to discuss their ambitions for teaching. They were very positive about the support available to them, for example to study for postgraduate qualifications. The newly developed workload allocation model includes time for staff to participate in CPD. The team concluded that staff are provided with opportunities for CPD, and line managers are responsible for identifying how individual needs are met in relation to the strategic priorities of the institution while also noting that capacity and workload issues may also limit staff take-up of development opportunities.

**The institution has established an extensive portfolio of teaching development activities**

179     An extensive portfolio of teaching development activities is available to staff teaching higher education programmes at SRUC. These activities include access to external programmes, internal courses and bespoke courses. CELT has overall responsibility for staff CPD relating to teaching, learning and assessment. The Academic Staff Development Framework sets out agreed principles and contexts for staff development, distinguishing between the responsibilities of CELT and those of the wider institution and noting that 'CELT is a small team'. The framework lists agreed activities for the short, intermediate and longer term (2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022+ respectively) to be delivered by CELT. These include short-term aims to deliver a Professional Development Award (PDA), coordinating access to external training courses (for example, a Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Tertiary and Higher Education and a Teaching Qualification in Further Education (TQFE) college sector award), short clinics/drop-ins, workshops, termly 'new to teaching days' and how-to guides. Webinars and bespoke courses were planned for 2022 and mentoring/coaching and leadership beyond 2022.

180     Newly appointed staff undertake a learning, teaching and assessment induction using an online 'New to Teaching Toolkit' in the VLE and are allocated a subject mentor within their team. New staff are directed towards gaining appropriate teaching qualifications by the Academic Enhancement Lead (Staff Development) within CELT. They are expected to undertake a teaching qualification and complete within two years. Staff teaching wholly at SCQF Level 6 or below complete the in-house supported Professional Development Award (PDA) in Teaching Practices in Scotland's Colleges, followed by the Teaching Qualification for Further Education (TQFE) at the University of Stirling. Staff teaching fewer than 120 hours per year complete the PDA only.

181     The Critical Self-Analysis states that a 'significant proportion of CELT's academic development fund' is used to fund staff to achieve teaching qualifications and there is a target for all new teaching staff to be registered on the PGCert and for 80% of existing staff to be registered by 2023. As of August 2022, 68% of teaching staff had a recognised teaching qualification, defined as one of two recognised awards - the Post Graduate Certificate in Tertiary and Higher Education delivered through the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and the Teaching Qualification for Further Education delivered at Stirling University. The targets for teaching qualifications are not being met, nor is it likely that they will be achievable because of the limited places available for SRUC staff on the PGCert programme. SRUC recognises that work needs to be done to ensure staff are fully aware of the different qualifications frameworks and how they impact curriculum design and delivery. However, the scrutiny team also learned that there is currently a waiting list for SRUC staff to join this programme attributed to a cap on numbers set by the delivery institution and with taught degree awarding powers there is an ambition to create an in-house PGCert for staff as a means to address identified need. Meanwhile, the target of 80% of staff registered for a PGCert by 2023 remains unattainable because of limited capacity to deliver these places. The team noted that the development of an in-house PGCert has not been written into the People and Organisational Development Strategy.

182     Postgraduate research students who teach are required to complete the 'New to Teaching' module either online or in person. They also have access to the Staff Development programme on the VLE and are provided with a Post Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook. If they teach more than 40 hours in one year, they can also access the Professional Development Award (with CELT) and, if teaching over 18 months or more, they may request to enrol in the PGCert in Tertiary and Higher Education. Their teaching is evaluated through peer observation, student feedback and module evaluation.

183     Staff with teaching qualifications are encouraged, but not required, to undertake Advance HE Fellowship either through direct application (supported by CELT) or through Advance HE accredited provision as part of the PGCert at UHI. There are 42 registered Fellows, with a further 23 undertaking the award at UHI and 14 applying directly to Advance HE for fellowship. Some activities have inevitably been impacted by the pandemic. A whole-institution annual learning and teaching conference was held previously and had been well attended (80% of teaching staff). It included external participants, albeit primarily from further education organisations (for example, Education Scotland, the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Skills Development Scotland, and the College Development Network).

184     An online staff development programme was held during the summer before the start of the 2020-21 academic year to support staff to upskill in online delivery. Material was released weekly on the VLE over a five-week period, with a total of 44 activities and resources. Analysis and reflections on the course by the Academic Enhancement Lead (Staff Development) found that, as of the end of September 2020, 180 staff had engaged with the material. While there was good engagement at the start of the five-week programme, the number of participants dropped by week five with Learning and Teaching, Digital, and Student Journey resources being the most-used. Over 60% of staff expressed satisfaction with the material and only 14% were dissatisfied. Following this survey it was recognised that the future focus should be on digital learning, particularly the new virtual classroom (Kaltura) and also taking a localised approach where possible. The material remained available for staff to access for the remainder of the year, by which time there had been 24,000 individual accesses according to the Quality Enhancement Plan 2020-21 considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee in June 2021.

185     In response to the review of the staff development programme, as well as recommendations from Landex (a Land Based Colleges and Universities Aspiring to Excellence subscriber organisation) peer review report (April 2021), the Digital Learning

Team within CELT subsequently delivered digital learning staff development sessions (Edinburgh, August 2022) including 'Getting the best out of Moodle (GBOM)' and using Kaltura. The presentation and supporting material were made available to the scrutiny team and these demonstrate a good depth of coverage with direction towards further material. The online GBOM was launched in July 2020 and has been accessed 82,000 times by staff between July 2020 and April 2021 and a weekly GBOM newsletter is produced.

186	CELT also provides further bespoke learning and teaching-related CPD following consultation with groups to agree a programme brief that has, for example, delivered sessions for Horticulture and Landscape Design, support for the introduction of the honours year in veterinary nursing, assessment and feedback staff development, and personal tutoring. Other areas of support provided by CELT include training with the Quality Assurance Lead and Head of Learning and Teaching for staff involved in ILRs. Informal networking opportunities are also provided through various group forums, for example for Heads of Department, programme leads, for staff involved in providing guidance, pastoral and academic support, and for staff wishing to share best practice and support developments in digitally enhanced learning and teaching.

187	The Critical Self-Analysis states that pedagogic developments are supported through three main schemes, namely, QAA Scotland's Enhancement Themes, the Principal's Teaching Innovation Fund, and the Orchard Programme. The Enhancement Themes fund has supported staff and student projects on student learning communities, peer mentoring in a blended learning environment, and staff learning communities. The projects are evaluated as part of the national programme of enhancement themes led by the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee. The Principal's Teaching Innovation Fund supports projects that address the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy, particularly relating to digital learning, assessment and feedback and learners as partners. The scrutiny team was given an example of one successful bid, for video analysis and performance review of horse-riding for HNC and HND programmes that was demonstrated at the Celebration of Learning and Teaching Event in August 2022 where it was explained that this was a facility unique within the sector and, as such, a good example of innovative teaching and sharing of good practice.

188	A March 2021 report on the Orchard Programme considered by the Commercial Leadership Team indicates that the programme invested over £800,000 in projects and support between its inception in 2019 and closure in 2021. The initiative provided funding for projects with potential for commercialisation, with 16 funded out of 39 entries. The programme also provided training to staff in innovation and enterprise and a total of 40 staff attended workshops, seminars and training sessions. The Orchard Programme continues and is funded annually out of the SFC University Innovation Fund. SRUC also continues to participate in the Converge Challenge which is open to Scottish Universities or Research Institutes.

189	The annual Celebration of Learning and Teaching conference, organised by CELT, took place in-person in August 2022 for the first time since pandemic restrictions were imposed in 2019. At the 2019 conference, as well as SRUC staff, there were speakers and workshops from a number of external organisations including sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland), Landex, QAA, Skills Development Scotland and Advance HE, providing a good opportunity for SRUC staff to engage across the HE sector. At the 2022 event there were no talks, but instead a number of stands hosted by SRUC staff exhibiting learning and teaching topics. These included information on an online enterprise course available to all SRUC students, the SEEDABLE curriculum, and a demonstration of the equestrian project referred to above. The Principal presented awards for learning and teaching to staff who had achieved HEA fellowship and PGCerts, and staff and student awards were presented for best teacher and contribution to key projects.

190     There are many opportunities for SRUC staff to engage in CPD relating to learning, teaching and assessment, primarily through CELT but also through external organisations. Staff are funded to take teaching qualifications although there is a waiting list because of a cap on numbers imposed by the delivery body. Funds are also available for innovative projects that are in line with the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy 2020-25. While CPD opportunities are available, staffing capacity and workload considerations may serve to limit staff access to such opportunities.

**The institution's staff contribute to academic publications**

191     The staff spreadsheet (September 2022) shows that a total of 41 staff have published journal articles, of whom 15 have also published book chapters and 23 conference papers. Another member of staff has published a book chapter and a further eight conference papers. This makes a total of 50 staff who have produced a form of academic publication, or 36% of those academic staff teaching at SCQF Level 8 or above.

192     SRUC staff were submitted into the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) with University of Edinburgh Agricultural and Veterinary research, which was judged highly. The 2021 REF Submission shows that a total of 111 (105.4) FTE staff were submitted into the same category in REF 2021. This was a joint submission with the University of Edinburgh and SRUC underpinned eight out of the 11 impact case studies. Overall, 24.6% of outputs were judged at 4* and 53.1% at 3*. The impact of the research was rated 54.4% at 4* and 45.5% at 3* and the environment 62.5% 4* and 37.5% at 3*. The results are not separated between SRUC and Edinburgh although 104.99 of the total 256.8 FTEs submitted were SRUC staff so the contribution was notable. Staff on teaching tracks told the team that they had not been able to publish within the last two years but the team noted that the workload allocation model, which has only just been introduced, will include time for staff to undertake research or scholarly activity. The team considered that if the model works correctly, it will enable SRUC to identify areas where additional staff are required. The team concluded that there is a strong research culture at SRUC, and a good proportion of staff are contributing to academic publications.

## Criterion 12: Staff maintain high professional standards

**Feedback on performance is regularly received from students, employers and other institutional stakeholders**

193     The annual Making Performance Matter process provides the means of identifying staff development needs and career ambitions and recognition of achievements. In addition, for academic staff there is a professional discussion of learning and teaching procedure. This practice is led by CELT with three options for staff to engage in, namely classroom observation, peer support of learning (arranged on an individual basis) and learning walks. The Critical Self-Analysis states that departments/programme teams select two of these three options to 'encourage staff uptake'. The target is for all staff to engage in one of these activities over a 24-month period.

194     A Peer Observation Review Report covering the period April 2022 to February 2023 comments on the institution-wide peer observation of teaching process which was introduced on a trial basis in the North faculty, replacing the former SRUC classroom observation scheme that previously focused on 'professional rather than peer observation'. The aim is to establish the new peer-review scheme across the whole of SRUC over the next three years. A 'light touch' review of the new process reported that there were 58 participants, with 30 completing the forms. Feedback from participants was generally very positive. Future plans are for staff to undertake two observations each, and to be observed twice per year. Outcomes remain confidential between staff pairings, but the final parts of the

peer observation forms are used by Academic Enhancement staff to enable the identification of common themes for future CPD although none have been published to date.

195     There are a number of rewards and incentives to staff in addition to the promotions process. The 'Above and Beyond' Awards recognising a range of collegiate behaviours were introduced in 2019 following suggestions from staff involved in SRUC's People Strategy Group. Nominees are proposed by staff and selected by the Above and Beyond Awards Committee. Staff and students make nominations for Teaching Excellence Awards and there are also awards from SRUCSA providing another means for students to provide feedback on staff performance. A selection of anonymised teaching award nominations included nominations for teaching awards from individuals who valued the support given to them by staff and recognition of the contribution staff have made to the success of programmes and student recruitment.

196     SRUC aims to provide equivalent standards for promotion for academic staff on further education and higher education contracts and a new academic promotions process was introduced in the 2021-22 academic year. A review of the process was undertaken and presented to the Academic Leadership Team in January 2023 with recommendations for revision in the current cycle 2022-23. This included consolidation of subcommittees and guidance on providing evidence as well as amended promotions criteria that are under discussion although the new cycle has already opened. No specific training was provided to promotions panel members in 2021-22 other than an online e-learning module on equality and diversity, but they did receive the role profiles for promotions criteria and policy in advance of the promotions panel meeting. No additional support was provided to academic staff considering promotion beyond the annual review (MPM) for discussion with their line manager who had also received no training. As a result, a proposal has been submitted to the Academic Leadership Team to provide (i) staff development and training for those on the Learning, Teaching and Scholarship track and (ii) a session for panel members ahead of the next promotions round and drop-in sessions for academic staff and managers during the 2023 round. While staff commented that more information on the promotions process was coming through to programme leaders and line managers, presentations on the process given to the January 2023 meeting of the Learning and Teaching Committee indicated that there is still work to be done to support staff through promotion and further indicates that the promotions process remains under development.

197     Feedback on staff performance is also elicited through student surveys, student representation and engagement in the academic governance structure, MyVoice, and Student Liaison meetings. Staff are required to reflect on feedback received and survey outcomes at every stage of programme delivery, from planning to review and closure. Given the nature of the provision offered by SRUC, industry representation and engagement is an important component in designing, monitoring and reviewing performance. Industry liaison days also provide a means to consider alignment between subject provision and industry needs. Staff links and engagement with industry also enable staff to update their knowledge, inform programme enhancement and enhance the quality of the student experience. Feedback on performance is also provided by the range of external bodies to which SRUC reports and to which it is accountable for validation and funding.

**The outcomes of external scrutiny exercises undertaken by bodies such as theQuality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, the funding councils and professional and statutory bodies are carefully considered and actioned**

198     Prior to the formation of SRUC, SAC participated in previous ELIRs, with the last taking place in 2010. SRUC has participated in two Enhancement-Led Institutional Reviews, ELIR 3 in 2014 and ELIR 4 in 2019. The 2014 ELIR report identified a priority action 'to establish regular and systematic arrangements to ensure institutional oversight of the

conduct and outcomes of key quality processes' and seven other recommendations covering staff induction, information management, and mapping to the UK Quality Code. Key improvements were the introduction of a SRUC Education Manual and implementation of a single system for annual monitoring. The recommendations in ELIR 2019 covered the need for effective use of academic committee structures; a review of the distance-learning student experience; a clear policy on institutional expectations for training of staff and students who teach; a review of the arrangements for responding to student views; completion of work underway on providing timely feedback to students on assessed work; the use of data to enhance the student experience; and enhanced careers advice to students.

199     The Academic Board, Academic Leadership Team and the Learning and Teaching Committee considered the outcome report from ELIR 4 (2019). An ELIR action plan group was formed, producing an action plan that was subsequently approved by the Academic Board. The Academic Board and SRUC Board agreed the one-year-on follow-up report to QAA Scotland in September 2020. The report included plans to review the effectiveness of Academic Board committees in Autumn 2020 (it is not apparent that this has been completed) and a CELT project to develop a standard operating procedure for monitoring distance learning student progress which was completed in 2019-20. A recommendation to improve preparation for teaching led to the requirement for all staff and students teaching to take the 'new to teaching' online module, with a 'new to teaching day' piloted in January 2020.

200     Academic staff development received a commendation in the 2019 ELIR outcome report. The formation of CELT in 2019-20 aimed to improve it further, including the creation of a new post of Academic Enhancement Lead and the introduction of a suite of activities. The intention to create an overarching SRUC Staff Development Policy was identified as a further development of the outcome from the 2019 ELIR in the follow-on report of 2020 with delivery anticipated for February 2021 . When looking to develop this policy with Organisational Development, it was agreed instead to incorporate it into the Academic Staff Development Policy (created in August 2020) which outlines the responsibilities of the separate functions.

201     Academic staff teaching on the programmes validated by the partner universities are formally approved by them, and a summary report of all new staff and their qualifications is included in the annual meetings and reports to the University of Glasgow and University of Edinburgh. These annual meetings provide an opportunity for senior staff at the partner universities to scrutinise the comprehensive annual reports, which include outcomes of external reviews (for example, ELIR and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body accreditation activities), student performance, external examiners' reports, and student and staff feedback.

202     The Veterinary Nurses Council of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) scrutinised academic staff qualifications in 2018 during the initial accreditation and validation of the new veterinary nursing degree. The accreditation report indicated that there was 'an experienced staff team at Barony, of which a very high number are professionally qualified'. Fifteen teaching staff were submitted, five with no teaching qualifications, eight with further education teaching qualifications, and two with higher education teaching qualifications. The 2018 report stated that investment was needed in staff development to reach a minimum of MSc level, and also for higher education teaching qualifications to be achieved. From the CVs made available to the scrutiny team there have been no changes in teaching qualifications or master's degrees of any staff teaching on the veterinary nursing programme since 2018. At the January 2023 revalidation and accreditation event, staff CVs were assessed in relation to RCVS Standard 4 (Educators and assessors), with the outcome that this standard had been met although it was apparent that staff were not being given time to gain teaching qualifications.

203     The Landex review (2019-20) focused on distance learning and actions led to the development of improvements to Moodle and associated training from CELT (Getting the Best out of Moodle resource produced for training and guidance to staff) including the adoption of Kaltura for lecture capture and staff development for digital learning. Outcomes of external reviews by QAA, Education Scotland, Landex and PSRBs are reported to the Learning and Teaching Committee and to the Academic Board and formed part of annual reporting to, and discussion with, the University of Glasgow. As such, the Academic Board has oversight and overall responsibility for outcomes from external reviews.

**Academic staffing: Key strengths and weaknesses**

204     SRUC has processes in place to align staff performance with the strategic plan, recognising the needs of individuals (through the annual MPM) and the priorities and targets that are set out in documents such as the Balanced Scorecard. Of the 138 academic staff who teach at SCQF Level 8 and above, 105 (76%) are qualified to postgraduate level and 32 (23%) hold professional qualifications. Differences in staff qualifications at each campus reflect the current level of qualifications taught at each site. The proportion of academic staff with teaching experience in other higher education institutions (22%); experience of curriculum development and assessment design (29%); and relevant experience outside higher education, for example, in professional practice (20%) is relatively low in each case.

205     Analysis of the data provided indicated that 31% of academic staff actively engage with the pedagogic development of their discipline externally as members of subject associations or professional bodies, and staff contribute to academic publications. There are 22% of academic staff working towards a postgraduate qualification which is not a significant proportion. However, there is a good range of opportunities for staff to engage in pedagogic development, primarily through the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) but additionally through external bodies including UHI and Stirling University programmes, which support the establishment, development and enhancement of academic staff competences. The target for 80% of staff to be registered on the Postgraduate Certificate by 2023 is not achievable given capacity issues. Overall, there is structured and supported professional development for staff across the institution.

206     Academic job descriptions set out the requirements for each grade from Level 6 (Teaching instructor) through to Senior Lecture/Reader and these are broadly comparable to those of similar higher education institutions. Staff maintain high professional standards through the feedback they receive from internal and external stakeholders. There is a clear process for annual appraisals through Making Performance Matter (MPM) and there is separate and clear documentation to help employees and managers to work through this online process. Information from the process feeds into staff development plans, with CELT being responsible for learning and teaching development activities. Although the continuing professional development and career development needs of individuals are considered at MPM, the team noted that there are capacity issues associated with workload and opportunities available with regard to access to external qualifications. MPM completion rates remain low across SRUC and this is to be addressed under the People and Organisational Development Strategy (2023-2027).

SRUC gives careful consideration to feedback received from students, employers and other institutional stakeholders and engages constructively with the feedback received. SRUC's response to the outcomes of external review is organised and transparent, with clear oversight and accountability for actions in response to external scrutiny activity involving external bodies, including its validating partners - the Scottish Funding Council, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

## Table of evidence

213.     Academic Job Descriptions
214.     Workload Allocation Model
215.     ALT Balanced Scorecard
216.     PGTA Handbook and Code of Conduct
217.     Memorandum of Understanding with UHI
218.     Example Sponsored Education Forms
219.     Academic Staff Development Framework
220.     Annual Conference Example Programme 2019
221.     2020 Annual Staff Development Programme Report
222.     Example Bespoke Programme Development Summary
223.     Interim Learning and Teaching Discussions Report
224.     Veterinary Nursing Bespoke Programme Development Summary
225.     The Orchard Programme Report 2021
226.     Moodle Standards Project Brief
227.     Classroom Capture Project Brief
228.     2014 REF Results
229.     2021 REF Submission Summary
230.     Challenge Driven Research Centres Briefing
231.     Enhancement Theme 2020-2023: Year One Report
232.     Example Professional Discussion Report

**Response to request for additional information – 7 February 2022**
233.     TDAP Information – MPM Narrative.docx
234.     TDAP Information Faculty Offices – final structure.vsdx
235.     TDAP Information Job Profile – Head of Faculty Administration.doc
239.a    BA (Hons) RBM 2021.pdf
239.b    BSc (Hons) Agriculture 2021.pdf
239.c    BSc (Hons) Applied Animal Science 2021.pdf
239.d    BSc (Hons) Environmental Resource Management 2021.pdf
239.e    CAH3 Rural Estate Management 2021.pdf
239.f    CELT 2021.pdf
239.g    HND Agriculture 2021.pdf
239.h    HND Animal Care 2021.pdf
239.i    HND Rural Business Management 2021.pdf
239.j    SRUC Report 2021.pdf
239.k    Student Support 2021.pdf
239.l    NSS 2021 Detailed.xls
240.a    TDAP Workforce allocation Narrative.docx
240.b    Workload Allocation Model Guidance Jan 2022.docx
240.c    Pilot WAM Model Jan 2022.xlsx
241.a    Promotion Criteria – Narrative.docx
241.b    Current Job Evaluation Policy August 17.docx
241.c    Current Form – Job Profile Form.doc
241.d    To be SRUC Academic Promotion Application Form.docx
241.e    To be SRUC Academic Promotion External Assessor Form.docx
241.f    To be SRUC Academic Promotions Policy Jan 2022.docx
241.g    SRUC Level 6 UCEA 1 Profiles.docx
241.h    SRUC Level 7 UCEA 2 Profiles.docx
241.i    SRUC Level 8 UCEA 3 Profiles.docx
241.j    SRUC Level 9 UCEA 4 Profiles.docx
241.k    SRUC Level 10 UCEA 5 Profiles.docx
242.a    Narrative – Job Descriptions for academic staff at each grade.docx
242.b    Teaching Instructor_Research Assistant JP – 07.06.21.docx
242.c    Lecturer G4_Research Associate JP – 07.06.21.doc
242.d    Lecturer G3_Research Fellow JP – 07.06.21.docx

289.p NSS - Comments 2022.xlsx
289.q NSS - Raw Data 2022.xlsx
290.a Update on Programme Leadership.docx
291.a WAM Trial Report.docx
292.a Specific Memorandum - SRUC V1-1 KB 6 July.doc
292.b UA-SRUC MOU 9-15-17.doc
292.c UA-SRUC MOU Purpose Statement.docx
292.d Ref_APP-Q7IG7T_-_You_need_to_sign_your_grant.pdf
293.a Animal Welfare Science Curriculum and Assessment Map.xlsx
293.b Equine Science Management Curriculum and Assessment Map.xlsx
293.c MRes Zoonosis and Epidemiology Curriculum and Assessment Map.xlsx
294.a Collation of all External Examiner Reports 2021-22.pdf
295.a MSc APP - EE Response Letter 2021-22.pdf
295.b PGDip MSc Organic Farming - EE Response Letter 2021-22 session.pdf
295.c BSc Agricultural Bioscience - SRUC Response Letter to EE.pdf
295.d BA RBM - SRUC Response Letter to EE.pdf
296.a Data Management Plans Narrative.docx
296.b Appendix 1 Annual Monitoring Report Aberdeen HE 202122.xlsx
296.c Appendix 2 Agriculture and RBM AMR.xlsm
296.d Appendix 3 How to use Board of Studies AMR data pack.pdf
297.a SRUC Staff Spreadsheet 2022.xlsx
297.aa SRUC Staff Spreadsheet September 2022.xlsx
297.b External Engagement for Staff Spreadsheet.docx
298.a SRUC Staff CVs
299.a Academic Staff Migration.docx
300.a Promotions Statement.docx
301.a Equivalence in Relation to Doctoral Qualifications.docx
302.a Statement on Teaching Qualifications, Fellowship and UKPSF.docx
303.a Procedure for inputting student results.docx
303.b SOP 2.09 FE and HE Curriculum Plans.pdf
303.c FE Resulting in the Staff Portal UNITe.pdf
303.d End of Year Outcome Instructions 2020 v3.pdf
303.e Resulting Process with FAQs.pdf
304.a SRUC plans in relation to staff numbers and development.docx
305.a Copy of Sample Unit Evaluations.xlsx
306.a Selection of Teaching Award Nominations - Anonymised.docx
307.a Outline of VN Clinical Placement Processes and Procedures.docx
307.b SRUC VN Placement Policy.docx
307.c BSc (Hons) Student Clinical Practice Training Agreement.docx
307.d Clinical Placement Information Support Docs - Cohort 2020.msg
307.e SRUC Clinical Placement Sampling Strategy.docx
307.f DOS Sampling Activity.pdf
307.g Exemplar Completed Student Tracker.pdf

**Material uploaded 9 September 2022**
311.a AQD Agric RBM Recording.mp4
312.a B3.4.1a Board of Studies Programme Allocations 2021 2022.docx

**Material uploaded 14 September 2022**
298.a SRUC Staff CVs not uploaded on 22 August 2022

**Material uploaded 8 November 2022**
319. SRUC Joint Accreditation and Validation of BSc Veterinary Nursing Paper

**Material uploaded 27 January 2023**

327.a Programme Curriculum and Assessment Map BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
327.b Programme Design Curriculum and Assessment Map Animal Welfare Science
327.c Curriculum and Assessment Map Equine Science Management
328.a IDS_SRUCSA June 2020
328.b IDS_SRUCSA April 2021
328.c IDS_SRUCSA June 2021
328.d IDS_SRUCSA Sept 2021
328.e IDS_SRUCSA 26 Jan 2022
328.f IDS_SRUCSA 21 October 2022
329. IDS Business Partner Role TDAP2023
330.a Training Sessions Offered by Library Services 2008 to Present
330.b Statistics on LIBGuide Usage 2015 to Present
331. Progress and integrations with OCLC WMS
332. Update from Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy
333.a Progress and actions toward gender equality - SRUC Wide
333.b Progress and actions toward gender balance targets - Board of Studies Responses
333.c Progress and actions toward gender equality - Athena Swan Update January 2023
334.a Complaints Annual Report Sept 2019 - Aug 2020
334.b Complaints Annual Report Sept 2020 to Aug 2021
334.c Complaints Annual Report September 2021 - August 2022
335. Support Staff CPD
336. Capital Projects Update Jan 2023
337.a Work-based Learning update January 2023
337.b WBL Thematic Review Report FINAL
337.c SRUC WBL Strategy TDAP summary
337.d WBL Draft Strategy_TDAP
337.e PAASC One year on WBLreport
337.f Benchmark report Work Based Learning Thematic Review
338.a Applied Animal Science A4 S30055258 marking
338.b Applied Animal Science A4 S30055258 project
338.c Applied Animal Science C2 S300462152 marking
338.d Applied Animal Science C2 S300462152 project
338.e Agriculture A5 S30034350 marking
338.f Agriculture A5 S30034350 project
338.g Agriculture C3 S30034680 marking
338.h Agriculture C3 S30034680 project
338.i Countryside Management A5 S30026213 marking
338.j Countryside Management A5 S30026213 project
338.k Countryside Management D3 S30036196 marking
338.l Countryside Management D3 S30036196 project
338.m Environmental Management A4 s30047794 marking
338.n Environmental Management A4 s30047794 project
338.o Environmental Resource Management C3 S30040732 marking
338.p Environmental Resource Management C3 S30040732 project
338.q Garden and Greenspace Design A4 S30034895 marking
338.r Garden and Greenspace Design A4 S30034895 project
338.s Garden and Greenspace Design C1 S30042006 marking
338.t Garden and Greenspace Design C1 S30042006 project
338.u Horticulture with Plantsmanship A5 S30038640 marking
338.v Horticulture with Plantsmanship A5 S30038640 project
338.w Horticulture C3 S30035269 marking
338.x Horticulture C3 S30035269 project
338.y Rural Business Management A3 S30046020 marking
338.z Rural Business Management A3 S30046020 project
338.za Rural Business Management C3 S30047788 marking

338.zb Rural Business Management C3 S30047788 project
338.za Rural Business Management C3 S30047788 marking
338.zb Rural Business Management C3 S30047788 project
339. Evidence of NSS Discussions
340.a Finance and Estates Committee 15 Nov 2022 a
340.b Finance and Estates Committee 15 Nov - Agrecalc paper b.
341. SRUC REF2021 Brief
342. Staff Qualifications Additional Information January 2023
343. MPM Narrative for TDAP
344.a Academic Promotions Additional Information January 2023
344.b SRUC Academic Promotions Policy and Process
344.c ALT Academic Promotions 2023
345.a Student Journey Project Summary Jan 2023
345.b Student Journey Project Details Jan 2023
346. Update on Curriculum Mapping Project
347. Use of Subject Benchmark Statements
348.a TDAP Assessment Info (Organic Farming)
348.b Organic Farming Example - Principles and Practice LO1 Assessment 2020-21
348.c Organic Farming Example - Issues In Organic Farming Assessment Schedule 2022-23
348.d TDAP Curriculum and Assessment Info (Agriculture)
348.e Agriculture HN Stakeholder Engagement Workshop Details
348.f Example Slidedeck from Stakeholder Engagement Activity - Livestock Systems Workshop 1
348.g Industrial Liaison in Assessment Development (Environmental Management)
349. Narrative - Revalidation and Accreditation of BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing 27 Jan 2023

**Material uploaded 14 March 2023**
350.a SRUC People Strategy Development Narrative
350.b People Strategy Video
350.c PS 2018-2022 Board Presentation
350.d PS 2018-2022 Implementation Plan
350.e P&OD Board Paper Final 29.08.22
350.f P&OD Strategy - Emerging Themes (June 22)
350.g P&OD Strategy outline 2022-26
351.a A SEEDABLE Curriculum - SRUC's Curriculum Review Framework
351.b Curriculum Review Framework Companion - An Introductory Guide to the Framework
351.c Curriculum Review Framework Companion - A Framework Theory and Practice Primer
351.d Curriculum Review Framework Companion - A Glossary V1.1
351.e Curriculum Review Framework Companion - SEED Competencies Support Guide
351.f Curriculum Review Framework Companion - The Review Templates - V3
352. TDAP - Staff Retention Data 09032023
353. Peer Observation Review

**Material uploaded 24 March 2023**
354.a UPDATE SRUC People Strategy Development Narrative Revised 23.03.2023
354.b People Strategy 2018-2023
354.c People Strategy 2018-2023 Review & Outcomes
354.d People and Organisational Development Strategy 2023-2027
354.e HR Development Plan 2023-24

**Material uploaded 30 March 2023**
355. TDAP response Strategies

**Observation Reports and Evidence**

**ZDOb01 Environment and Countryside Board of Studies – 10 February 2022**
236.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 1 Env and Countryside Bo S Agenda item 3 Annual Board of Studies Monitoring and QEP_2021_2022.docx
237.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 1 Env and Countryside BoS Agenda 10 February.docx
238.　　TDAP Scrutiny meeting 1 Environment and Countryside Board of Studies - Minutes_2021 Nov 08_Draft1.docx

**PWOb02 Academic Board meeting – 15 February 2022**
245.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Academic Board Action Log.xlsx
246.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Academic Board Agenda 2022 Feb.docx
247.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Minutes of Academic Board Meeting 9 November 2021 Final.docx
248.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 72 Academic Board EDI Update February 2022.docx
249.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 73 AcBoard-2022Feb Programme Leadership under the New Job Families.docx
250.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 74 AcBoard-2022Feb Curriculum Review Update.docx
251.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 75 SRUCSA Update - AcBoard 15 feb.docx
252.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 76 Academic Board February UoE SRUC Annual Report 2020 21 CP.docx
253.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 77 AB SRUC Quality Enhancement Plan 202122 Feb22 FINAL.docx
254.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 78 Ethics Committee Minutes 081221 gc.doc
255.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 79 AcBoard-2022Feb LTC Minutes 9 December 2021.doc
256.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 80 AcBoard-2022Feb SSEC Minutes 27 January 2022.doc
257.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 81 DRAFT Minutes SRUC Research Committee Meeting Jan 2022.docx
258.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 82 20210912 IKE draft minutes.docx
259.　　TDAP Scrutiny Meeting 2 Paper 83 Vet School Business Case Feb 22 SFC v7.pdf

**ATOb03 SRUC Board Chair Hustings - 1 March 2022 (No papers)**

**APOb04 Horticulture and Landscape Institution led Review – 16 March 2022**
260.a　　Horticulture Self Evaluation Document 2022.docx
260.b　　Periodic institution-led review guidance.pdf
260.c　　SRUC Context and Background.pdf
260.d　　Panel Membership for Review.docx
260.e　　Draft timetable.doc
260.f　　Expenses Form.docx
268.a　　HL ILR - Review Event.docx
268.b　　HL ILR - Student Meeting.docx
268.c　　Horticulture and Landscape Institution-Led Review - Panel Introduction-20220307_150251-Meeting Recording.mp4
268.d　　Horticulture and Landscape Institution-Led Review- Review Team Introduction-20220310_123156-Meeting Recording.mp4
268.e　　HL ILR Review Team Members.docx
268.f　　HL ILR Student Meeting Summary.docx

**ATOb05 Academic Leadership Team Meeting – 25 March 2022**
269.a    Agenda ALT 25 Mar 2022.docx
269.b    Paper 3.01a Research Applications February 2022.docx
269.c    Paper 3.01b Pure Applications February 2022.xlsx
269.d    Paper 3.02 Scottish Veterinary Service- risk.docx
269.e    Paper 3.03 School of Vet Med Stakeholder Consultation Groups.docx
269.f    Paper 3.04 Enterprise Academy Update.docx
269.g    Paper 3.05 Dairy Nexus.docx
269.h    Paper 3.07a CDN-College-Awards-Prospectus-2022.pdf
269.i    FW CDN College Awards 2022 - now open for entries!.msg
269.j    Paper 3.08a March 2022 Forecast.docx
269.k    Paper 3.08b March 2022 Forecast.xlsx
269.l    Paper 3.09 WAM Trial Update March 22.docx
269.m    Paper 3.10 Academic Year 2022-23.docx
269.n    Paper 3.11a LEAPS Transition Course - ALT.docx
269.o    Paper 3.11b LEAPS Transitions Course Details Paper Feb 10.pdf

**SRUC Board Meeting – 31 March 2022** *(scheduled to observe but, in the event because of technical issues at the airport, no observation was possible)*
270.a    SRUC Board 31 March 2022 (e-version).pdf
270.b    SRUC Board 31 Mar 2022 - Items 5.0 and 9.01 (e-version).pdf
271.    Replacement SRUC Board 31 March 2022 (e-version).pdf

**PWOb06 Senior Leadership Team Meeting – 12 May 2022**
273.a    SLT Agenda 12 May 22
273.b    SLT ELT Paper – PandODStrategy 2022
273.c    SLT Draft and examples of PandOD Draft Strategic Priorities 2022-2026
274.a    SLT RMG Agenda 12 May 22
274.b    RMG Notes of Meeting 22 March 22
274.c    Risk moderation paper April 22

**PWOb07 SRUC Board Audit and Risk Committee Meeting – 26 May 2022**
276.    Audit and Risk Committee Paperwork

**ZDOb08 Student Support and Services Board of Studies Meeting – 7 June 2022**
277.a    BoS Meeting Agenda.docx
277.b    BoS Meeting Minutes - February 2022.docx
277.c    Action tracker Feb 2022.docx
277.d    Paper 4.1 Establishment of Short-life Working Group (Adherence to Acceptable Use Policy).docx
277.e    Paper 8.1 Establishment of SRUC Library Users Group.docx
277.f    Paper 8.2 SSS BoS provisional meeting dates AY 22 - 23.docx

**PWOb09 SRUC Board Meeting – 14 June 2022**
278.a    Board meeting papers (combined in a single pdf)

**ZDOb10 MSc Organic Farming Examination Board – 22 June 2022**
282.    MSc Organic Farming Exam Board Agenda

**ATOb11 MSc Agricultural Professional Practice Examination Board – 23 June 2022**
281.    MSc Agricultural Professional Practice Examination Board Agenda 23.06.2022
basic

**ATOb12 Academic Promotion Sub-panel meetings – 27 June 2022**

280.a    SRUC Academic Promotion Application Form
280.b    SRUC Academic Promotion External Assessor Report Template
280.c    SRUC Academic Promotions Policy and Process
280.d    SRUC Level 6 Profiles for Promotion – Instructor & Assistant
280.e    SRUC Level 7 Profiles for Promotion – Associate
280.f    SRUC Level 8 Profiles for Promotion – Lecturer, Fellow & Academic Clinician
280.g    SRUC Level 9 Profiles for Promotion – Senior Lecturer, Reader & Senior Academic Clinician
280.h    SRUC Level 10 Professorial Zones 2 and 3 Additional Criteria
280.i    SRUC Level 10 Profiles for Promotion – Professorial
284.a    Academic Promotions Subject Panel: Land-based Science and Engineering Agenda
284.b    Academic Promotions Subject Panel: Social Science Agenda
284.c    Academic Promotions Subject Panel: Veterinary and Animal Science Agenda

**ATOb13 BSc (Hons) Applied Animal Science Examination Board – 30 June 2022**

283.      Applied Animal Science Examination Board Agenda 30 June 2022

**ATOb14 Celebration of Learning and Teaching – 9 August 2022**

No Papers

**PWOb15 Finance and Estates Committee – 23 August 2022**

285. Finance and Estates Committee Paperwork

**ZDOb16 CELT Workshops – 30 August 2022**

308.a Assessment and Feedback Staff Dev Aug 2022.pptx
308.b Introduction to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing (Staff Development August 2022) 1.pptx
309.a Digital Learning Team Session 30th August Narrative.docx
309.b CELT_DL_Agenda and Guides_August 2022.docx
309.c Conversational Framework teaching activities and definitions.pdf
309.d DLT Staff Dev for August 2022 v2.pdf
310.a Conference Narrative.docx

**APOb17-21 Annual Quality Dialogues 5 September – 7 September 2022**

Areas involved: Agriculture and Rural Business Management, Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Golf and Greenkeeping, Environment and Countryside, Horticulture and Landscape
311.a AQD Agric RBM Recording.mp4 in lieu of observation of live meeting
No papers for other AQD meetings

**ATOb22 Annual Quality Dialogue – 8 September 2022**

Areas involved: Forestry, Forgework and Engineering
No papers

**ZDOb23 Forestry, Forgework and Engineering Board of Studies – 22 September 2022**

313.a Agenda for Forestry Forgework and Engineering
313.b FF&E BOS 14062022 minutes.docx
313.c FF&E BOS 01072022 Extraordinary Meeting minutes.docx
313.d Graded Unit Forestry HNC 2021.22.xlsx
313.e FE SQA credits and Locally Derived Modules.msg

**PWOb24 Executive Leadership Team – 3 October 2022**
314.a ELT 3 October 2022 e-version.pdf
314.b Farms Strategy Update ELT Oct 3 2022.docx
314.c 20220816 Farms - Operational plan_v4.xlsx

**ATOb25 Learning and Teaching Committee – 11 October 2022**
315.a LTC-2022Oct Agenda.pdf
315.b Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-2.1 Minutes 9th June 2022.pdf
315.c Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-3.1 Academic Misconduct During 202122.pdf
315.d Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-3.2 Academic Appeals During 202122.pdf
315.e Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-3.3 Student Surveys (SSES, NSS) 202122.pdf
315.f Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-3.3a SRUC-wide SSES Report 2022.pdf
315.g Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-3.3b SRUC-wide NSS Report 2022.pdf
315.h Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-3.4 SRUC Quality Enhancement Plan.pdf
315.i Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-3.5 Education Quality Arrangements for 202223 and 202324.pdf
315.j Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-3.6 Widening Access and Participation Strategy.pdf
315.k LTC-2022Oct-3.6a Bursary Allocation Data.xlsm
315.l Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-4.1 Curriculum Review Update.pdf
315.m Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-4.2 Education Manual Updates 2022.pdf
315.n Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-4.3 Programme Development Update.pdf
315.o LTC-2022Oct-4.3a PAASC Programmes in Progress 30 September 2022.xlsx
315.p Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-5.1 DCC Minutes 13 September 2022 DRAFT.pdf
315.q LTC-2022Oct-5.2a PAASC Meeting Minutes 1 June 2022 Approved.pdf
315.r Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-5.2b PAASC Update (in lieu of minutes).pdf
315.s Microsoft Word - LTC-2022Oct-5.3 SSEC Minutes 1 Sept 2022.pdf

**ATOb26 Research Committee – 25 October 2022**
316.a Agenda Research Committee October 2022.docx
316.b 17th Jun 22 Minutes SRUC Research Committee.docx
316.c Research Ctte Publications Strategy.docx
316.d Research Ctte Trust Funds - Research.docx
316.e Research Ctte Funding October 2022.docx

**ZDOb27 Student Liaison Committee, Edinburgh – 14 November 2022**
320.a SLC meeting 14 November 2022, Agenda & Remit

**ATOb28 Academic Board – 15 November 2022**
317.a Academic Board 15 Nov 22 - Agenda and Papers -Full Pack

**ZDOb29 Student Liaison Committee, Aberdeen – 16 November 2022**
318.a Education Manual – SLC
318.b SLC Aberdeen Agenda 16 November 2022

**APOb30 Programme Approvals and Academic Standards Committee – 22 November 2022**
321.a PAASC Agenda 22 November 2022
321.b Item 22.2.05 PAASC Meeting Minutes 25 August 2022 Draft
321.c Item 22.4.03 Programme Concept Note - GP28 24 (Agricultural LivestockCrops)
321.d Item 22.5.02 Revised.Resubmitted Programme Business Case HNC Game and Wildlife Management (DL)
321.e Item 22.8.03 PAPER - which courses where 2024
321.f Item 22.9 2022_0825_Countryside and Environment Board of Studies Minutes
321.g Item 22.9 20220831 VAS BoS Meeting Minutes 31st August 2022
321.h Item 22.9 ABM BoS Sep 22 Minutes

321.i Item 22.10.02 PAASC Paper Summary of External Examiner feedback 2122
321.j Item 22.10.03 PAASC Summary of EV visits 2021-22 Final
321.k Item 22.11.05 Update on Learning Design Activities
321.l Item 22.14.07 Proposal of Veterinary Education Professor joining PAASC Committee

**ZDOb31 Student Support and Engagement Committee – 29 November 2022**
323.a SSEC-2022Nov Agenda
323.b SSEC-2022Nov-2.1 Minutes 1 Sept 2022
323.c SSEC-2022Nov-3.1 Improving how IDS Support Students
323.d SSEC-2022Nov-3.1a Improving how IDS Support Students
323.e SSEC-2022Nov-3.2 SRUC-Wide Student Survey Proposal
323.f SSEC-2022Nov-4.1 SRUCSA Up
323.g SSEC-2022Nov-4.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Update
323.h SSEC-2022Nov-4.3 Academic Year 2023-2024 Start Update
323.i SSEC-2022Nov-4.4 Widening Access and Participation Strategy Update
323.j SSEC-2022Nov-5.1 SSS BOS Draft Minutes 7th June 2022
323.k SSEC-2022Nov-5.2 RDAP Student Support Subgroup Update Nov 22
323.l SSEC-2022Nov-5.3 Out of Committee - Corporate Parenting Next Steps

**ZDOb32 Student Support Services Institution Led Review – 06 December 2022**
322.a 01 SRUC Student Support Services SED Nov 22
322.b 02 SRUC ILR Panel Introduction and Guidance
322.c 03 SRUC ILR Panel Feedback Guide Student Support Services
322.d 04 SRUC Context and Background
322.e 05 Panel Membership for Review
322.f 06 Draft timetable
322.g 07 SRUC Periodic institution-led review (procedure)

**ATOb33 Annual meeting between the University of Glasgow and SRUC – 17 January 2023**
326.a UoG SRUC JLC 20230117_Agenda
326.b UoG_SRUC_JLC_20230117_SRUC_2022-01 (remit and membership)
326.c UoG SRUC JLC_20230117_SRUC_2022_02 (minutes)
326.d UoG_SRUC_JLC_20230117_SRUC_2022_03a (minutes of interim meeting)
326.e UoG_SRUC_JLC_20230117_SRUC_2022_03b (minutes of interim meeting)
326.f UoG_SRUC_JLC_20230117_SRUC_2022-04 (annual report)
326.g UoG_SRUC_JLC_20230117_SRUC_2022-05 Veterinary Nursing Report
326.h UoG_SRUC_JLC_20230117_SRUC_2022-06 SRUCSA Report

**APOb34 Learning and Teaching Committee – 17 January 2023**
325.a LTC-2023Jan Agenda
325.b LTC-2023Jan-2.1 Minutes 11 October 2022
325.c LTC-2023Jan-3.1 SRUC Quality Enhancement Plan
325.d LTC-2023Jan-3.2 Annual Programme Monitoring
325.e LTC-2023Jan-3.3 BVSci and Official Veterinary Surgeon Status
325.f LTC-2023Jan-3.4 Supporting Teaching and Scholarship Progression
325.g LTC-2023Jan-3.4a Supporting Teaching and Scholarship Progression
325.h LTC-2023Jan-4.1 Curriculum Review Update
325.i LTC-2023Jan-4.2 Programme Development Update
325.j Copy of LTC-2023Jan-4.2a PAASC Programmes in Progress 6 January 2023
325.k LTC-2023Jan-5.1 DCC Draft Meeting Minutes 13 Dec 2022
325.l LTC-2023Jan-5.2a PAASC Meeting Minutes 25 August 2022 Draft
325.m LTC-2023Jan-5.2b PAASC Meeting Minutes 22 November 2022 Final Draft
325.n LTC-2023Jan-5.3 SSEC Minutes 29 Nov 2022

**ATOb35 Validation (and accreditation with RCVS) of the BSc (Hons) in Veterinary Nursing – 25-26 January 2023**

319. a SRUC Joint Accreditation and Validation of BSc Veterinary Nursing Paper
324.a Veterinary Nursing UoG SRUC RCVS Accreditation Agenda Jan 2023
324.b RCVS Application Spreadsheet (1)
324.c A02.1.7 Programme Specification BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
324.d BSc Hons Veterinary Nursing Design Narrative 2022.23
324.e Programme Curriculum and Assessment Map BSc (Hons) Veterinary Nursing
324.f Programme Design and (Re)validation - Equality Impact Assessment BSc (Hons) VN
324.g SRUC Joint Accreditation and Validation of BSc Veterinary Nursing Paper
324.h Yr 1 Canine and Feline Anatomy and Physiology - Module Descriptor 2022
324.i Yr1 EVPC Module Specification 2022
324.j Yr1 Exotics and Wildlife Nursing - Module Descriptor Revalidation (Updated) Sept 2022
324.k Yr 1 ITCP Module-Unit Specification
324.l Yr 1Large Animal Healthcare unit descriptor draft
324.m Yr1 Veterinary Infection Control - Module Descriptor Revalidation (Updated) Sept 2022
324.n Yr 1 Welfare A02.1.8 Module-Unit Specification Template (Vet Nursing) (1)
324.o Yr 2 Anaesthesia and Analgesia Module Descriptor Draft 2022
324.p Yr 2 AVPC Module-Unit Specification
324.q Yr 2 Companion Animal Nutrition 2023
324.r Yr 2 Diagnostic techniques unit descriptor draft
324.s Yr 2 Pharmacology BSc VN Module Descriptor Draft Sept 2023
324.t Yr 2 Small Animal Diseases and Conditions BSc VN Draft Module Descriptor Sept 2023
324.u Yr 2 NEW Clinical Practice 1 (Vet Nursing)
324.v Yr 3 Professional Responsibilities Module-Unit Specification
324.w Yr 3 RSDA Module Specification 2022
324.x Yr 3 NEW Clinical Practice 3 (Vet Nursing)
324.y Yr3 NEW Clinical Practice 2 (Vet Nursing)
324.z Yr 4 CABW Module Specification 2022 updated 31OCT22
324.za Yr 4 CAGB Module Specification 2022
324.zb Yr4 Honours Module Specification 2022
324.zc Yr4 PPW Module Specification 2022
324.zd Yr 4 AVNC Module Specification 2022
324.ze Yr 4 Animal Ethics Module Specification 2022

**Visit Meetings**

**Visit 1 (23-24 February 2022)**
TV1M1        Members of the Executive Leadership Team
TV1M2        Members of the Academic Leadership Team
TV1M3        Members of the SRUC Board
TV1M4        A representative cross-section of Heads of Department and Programme
                    Leaders
TV1M5        A representative cross-section of academic staff
TV1M6        A representative cross-section of students, student representatives and
                    sabbatical officers
TV1M7        Academic Liaison Managers, Year Tutors, Head of Student Services (or
                    equivalent)
TV1M8        Final clarification meeting with institutional facilitator and relevant
                    postholders

**Visit 2 (16-17 February 2023)**
TV2M1        Members of the Executive Leadership Team
TV2M2        Deans, Head of Research and Head of Learning and Teaching
TV2M3        Members of the SRUC Board

| | |
|---|---|
| TV2M4 | Library User Group and other project Chairs and members |
| TV2M5 | Teaching staff |
| TV2M6 | Students on higher education provision |
| TV2M7 | Professional support staff and faculty members |
| TV2M8 | Final clarification meeting with institutional facilitator and relevant postholders |
| Moodle Demo | Moodle Demonstration |
| WAM Demo | Workload Allocation Model Update and Demonstration |

# Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms

This glossary is a quick reference guide to key terms in this report that may be unfamiliar to some readers.

| Term | Description |
|------|-------------|
| A&B | Above & Beyond |
| AGCAS | Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services |
| ALM | Academic Liaison Manager |
| ALPINE | Accredited Learning, Professional Development and Innovation in Education |
| ALT | Academic Leadership Team |
| AMOSSHE | The Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education |
| BAME | Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic |
| CELT | Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching |
| CPD | Continuing Professional Development |
| DAP | Degree Awarding Powers |
| EDI | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion |
| ELIR | Enhancement-Led Institutional Review |
| ELT | Executive Leadership Team |
| ERASMUS | European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students |
| FHEA | Fellowship of Advance HE |
| FHEQ | Frameworks for HE Qualifications for UK Degree-Awarding Bodies |
| FTE | Full Time Equivalent |
| HESA | Higher Education Statistics Agency |
| IDS | Information and Digital Services |
| ILR | Institution-Led Review |
| IS | Information Services |
| ISO | International Organization for Standardization |
| KPIs | Key Performance Indicators |
| Landex | Land Based Colleges Aspiring to Excellence |
| LTC | Learning and Teaching Committee |
| MPM | Making Performance Matter |
| NSS | National Student Survey |
| NUS | National Union of Students |
| OBC | Outline Business Case |
| PAASC | Programme Approvals and Academic Standards Committee |
| PDA | Professional Development Award |
| PGCert | Postgraduate Certificate |
| PSRB | Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body |
| QAA | Quality Assurance Agency |
| QBA | Qualitative Behaviour Assessments |
| QEP | Quality Enhancement Plan |
| RCVS | Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons |
| REF | Research Excellence Framework |
| RICS | Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors |
| RISE | Respect, Innovate, Support, Excel - SRUC's Values |
| RVN | Registered Veterinary Nurse |
| SAC | Scottish Agricultural College |
| SARU | Student Achievement Ratio by Unit of Learning |
| SCQF | Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework |
| SDS | Skills Development Scotland |

| | |
|---|---|
| SED | Self-Evaluation Document |
| SFC | Scottish Funding Council |
| SLC | Student Liaison Committee |
| SLG | Student Liaison Group |
| sparqs | Student Participation in Quality Scotland |
| SPSO | Scottish Public Services Ombudsman |
| SQA | Scottish Qualifications Authority |
| SRUC | Scotland's Rural College |
| SRUCSA | SRUC Students' Association |
| SSBS | Student Support and Services Board of Studies |
| SSEC | Student Support and Engagement Committee |
| SSES | Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey |
| TDAP | Taught Degree Awarding Powers |
| TEF | Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework |
| TPG | Transformation Portfolio Group |
| TQFE | Teaching Qualification in Further Education |
| TSG | Transformation Steering Group |
| UHI | University of the Highlands and Islands |
| VLE | Virtual Learning Environment |

# Annex 1: Scrutiny schedule

Table 1: Record of team meetings and visits

| Date | Description |
|---|---|
| 23-24 February 2022 | First team visit (online) |
| 16-17 February 2023 | Second team visit (onsite) |

Table 2: Record of individual scrutiny team member observations

| Date | Description |
|---|---|
| 10 February 2022 | Countryside and Environment Board of Studies meeting (ZDOb01) |
| 15 February 2022 | Academic Board meeting (PWOb02) |
| 1 March 2022 | SRUC Board Chair Hustings (ATOb03) |
| 16 March 2022 | Horticulture and Landscape Institution Led Review (APOb04) |
| 25 March 2022 | Academic Leadership Team meeting (ATOb05) |
| 12 May 2022 | Senior Leadership Team meeting (PWOb06) |
| 26 May 2022 | SRUC Board Audit and Risk Committee meeting (PWOb07) |
| 7 June 2022 | Student Support Services Board of Studies meeting (ZDOb08) |
| 14 June 2022 | SRUC Board meeting (PWOb09) |
| 22 June 2022 | MSc Farming Examination Board (ZDOb10) |
| 23 June 2022 | MSc Agricultural Professional Practice Examination Board (ATOb11) |
| 27 June 2022 | Academic Promotion Sub-panel meetings (ATOb12a, b, c) |
| 30 June 2022 | BSc (Hons) Applied Animal Science Board meeting (ATOb13) |
| 9 August 2022 | Celebration of Teaching and Learning (ATOb14) |
| 23 August 2022 | Finance and Estates Committee (PWOb15) |
| 30 August 2022 | CELT workshops (ZDOb16) |
| 05 September 2022 | Agriculture and Rural Business Management Quality Dialogue (APOb17) |
| 06 September 2002 | Veterinary and Animal Sciences; Golf and Greenkeeping Quality Dialogues (APOb18; 19) |
| 07 September 2002 | Environment and Countryside; Horticulture and Landscape Quality Dialogues (APOb20; 21) |
| 08 September 2002 | Forestry, Forgework and Engineering Quality Dialogue (ATOb22) |
| 22 September 2002 | Forestry, Forgework and Engineering Board of Studies (ZDOb23) |
| 03 October 2022 | Executive Leadership Team meeting (PWOb24) |
| 11 October 2022 | Learning and Teaching Committee (ATOb25) |
| 25 October 2022 | Research Committee (ATOb26) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 14 November 2022 | Student Liaison Committee, Edinburgh (ZDOb27) |
| 15 November 2022 | Academic Board (ATOb28) |
| 16 November 2022 | Student Liaison Committee, Aberdeen (ZDOb29) |
| 22 November 2022 | Programme Approvals and Academic Standards Committee (APOb30) |
| 29 November 2022 | Student Support and Engagement Committee (ZDOb31) |
| 06 December 2022 | Student Support Services Institution Led Review (ZDOb32) |
| 17 January 2023 | Learning and Teaching Committee (APOb33) |
| 17 January 2023 | Annual meeting between the University of Glasgow and SRUC (ATOb34) |
| 25-26 January 2023 | Validation (and accreditation with RCVS) of the BSc (Hons) in Veterinary Nursing (ATOb35) |

# Annex 2: Programme information

Number of programmes and students (May 2023)

| Programme Title | Validator | Headcount | FTEs |
|---|---|---|---|
| Advanced Certificate Golf Course Management (DL) | SQA | 7 | 3.33 |
| Advanced Diploma Golf Course Management (DL) | SQA | 2 | 1.5 |
| Advanced Certificate Poultry Production | SQA | 4 | 2 |
| Advanced Certificate Wildlife and Conservation Management (Flexible Learning) | SQA | 8 | 4 |
| BSc Environmental Management | University of Edinburgh | 20 | 18.33 |
| BSc Agricultural Technology | University of Glasgow | 2 | 1 |
| BSc Agriculture | University of Glasgow | 96 | 95.33 |
| BSc Applied Animal Science | University of Glasgow | 66 | 62.83 |
| BSc Equine Science and Management | University of Glasgow | 15 | 15 |
| BSc Garden & Greenspace Design | University of Glasgow | 11 | 10 |
| BSc Horticulture | University of Glasgow | 20 | 18.5 |
| BSc Horticulture with Plantsmanship | University of Glasgow | 43 | 40.83 |
| BSc Wildlife & Conservation Management/Countryside Management* | University of Glasgow | 58 | 53.33 |
| BSc Veterinary Nursing | University of Glasgow | 146 | 134.28 |
| BSc (Hons) Animal Welfare Science | University of Glasgow | 6 | 6 |
| BA Rural Business Management | University of Glasgow | 122 | 117.66 |
| BSc (Hons) Agricultural Bioscience* | University of Glasgow | 1 | 1 |
| MSc Applied Professional Practice | University of Glasgow | 14 | 7 |
| MSc Organic Farming | University of Glasgow | 19 | 9.5 |
| MSc Wildlife & Conservation Management/Countryside Management* | University of Glasgow | 34 | 18.83 |
| MRes Zoonoses and Epidemiology of Animal Infectious Diseases (PGT) | University of Glasgow | 5 | 3.5 |
| MSc Countryside Management* | University of Glasgow | 1 | .5 |
| PDA Ecological Surveying | SQA | 18 | 9 |
| HN Agriculture | SQA | 134 | 131.83 |
| HN Animal Care | SQA | 198 | 182.11 |
| HN Environmental Management | SQA | 29 | 23.82 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| HN Forestry | SQA | 6 | 6 |
| HN Equine Studies | SQA | 48 | 45.33 |
| HN Garden Design | SQA | 17 | 13.33 |
| HN Golf Course Management | SQA | 112 | 56 |
| HN Horticulture with Plantsmanship | SQA | 22 | 16.83 |
| HN Horticulture | SQA | 57 | 50.5 |
| HN Landscape Management | SQA | 5 | 4.5 |
| HN Poultry Production | SQA | 18 | 8.15 |
| HN Professional Golf | SQA | 21 | 21 |
| HN Rural Animal Health | SQA | 10 | 10 |
| HN Rural Business Management | SQA | 37 | 33.16 |
| HN Wildlife and Conservation Management | SQA | 139 | 112.5 |
| Various infill | | 27 | 8.91 |

*Programmes with an asterisk are being taught out