Thematic Report on Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Reports 2013-16: Student Engagement

Introduction

As part of the ELIR 3 method, QAA Scotland produces regular Thematic reports to support learning from the outcomes of individual ELIR reports. The purpose of the Thematic reports is to inform future development work in the sector and, in particular, to inform future QAA activity including work carried out in collaboration with the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC).

Scope and structure of this report

This report identifies material relating to student engagement within all eighteen reports published in the ELIR 3 cycle. The institutions included in this report are: the University of Aberdeen; Abertay University; the University of Dundee; the University of Edinburgh; Edinburgh Napier University; Glasgow School of Art; Glasgow Caledonian University; the University of Glasgow; Heriot-Watt University; the University of the Highlands and Islands; Queen Margaret University; Robert Gordon University; the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland; Scotland's Rural College (SRUC); the University of St Andrews; the University of Stirling; the University of Strathclyde and the University of the West of Scotland.

This report summarises the more detailed findings included within the ELIR Technical Reports. It is possible that additional practice takes place in these eighteen institutions, but only those elements of practice included within the ELIR Technical Reports is included here. The report subsequently includes the areas of positive practice and the areas for development identified in the ELIR Outcome Reports, before it briefly outlines the next steps in the ELIR process, following the publication of the reports.

The annex includes references to student engagement within the ELIR Technical Reports. The paragraph numbers used in the annex are taken directly from the original reports.

Student engagement: activity to promote good practice

This section identifies current interesting practice at the eighteen institutions as identified in the ELIR Technical Reports.

Student representation

Every single institution reviewed had student representation at various different levels of the organisation. All institutions have student association, student unions or representative councils led by sabbatical officers that offer institution-wide representation. Most institutions also have student representatives at a college, faculty or school level, with class representatives also in place who usually receive training from their Students' Association often in partnership with Student Partnership in Quality Scotland (sparqs). Most of these student representatives are elected by their fellow students, although Glasgow Caledonian University, the University of the Highlands and Islands, the University of Stirling and Robert Gordon University have School, Subject Network or Student Faculty 'Officer' posts which are

appointed by the Students' Association, often in partnership with the relevant school or faculty. These Officers often perform representative functions as well as supporting and leading on particular projects.

Strengthening and developing student representation

While all Scottish higher education institutions reviewed had student representation arrangements in place, many institutions have developed new ways to engage with their student population in the time period since their last ELIR review.

Structures

At Abertay University, in 2015 the Student Life Network (SLN) was established (as a result of the discontinuation of the previous Student Experience Subcommittee). The SLN is open to all students and relevant staff to discuss issues identified by the students as being important to their experience at the University. Student engagement with the Abertay Teaching and Learning Fund (ATLEF) has also developed over time, with students funded to undertake research and work as active members of project teams. At the time of the ELIR review, a call was being developed for student-led pedagogic projects which were to be supported by the Students' Association.

The Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) has created a new single Student Council to allow sabbatical officers and student representatives to discuss all academic matters. The University has also taken steps to enhance representation at college level, following the 2011 ELIR which highlighted inconsistencies in Edinburgh's class representative systems. In 2014-15, the University also undertook a thematic review of online/distance postgraduate provision in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, with the aim to explore student representation for online distance learning students.

Since the 2011 ELIR review, Edinburgh Napier University has established a new Student Experience Committee and reviewed student staff liaison committees.

The University of Glasgow has implemented several changes which has impacted on student engagement since their previous ELIR. It has appointed an internal communications manager to enhance its internal communication with staff and students. In addition, the University has recently established a Council of Senate, which includes 12 student representatives.

At Glasgow Caledonian University, the Student Action Group for Engagement (SAGE) is in the early stages of development, and provides a tool to capture and report on the views of all the University's students.

At the University of the Highlands and Islands, the Highlands and Islands Student Association was launched in 2015 as a result of a two-year Scottish Government and SFC-funded project awarded to UHI to establish a new regional framework for student representation. UHI provided extensive support for HISA in its first year of operation, including leading on the recruitment and training of its first permanent staff, and the election of the Depute Presidents based at the Academic Partners.

At Queen Margaret University, the Students' Union has also established the Academic Council, chaired by the Students' Union President, as a forum for all class representatives across the University.

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland ELIR Technical report stated that student engagement was likely to be strengthened at the institution as there was a new programme committee model which includes student-led, as well as staff-led, meetings.

SRUC has seen significant changes as the institution was created following a merger between four legacy organisations. The period leading up to the ELIR saw the establishment of the cross-institutional Students' Association (SRUCSA) and student representation mechanisms. SRUC and SRUCSA have worked with the support of Student Partnership in Quality Scotland (sparqs), and the National Union of Students when devising the student representative arrangements.

At the University of St Andrews, an Enterprise Working Group was set up which included student representation. Students have led on developing the profile of enterprise activities across the University, including setting up conference and events such as an Enterprise Week.

New representative roles

Many of these developments have involved changes to the student representative structures within institutions. At the University of Aberdeen, the introduction of School Convenors has strengthened the communication between Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) and class representatives, with these 'super representatives' moving beyond being solely feedback focused at Staff-Student Liaison Committee level to being involved in Class Representative Conferences and Councils. Aberdeen was also piloting a new system of representation, known as Universal Academic Representation, which has centralised the student representative procedures within the 13 schools in the University.

A review of the Students' Association at Abertay University was undertaken in 2014, in partnership with the National Union of Students, and resulted in a restructure and a refocusing of the Association's work in representing the student population and enhancing the student experience. A key product of this review had been the enhancement of the class representation system, which was identified in Abertay's Student Partnership Agreement. The new system now sees a class representative elected for each stage per programme, who then becomes a member of the Student Representative Council and their School's programme committee. The ELIR team formed the view that the direct relationship between the student body, the schools and the Students' Association had been significantly strengthened.

The restructure of the University of Glasgow has had a positive impact on student representative structures, with a new student representative post at school level. There has also been a significant increase in the number of students being trained as class representatives over the previous five years.

Glasgow Caledonian University's Students'Association has introduced School Officers, who are appointed jointly with the School. It has improved the effectiveness of student engagement across the schools.

During the Glasgow School of Art ELIR, the President of the Students' Association was leading a review of the student representation and engagement structures. In recognition of the high workload the Students' Association President faced, the School funded a new Student Engagement Co-ordinator post at the Students' Association.

Following the 2012 ELIR, the University of the Highlands and Islands continued to develop the Subject Network Student Officer role. In 2014-15, five officers were appointed and their remit reviewed and refined. These paid roles were intended to facilitate student engagement with strategic management and governance processes through the subject networks and strengthen communication between the Students' Association, the student body and University structures.

The Robert Gordon University ELIR report identified the new Student Faculty Officer (SFO) posts as a key liaison and enhancement role at the University. The SFOs are part-time, paid roles with appointees having been trained by RGU:Union to work in partnership with academic course leaders and professional services staff across the University, particularly at faculty level.

The University of St Andrews has seen a change to the student representative system, with the introduction of the School President's system. It allows students to have more strategic engagement in learning and teaching within the schools. Another level of representation has also been added with the introduction of Faculty Presidents, who assist with the flow of student opinion from school to institutional level. This system is mirrored at postgraduate level.

Since the previous ELIR, the University of Stirling has seen development in the School Officer responsibilities, consultation with students around the change in the number of teaching weeks, an increasing emphasis on student participation in learning and teaching reviews and student involvement in the development of the Personal Tutor role.
The University also has plans to introduce a Graduate School Officer role aimed at the postgraduate student population.

Guidelines and training

At the University of Aberdeen, AUSA has developed a new code of practice for representative arrangements, as well as a Representation Planning Form which allows schools to plan their student representation effectively. Student representatives keep track of their activities at Aberdeen via their 'Rep Passes'.

The Students' Association at the University of Dundee has recently developed a new student representative handbook

The Edinburgh University Students' Association implemented new guidelines for class representatives with the aim of ensuring greater consistency, and work has taken place to identify variations in experiences across schools with the aim of using the outcomes to develop school-specific guidance for class representatives.

Edinburgh Napier University has developed new guidelines on student representation at staff-student liaison committees.

At the University of the Highlands and Islands, a Student Engagement Plan was produced in 2016 which sought to ensure that students feel part of a supportive institution, that they are engaged in their own learning and work with the University in shaping the direction of learning. In addition, a Students on Committees Protocol was developed as an induction resource for students in response to student feedback.

At Queen Margaret University, a review of the class representative experience was carried out in 2012, and, as a result the university has implemented a number of developments including additional class representative training sessions, a revised handbook and trialling of a reflective diary.

Since the previous ELIR, the University of Stirling has seen the introduction of School Officer training delivered jointly by schools and the Students' Union.

Strategic partnership

Many of the ELIR Technical reports commented on the strategic partnerships between an institution and their Students' Association, often working together to tackle specific challenges or to develop new policies.

At the University of Aberdeen, a widening participation working group was established to make recommendations on policy and is chaired by the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) with representation from Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA). The group has worked to develop a framework to promote widening participation from pre-application to post-graduation.

In response to the recommendations from the 2012 ELIR, the University of Abertay and their Students' Association have developed a more effective strategic partnership, with a new Student Partnership Agreement being signed in June 2014. The Agreement outlines a number of areas of work covering four main themes: assessment and feedback; student representation and engagement; student personal development; and learning resources and the environment. The Agreement links to the University Strategic Plan (2015-20) and these areas are reviewed jointly and considered in the schools' and professional services' action plans.

At the time of the ELIR review, the Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA), in collaboration with the University of Dundee, was to lead a review of pastoral support at the institution. DUSA also led a project to explore student views of policies and processes in relation to assessment practices. Further to this, DUSA and the University were in the early stages of developing a Student Partnership Agreement.

Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) has worked closely with the University of Edinburgh in the area of equality and diversity. EUSA is engaged with a variety of institutional teams making applications for equality and diversity awards, including the Race Equality Charter Mark and Athena Swan Institutional Silver Award. EUSA representatives also work with the University and students to highlight issues raised through four student liberation groups (LGBT+, Black and Minority Ethnic, Women Students, Disability and Mental Wellbeing), and the international postgraduate, mature, and part-time student groups.

The ELIR Technical report for Edinburgh Napier University noted that during the development and implementation of their new Strategy 2020, senior leaders were open and responsive to student views during the period of significant transformation and change. The ELIR report identified a wider cultural shift in the way senior managers engage with staff and students, placing value in open communication and consultation through a range of approaches, including: the Principal's Campus Conversations; regular e-newsletters from the Principal, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Secretary's Office; and University conferences. The Edinburgh Napier Students' Association (NSA) has also been working with the University to support and engage under-represented groups, including disabled students and part-time and distance learners. The NSA was developing a Support Services Navigation Map in partnership with the University's Centre for Learning and Study Skills at the time of the ELIR visit.

The ELIR Technical report for the University of Glasgow noted that the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy identifies an objective to promote student engagement with learning.

At Glasgow Caledonian University, the Engage initiative, a cross-university initiative led jointly by the GCU Learning Enhancement and Academic Development department (GCU LEAD) and the Student Experience Directorate and working in partnership with the Students' Association was noted as key to the University's successful strategy implementation. It uses a team partnership approach to co-construct a cross-institutional

understanding of the distinctive nature of the GCU student experience. This approach ensures staff and student contribution to strategy, policy and practice as well as institution-wide dissemination and implementation. Feedback from students during the ELIR confirmed that students consider themselves part of the University's consultations on policy and strategy.

At Glasgow School of Art, the President of the Students' Association was leading on a Review of Existing Student Representation and Engagement Structures during the ELIR review. The School also recently created the role of Student Engagement Co-Ordinator, to provide support to the Students' Association President and has proven to be an effective mechanism in supporting the President in developing new strategies for student engagement.

The ELIR at Heriot-Watt University demonstrated that the University had taken a considered approach to ensure staff and student engagement with, and ownership of, the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy. Students have also contributed to strategic projects on graduate attributes and the representation systems at the Dubai and Malaysia campuses.

The University of the Highlands and Islands has 'Our Students' as one of the three underpinning themes of its Strategic Plan, to demonstrate its partnership with the student body. The University also has a Student Engagement Manager whose role is to work with students, lead on student representation work and to support staff engaging with students. The University was the first to adopt a Student Partnership Agreement, which led to the development of the University's Social Experience Policy, and the Students' Association President meets monthly with the Principal to focus on high-level issues. The willingness of the University and the Students' Association to work in partnership to allow 'two-way communication from classroom to Court' was clearly evident to the ELIR team.

During the ELIR at Queen Margaret University, student representatives confirmed their engagement with strategic and operational decision making and their involvement in early discussions on the University's upcoming strategy, QM150.

At Robert Gordon University, it was evident that close relationships between the University and the Students' Association, RGU:Union, were also helping to ensure effective communication of strategic direction. The ELIR team found evidence of strong student involvement in the development of strategy through the Student Partnership Agreement and in the relocation to the Garthdee campus, where the ELIR report confirmed there is continuing and effective liaison about campus development and operation. The ELIR team found evidence of actions resulting from the Student Partnership Agreement themes being clearly embedded in institutional practice. Student representation and engagement are prioritised and clearly defined in the University's strategy and policies and the University uses a variety of methods to underpin partnership working with students including: the use of data from student surveys; effective student representative structures; the establishment and development of the Student Faculty Officer role; the Student Partnership Agreement; external engagement with sparqs and formal reporting on student partnership and involvement in quality assurance and enhancement processes. Another particularly positive example of student engagement and the University's responsiveness to student feedback was the establishment of the Student-Facing Support Services Review of IT resources. This adaptation of the institution-led periodic review process provided the ELIR team with clear evidence of an enhancement project being initiated in response to student feedback.

At the University of St Andrews, student representatives are involved in supporting the implementation of strategies, such as work relating to enterprise education and Annual Academic Monitoring dialogues. The new School Presidents' system has also allowed students to have more strategic engagement in learning and teaching within the schools.

The University of Stirling has three Students' Union representatives on its Education and Student Experience Committee, which has a remit including responsibility for the University's suite of strategies relating to learning, teaching, quality enhancement and the wider student experience. While there wasn't a student partnership agreement in place at the time of the ELIR, the University recognised the potential benefit of establishing one to further strengthen the collaborative and partnership working between staff and students - a view which the ELIR team supported.

The ELIR Technical report for the University of Strathclyde noted the work carried out by the Students' Association to support strategic efforts to improve equality and diversity at the University, with examples such as student membership on the Equality and Diversity Working Group. The Students' Association, USSA, also works in partnership with Professional Services to promote inclusive events, and has plans to work more closely with academic departments in the future to roll out these opportunities across the institution. USSA is also leading on the development of peer-support pilot initiatives at departmental level with a view to strengthening the student community and improving retention rates. Further to this, the University has also engaged with USSA to produce student-friendly policy web pages explaining academic policy.

Co-creation of the curriculum

Several of the ELIR Technical reports also identify examples of students and University staff working together in developing the curriculum. This section provides examples of different ways students in Scotland are encouraged to be co-creators of the curriculum.

At the University of Edinburgh, a joint University and Students' Association student engagement statement recognises students as active partners and co-creators of their learning.

During the ELIR at Edinburgh Napier University, staff provided examples of student involvement in curriculum co-creation, including determining assessment timing and format, moving from classroom-based lectures to fieldtrip activities, and agreeing the mode and timing of assessment feedback to students.

Glasgow Caledonian University's ELIR Technical report notes that staff-student engagement is embedded at all levels of the organisation. The introduction of School Officers has improved the effectiveness of student engagement across their schools through the officers' active involvement in initiatives such as co-creation of the curriculum. Discussion during the ELIR visit also confirmed that the curriculum had been informed and enhanced by the engagement of international students.

The ELIR report of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland noted that the Conservatoire was careful to include students in every stage of its Curriculum Reform project.

At the University of St Andrews, the Centre for Academic, Professional and Organisational Development (CAPOD), in partnership with the Students' Association, has developed the Professional Skills Curriculum which comprises over 20 different professional skills topics delivered through a series of online workshops, lectures and practical skills sessions.

The University of Stirling's report notes that, since the 2011 ELIR, the University has enhanced its process for programme development and approval, including increased engagement of students in the process. New programmes at the University are developed with the engagement of a programme panel, which includes student representatives.

At the University of the West of Scotland, students are now represented on programme boards and the school education forums to enable more effective engagement of students at the subject management level.

Student-led teaching awards

Many of the institutions have student-led teaching awards. These are usually organised by the Students' Association and are a way for students to identify and showcase what they recognise as good teaching. Overall, Abertay University, the University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, Heriot-Watt University, the University of the Highlands and Islands, Queen Margaret University, Robert Gordon University, the University of St Andrews, the University of Stirling, University of Strathclyde and the University of the West of Scotland were recognised for their student-led teaching awards in the ELIR reports.

At the University of Edinburgh, the Students' Association has been working to strengthen the quality of the nominations by encouraging students to elaborate on why they are nominating particular individuals, courses or programmes, Feedback given by students is shared anonymously with University staff to highlight what students value most, with the aim of improving the students' academic experiences. For the 2014-15 Awards, 3,000 nominations were received from students.

The University of Glasgow's Students' Representative Council published a winner's booklet for their Student Teaching Awards which included examples of the good practice identified by students.

At Heriot-Watt University, in addition to their 'Learning and Teaching Oscars', which serve as the more traditional student teaching awards, there are the Graduate Teaching Awards, which allow final year students to remember the staff within school that have had the most impact on their learning experience throughout their time at University.

The University of Stirling Students' Association also disseminate the nomination text to the nominees to share best practice and provide positive feedback to University staff, which was praised in the ELIR Technical report.

The Students' Association at the University of Strathclyde conducted a detailed analysis of the data from their awards scheme, to produce a 'Best Practice Report' that outlines the characteristics and attributes in their teachers that students respond most positively towards. Discussions were ongoing with the University about whether this would become an annual piece of work.

Engagement with postgraduate students

Several of the ELIR Thematic reports made specific reference to engagement with postgraduate students. The University of Glasgow's report provided information on the new Gilchrist Postgraduate Club, which was supported by a postgraduate development officer who was employed by the Students' Representative Council (SRC) but funded by the University. The post had responsibility for postgraduate student engagement as well as facilitating a range of academic and social events and activities. The ELIR report also talked about the University and the SRC's desire to enhance postgraduate student representation, particularly for PGR students. The SRC has delivered specific PGR student representative training since 2011 and, following restructuring, the SRC has introduced the role of postgraduate convenor for each college to increase opportunities for postgraduate student representation.

The University of the Highlands and Islands' Head of PGR Student Development supports PGR student engagement in conjunction with PGR student representatives by providing a dedicated VLE space for PGR students and through a biennial staff and student research conference. There are also two postgraduate research representatives on the University's Research Degrees Committee and one on the Research Committee. PGR students who met with the ELIR team indicated that student engagement had improved considerably this year and attributed this to the increasing impact of the Students' Association.

The Queen Margaret University ELIR report notes the Doctoral Students' Association, which has no formal link to the Students' Union, but its Co-Chairs represent students on the Research Strategy Committee and the Student Experience Committee. Postgraduate research students indicated that this was a beneficial representative system which offers various opportunities for development and support.

At SRUC, in addition to their sabbatical representatives, there is a part-time student officer to represent postgraduate students.

The University of St Andrews Technical report noted that taught postgraduate representation is facilitated through a system of programme representatives supported by the Postgraduate Convenor, an elected member of the Students' Representative Council. Postgraduate student representatives who met the ELIR team were satisfied with the effectiveness of the representation arrangements and could identify changes that had been made following their involvement.

At the University of Stirling, the ELIR team learned that the University plans to introduce a Graduate School Officer role aimed at the postgraduate student population. The University intended to recruit seven taught postgraduate and seven research postgraduate School Officers for the 2015-16 academic year. The ELIR team considered this was likely to enhance the partnership between the University and the postgraduate student population.

Postgraduate research students at the University of Strathclyde are represented on the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. A Postgraduate Students' Society was also established in 2012 with a view to creating a sense of postgraduate community across the institution and the University considers this will improve student representation for this population.

Engagement with the Enhancement Themes

There was some mention of student engagement with the Enhancement Themes in the ELIR Technical reports. While all institutions are expected to engage students with the Theme work, the University of Stirling's ELIR report made a considerable reference to the Enhancement Theme work. Its Enhancement Theme projects have been linked with efforts to enhance the student experience through the Transforming the Student Experience project alongside a range of other activities and events. The funding from the Enhancement Themes has also supported the Students' Union in hosting the inaugural Accessing Higher Education Conference. The University of Stirling ELIR team also heard about the University's move to more active student engagement in the most recent Enhancement Theme work, and the positive experiences of actively involving the Students' Union in this work.

The Robert Gordon University ELIR Technical report also noted that a student intern has been appointed by the University to investigate issues of transition from a student perspective. The University has also developed a Theme partnership with RGU:Union to support student engagement with the Theme and to consider student-led transitions support.

Student engagement in partner institutions and distance learners

Many of the ELIR Technical reports detailed how the institution ensures effective student engagement for students either studying abroad, or at partner institutions or international campuses.

At the University of Edinburgh, the report noted that the University aims to provide students on collaborative programmes with a learning experience equivalent to students on campus in Edinburgh. The partnership approval process ensures that mechanisms are in place to support the student learning experience, ensuring that students are able to comment on their experience and engage in decision making through student representation.

The ELIR Thematic report for Edinburgh Napier University noted that while the work of the Napier Students' Association does not extend systematically to transnational education (TNE) provision, the University does intend to build this into future plans.

The University of Glasgow recognised that its commitment to promote student engagement applies equally to students studying on collaborative programmes as it does to those studying at the home campus.

Heriot-Watt University's ELIR report noted that school-level student representation at their Dubai campus, and the work of the Students' Union in working proactively to develop student representation on both the Dubai and Malaysia campuses in ways that recognise local culture and context, within the overall University culture and ethos.

Robert Gordon University and their Students' Union have begun to work on ways to improve representation for students studying at a distance, including work with sparqs.

The University of the West of Scotland report identified that communications with students studying at partner institutions were carried out through student representation and staff-student liaison groups that have equivalence with arrangements on the home campus sites.

Student engagement: areas for development

While most examples relating to student engagement provided in the ELIR Technical Reports were of positive practice, a number of areas for development were also identified.

This section of the paper outlines the areas for development identified relating to student engagement in a higher education institution in the ELIR Technical reports.

Raising awareness of engagement opportunities

Regarding the Student Partnership Agreement at the Abertay University, the ELIR Technical report heard from the University and the Students' Association that the Agreement had not yet been an effective mechanism for driving significant enhancement work because it lacked visibility. There was also a lack of awareness among Abertay students of the recently established Student Life Network. The University and Students' Association have recognised this lack of visibility and engagement with the Network and are currently reviewing how best to use the Network to provide a forum for discussing the wider student experience.

The ELIR team identified some areas in which the Napier Students' Association (NSA) could enhance its profile. It appeared that a number of students were not aware of the ways in which the NSA represented them of influenced the University's decision making. Some students also indicated that class representatives could vary in their effectiveness. There would be benefit in the University and NSA continuing to reflect on the ways in which they

can inform the wider student population about their important work and about the student representative structures more generally.

The University of Glasgow developed a Student Voice website to promote student engagement, although there is a lack of clarity about the purpose and ownership of the Student Voice portal among staff and students. Use of the portal is intermittent and students and staff are using other media for such communication. The University is encouraged to consider the effectiveness of the portal, in consultation with the student body.

A review of graduate attributes at Heriot-Watt University identified a lack of awareness among staff and students of the attributes, which the University believes to have been caused by a lack of staff and student engagement at the development stage of the project. The University has subsequently redeveloped the graduate attributes following this review.

At the University of the Highlands and Islands, the staff and students who met the ELIR team were largely unaware of the current Student Partnership Agreement. Senior staff acknowledged that there would be a benefit in raising awareness of the Agreement, indicating that the University planned to relaunch it later in 2016.

The University of St Andrews has introduced a new 'school president' role. As these arrangements embed, the ELIR report indicated that there would be benefit in the University and Students' Association considering additional ways of promoting these roles to the wider student body.

Student representation

When visiting Abertay University, The ELIR team learned of some variability in student attendance at School Academic Committees (SACs) and that in a minority of situations, class representatives did not fulfil their role. Given the progress that has been made by the University and Students' Association in strengthening student engagement, there would be value in identifying this as a focus for future collaborative working.

The University of Edinburgh recognised that student representation at the college level could be strengthened further. The time and volume of committee meetings in one college were identified by students as barriers to engagement and the University was encouraged to progress with work to promote and implement more effective representation at the college level. Students at the University also identified a lack of clarity among some academic and support staff regarding the role of student representatives on committees. They also confirmed there is variation in the ways in which class representatives are elected and in the mechanisms through which they engage with course organisers and fellow students.
The ELIR team noted that students identified instances where representatives were not automatically members of, or systematically invited to, school and college committee meetings. Students who met the team emphasised that strengthening the representative structures at college and school level would ensure the 'student voice' reflected the student body more widely. It is recommended that the University review the processes for appointing students to school committees and provide more effective training and preparation for the roles, ensuring that staff in schools understand the student roles and are able to support students to contribute effectively. There would also be benefit in the University considering the best ways of providing feedback to the wider student body about the action that is taken in response to matters raised through school and college-level committees.

In discussions with the ELIR team at SRUC, student representatives highlighted a number of challenges that had been experienced in establishing the Students' Association (SRUCSA) and the wider representative structures. At times SRUCSA and SRUC staff at officer level had different priorities and this had led to tensions. Students identified a need for staff support within SRUCSA itself, rather than relying on SRUC officer support. The ELIR report

asked SRUC to consider this as the institution sought to embed the representative arrangements. Discussions with students also identified that the student liaison committee meetings could operate more effectively. Students reported a tendency for the same issues to be raised repeatedly, minutes not always being available, and a lack of clarity around whether or how matters had been resolved. SRUC indicated that it intended to introduce a 'you said, we did' approach to reporting on student liaison committees.

During the ELIR, senior managers acknowledged that there may be a gap for student engagement when school learning and teaching committee meetings take place during the summer, and indicated that they would address this. Some student representatives commented that the training they received had not adequately prepared them for their role, and there would be value in the University reflecting on the ways in which it could enhance this to ensure student representatives are supported in the schools.

The ELIR report for the University noted that there are differences in the election processes and appointment terms of class representatives, with some students expressing the view that ineffective representatives were not always replaced as alternatives could not be found. The University was encouraged to review the election processes in partnership with the Students' Association, to ensure effective operation of the process and to promote the benefits of becoming involved in student representation to the student body.

Partner institutions

At Abertay University, there is a limited connection between the Students' Association and partner college associations. The ELIR team recommended that the University should explore further ways of ensuring that student feedback from collaborative activity is gathered and acted upon.

The ELIR report for Edinburgh Napier University noted that the work of the Napier Students' Association does not extend systematically to TNE provision, although the University intends to build this into future plans.

The ELIR team at Glasgow Caledonian University learned that while the University has collaboration and accreditation arrangements with a number of institutions such as the Caledonian College of Engineering Oman, formal feedback from students in these institutions does not feed in to the University's representative and enhancement structures. To further enhance the student experience, consideration should be taken to ensure parity of the student experience at all locations such as other campuses or institutions with collaborative arrangements, including postgraduate students.

The Students' Union at Heriot-Watt University does not currently work with students in Approved Learning Partners (ALPs) or independent distance learners. Given the significant numbers of students in these categories, the University is asked to progress with the plans outlined in its Reflective Analysis to create representative structures for these students.

Postgraduate

Postgraduate student engagement at the University of Glasgow remained a challenge as there has been difficulty in filling the postgraduate convenor representative roles through election.

Discussions with postgraduate research students at Glasgow Caledonian University indicated formal representative structures at postgraduate research level are not as clear or established as those at undergraduate level. The planned increase in research student numbers means the University should review the representative structures for postgraduate research students.

External examiner reports

On the issue of external examiner reports, the ELIR team at the University of Dundee noted that if students have representative roles they may see the reports, or references to them through monitoring processes, but there was no systematic approach to making external examiner reports available to all students. The ELIR report encouraged the University to consider publishing the reports so that all students have the opportunity to engage with them.

At the University of Stirling, students who met the ELIR team were unsure about how they would access external examiner reports, and the team recommended that the students would benefit from clarification on this.

At Queen Margaret University, it was noted that student representatives were able to see the full reports on programme committees, although there was not mention of availability to the wider student body.

Areas highlighted in the ELIR Outcome Reports

In ELIR 3, Outcome Reports identify areas of positive practice and areas for development. Below are examples of these areas of positive practice and development which are related to student engagement.

Positive practice

University of Aberdeen

Student partnership: the University has a positive and constructive relationship with the Aberdeen University Students' Association. There are opportunities for students' views to be considered at all levels of the institution through the feedback arrangements, the University committee structure and the formal student representative system.

Abertay University

Open and responsive culture: the University has established an open and responsive academic community. It welcomes and responds to the views of academic staff, professional service staff and students.

Partnership working with the student body: student engagement has been significantly strengthened at both institutional and subject levels. There is an open and constructive relationship between the Students' Association and the University Senior Management Team. Student representation has also been formalised across the institution with direct links between students, schools and the Student Representative Council.

University of Dundee

Student engagement: Students are very positive about their experience of the University. There is a strong partnership with the Dundee University Students' Association, and student representation is embedded at all levels of the institution. During the review students confirmed that their views are actively sought and contribute to the University's enhancement agenda.

Edinburgh Napier University

Effective strategic development and commitment to communication: the University has an effective approach to developing and implementing its strategic plan, known as Strategy 2020. This includes senior leaders being open and responsive to staff and student views during the period of significant transformation and change while Strategy 2020 was developed and first implemented. More widely, there has been a cultural shift in the way senior managers engage with staff and students, placing value in open communication and consultation through a range of approaches including the Principal's Campus Conversations, which have contributed to promoting wider engagement in the strategic planning process.

Partnership with Students' Association: the University is committed to working in partnership with Napier Students' Association across a wide range of strategic and operational developments, for example: engagement with development of the University's Strategy 2020, developing representation, the volunteering service, and sports and societies.

Personalised student experience: the University is meeting its strategic objective to provide an excellent personalised student experience. The personal development tutor role is key to achieving this aim, and there is a strong partnership between academic and professional support staff. In addition to students being actively engaged in their learning experience across the University, there are some positive examples of students being engaged as co-creators of the curriculum.

University of Glasgow

Student engagement: The University has a strong commitment to student engagement. There is a positive relationship with the Student Representative Council (SRC), and students are clear that their contributions are valued and acted upon. There are opportunities for student views to be considered at all levels of the institution, and formal student representation has been strengthened by the inclusion of 12 student members on the recently established Council of Senate.

Glasgow Caledonian University

Partnership approach to student engagement: there is clear evidence of a partnership between the University and its undergraduate students. This can be seen in a variety of ways including student engagement with the key quality assurance and enhancement processes, the relationship with the Student Association and the wider representation arrangements, and the range of student-led initiatives, such as the Student Action Group for Enhancement (SAGE).

Glasgow School of Art

Student engagement: There is a positive and effective relationship between the Students' Association and the GSA executive, which ensures that the student voice is heard at the highest levels of the institution. The appointment of the Student Engagement Coordinator (a post funded by GSA but employed by the Students' Association) is an effective mechanism for supporting the President of the Students' Association in developing new strategies for student engagement.

Heriot-Watt University

Staff and student engagement in institutional strategy: the University has taken a consultative and collaborative approach to ensure staff and student engagement with,

and ownership of, its new Learning and Teaching Strategy. Development of the Strategy has involved both academic and professional services staff.

Student partnership: there is a constructive and effective partnership between the University and the Heriot-Watt University Student Union. This is illustrated by the work the University and the Student Union are carrying out jointly on: graduate attributes; the development of representative systems in Dubai and Malaysia; and the Students' Union Learning and Teaching Oscars, and Graduate Teaching Awards, which recognise and reward good teaching by University staff.

Queen Margaret University

Institutional context and culture: The University has a culture of reflection and continuous improvement. This can be seen by the engagement of staff and students in strategic development, the sharing of good practice, and support for enhancement activities at all levels.

Robert Gordon University

Student representation and partnership working: the University has an effective and proactive partnership with RGU:Union. A number of student roles have been established to enhance representation and engagement including student faculty officers and students acting as interns on enhancement projects. A particularly positive development has been the use of the Student Partnership Agreement as a foundation for the development of the Staff and Student Charter at Gray's School of Art, which sets out the respective responsibilities and expectations of staff and students around learning, teaching, assessment and opportunities for personal development. Students are recognised and rewarded for their engagement with enhancement activities through Student Contribution and Involvement Awards and the University's credit-bearing Extracurricular Award. Students are also active in recognising staff contribution through the student-led Support Teaching Appreciation and Recognition (STAR) awards.

Approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement: the University has comprehensive and robust arrangements for annual appraisal and periodic Institution-Led Subject Review (ILSR) and the consideration of outcomes from these processes. This is complemented by annual monitoring and periodic Student-Facing Support Services Review (SFSSR) which cut across organisational boundaries. Annual and periodic processes are overseen effectively by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee with the operational support of the Academic Affairs department, including the faculty quality officers. A particularly positive development has been student partnership in the SFSSR of IT services, which was well received by staff and students and will inform the approach taken to subsequent enhancement of the student experience. Action taken as a result of the SFSSR continues to have significant student engagement/involvement after the original review event.

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Undergraduate curriculum: The Conservatoire has successfully developed a new undergraduate curriculum which is having a transformational effect on the culture of the institution and which is distinctive and innovative among conservatoires in the UK and internationally. The core specialist curriculum includes opportunities for students to make choices which develop interdisciplinary working. This broadens the student experience and provides opportunities for students to become co-creators of their own learning. In addition, the careful mapping of learning outcomes onto the assessment matrix will support students to become self-critical in reflecting on their own and their peers' achievements.

Curriculum Reform project: The design of the curriculum was informed by engaging external peers, including those from outside the performing arts disciplines, and there was significant use of national and international reference points throughout the Curriculum Reform project. Implementation of Curriculum Reform was inclusive of staff and student opinion through extensive internal consultation.

Staff-student partnership: There is a strong staff-student partnership and a clear practitioner community, into which students are fully integrated. A powerful learning experience is delivered through the use of 'vertical' opportunities in which students from different years perform alongside professional practitioners.

Scotland's Rural College

Priority given to improving student representation and engagement: SRUC has made positive progress in this area including developing a learner engagement strategy and identifying staff and structures to support its implementation. Priority has been given to the establishment of the student association and relationships at the most senior levels are positive, with evidence of student views being well received in the institution-level committees. A number of these developments are in the early stages and SRUC is encouraged to retain an active oversight of their effectiveness as they embed, listening carefully to the views of the student representatives.

University of St Andrews

Proactive student engagement and representation: there are highly effective student representative arrangements in place including the successful posts of school and faculty president. The student representatives are proactive in identifying areas in which to engage and are supported by the University to do so, for example student-led groups are currently considering feedback on assessment and module evaluation questionnaires with the outcomes of each being considered for action by University committees.

University of Stirling

Student engagement and partnership: a commitment to engage with its students is embedded in the University culture. There has been a substantial volume of change, which has provided considerable opportunity for students to influence policy and practice, for example through the Transforming the Student Experience project. It is evident that the University and the Students' Union have established a productive partnership to ensure that the student voice is heard.

Student representation: the School Officer student representative role, which was piloted at the time of the 2011 ELIR, has been extended successfully to the whole University, with plans in place to appoint Graduate Officers for the research student population. School Officers sit on school learning and teaching committees and are twinned with staff members in the relevant school, reinforcing the student partnership approach. The role also promotes the effectiveness of student representation more widely through providing support for class representatives.

Student teaching award: the Recognising Achievement in Teaching Excellence (RATE) award, which is run by the Students' Union, incorporates a number of positive features, including every member of staff nominated for an award being provided with written feedback on the reasons for their nomination. The awards are also linked to the annual learning and teaching conference, which provides an opportunity to celebrate and share good practice.

Areas for development

University of Abertay Dundee

Communication with students: review the approach to communicating with students, ensuring formal information relating to policy and regulatory matters is visible to the student population. The University has a multi-channel approach for student communications and is asked to review this to ensure the mode of communication appropriately reflects the information being disseminated and to avoid important information becoming lost in the high volume of messaging. In addition, the University is encouraged to progress with its intention to make the external examiner reports and associated school and programme responses more visible to students.

University of Edinburgh

Student representation at school and college levels: building on the existing constructive relationship with Edinburgh University Students' Association, ensure there is more effective coordination of student representation at college and school level. The University should review the processes for appointing students to college and school committees and provide more effective training and preparation for the roles, ensuring that staff also understand the role of student representatives and are able to support students to contribute effectively. There would also be benefit in the University considering the best five ways of providing feedback to the wider student body about the action that is taken in response to matters raised through school and college-level committees.

Assessment and feedback: implement feedback policy in a clear and consistent manner across the University to ensure that all students receive timely, relevant and high quality feedback at key points during their programmes. There would be benefit in working closely with students at school level to understand their specific issues and needs, and to consider whether students in particular disciplines, locations or modes of study would benefit from contextualised approaches. In carrying out this work, there would be value in the University reflecting on the positive experiences of assessment and feedback reported by online distance learning students.

University of the Highlands and Islands

Realising the benefit of the Student Partnership Agreement: build upon the positive relationship between the University and the newly established Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA) to realise the benefits of capturing and progressing joint work through the Student Partnership Agreement.

Student feedback - continue working to ensure students are aware of the ways in which their feedback is being listened to and acted upon.

University of Glasgow

The Student Voice portal: The Student Voice portal has been developed from the Student Voice website to facilitate student engagement and feedback. However, there is a lack of clarity about the purpose and ownership of the Portal among staff and students. Although the portal is intended to link students to their student representatives and to facilitate student-to-student communication, use of the portal is intermittent and students and staff are using other media for such communication. The University is encouraged to consider the effectiveness of the system in consultation with the student body.

Glasgow Caledonian University

Research student experience: develop the research student experience in a range of ways including reviewing the effectiveness of the structures and systems in place aimed at establishing a research community. The University should ensure the availability of appropriate physical space, learning resources and staff resources to provide supervision in support of the research student population, particularly in view of the strategic intention to double research student numbers by 2020. The University should also review the representative structures and arrangements for responding to the research student voice to ensure these are as effective as those in place for the undergraduate student population.

Capturing the off-campus student voice: consider the ways in which the existing arrangements could be developed further to capture and reflect on the views of the University's students who are studying away from the Glasgow campus in order to inform institutional strategy and policy setting and implementation, with a view to enhancing the student experience overall. This would be particularly valuable as the University extends its reach beyond Glasgow.

Heriot-Watt University

Student representation - Progress plans to create representative structures for students studying with an Approved Learning Partner or through independent distance learning, building on positive representation systems evident in the Edinburgh and Dubai campuses, and emerging in Malaysia.

Queen Margaret University

Scope and analysis of student surveys - Continue to review the University's strategic approach to the management and use of student surveys. The University is asked to review the number and scope of the surveys that it uses. It is also asked to develop an effective system for analysing the survey outcomes, linking the outcomes to action plans.

University of St Andrews

Engaging with the student experience - Continue to reflect on the extent to which all students can engage with the St Andrews student experience, in the context of a more diverse student body including those who live some distance from the University.

What happens next?

QAA Scotland follows up the ELIR outcomes with institutions individually through annual discussion visits, and each institution is required to produce a Follow-up Report indicating how it has addressed its own ELIR outcomes. QAA Scotland also promotes collaborative working between institutions to share good practice and to find collective solutions to common areas for development. Each institution is invited to participate in a Follow-up event to engage with the ways other institutions who were reviewed at around the same point of the ELIR cycle have addressed their review outcomes.

References to Student Engagement in the ELIR 3 Technical Reports

The paragraph numbers below refer to those in the original ELIR Technical Reports for each institution.

University of Aberdeen

20   In February 2013, the University established a widening participation working group to make recommendations on policy to UCTL and the Advisory Group on Student Recruitment and Admissions. The group is chaired by the Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) and includes representation from the Directorate of Academic Affairs, Policy, Planning and Governance, Colleges, SRAS and Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA). The group has been developing a framework to promote widening participation from pre-application to post-graduation. The group has been working to ensure that the University is using the most appropriate statistical indicators in relation to widening access and is also developing partnership working to engage with school pupils at an early stage of their school career. In the partnership working approach, the University recognises two key elements: raising aspirations and supporting schools to enhance attainment. The University is discussing this approach with local authorities and school head teachers.

36   The University's virtual learning environment (VLE), MyAberdeen, is used to enhance the student experience in a range of imaginative ways. Since 2011, the University has recruited student interns to support the enhancement and development of the VLE, ensuring that developments take student ideas and perspectives into account. The range of information and the form of its presentation is responsive to student opinion. It incorporates a variety of useful tools, such as the Peer Assessment Module and a Frequently Asked Questions section relating to points arising from the student survey. Student engagement with graduate attributes is promoted through the VLE with the inclusion of a class blog, reflective journal and e-portfolio which enable students to document and collate evidence of their self-evaluations, work experiences, and reflections on their learning from work. The School of Medical Sciences developed student retention support using the VLE, an approach which the ELIR team heard is now being rolled out across all schools. In discussion with the team, undergraduate students, in particular, were very positive about the range of material available through MyAberdeen and staff emphasised its benefits in support employability.

37   The University places a high value on student engagement. Student representatives have the opportunity to sit on all decision-making forums within the University, including the Senate and Court. Training is provided for student representatives and was developed with support from student participation in quality Scotland (sparqs). The introduction of School Convenors has strengthened the communication between Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) and class representatives, with these 'super reps' moving beyond being solely feedback focused at Staff-Student Liaison Committee level to being involved in Class Representative Conferences and Class Representative Councils.

38   During 2013-14, the University is piloting a new system of representation, Universal Academic Representation. This new system was proposed by AUSA for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. One of the benefits will be running a single representative system, rather than the 13 systems that have been in use across the schools and which led to some inconsistencies in student engagement in school committees in the past. AUSA has developed a code of practice for the new representative arrangements. Elected students will be in post for one academic year and represent their discipline or programme in their year of study. The Universal Academic Representation system includes the introduction of a Representation Planning Form which will aid schools by highlighting aspects that need to be considered at the beginning of the year including how many representatives they need,

who is responsible for filling these roles and when the SSLC meetings take place. In addition, 'Rep Passes' will provide evidence that students are fulfilling their representative roles through documenting their activities, including their participation in compulsory training. Both AUSA and the pilot schools plan to evaluate the new system through students, student representatives and staff in key roles, Directors of Learning and Teaching, and Education Development Coordinators.

39   Overall, students indicated to the ELIR team that they are satisfied with the representative opportunities available and feel listened to as the University is responsive to the feedback given through formal committee meetings as well as through informal channels. The relationship between the student representatives and the University was tested over the decision to change the academic year structure, with students reporting dissatisfaction with the way in which students were consulted. The ELIR team explored the matter during the visit and took the view that the University had been responsive to the student body as a whole. Students and staff were supportive of the new representative scheme, indicating that it would 'professionalise' the representation system, making it easier for students to engage in representation and develop a variety of skills, as well as promoting student views.

60   Course and programme approval is a two-tier process. At college level, proposals are considered in relation to the nature of assessment, student engagement, resources, and alignment with school and college policy and strategic plans. At QAC level, the focus is on conformity to institutional regulations and practice and compliance with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the SCQF. The approval processes are served by Senate Academic Standards (SENAS) forms. As the 2010 ELIR report identified, the SENAS forms are well structured and comprehensive.

Abertay University

43   The University has an effective approach to student representation with a strong and constructive relationship fostered between the Students' Association, student body and the University. A review of the Students' Association was undertaken in 2014, in partnership with the National Union of Students, and resulted in a restructure and a refocusing of the Association's work in representing the student population and enhancing the student experience. The enhancement of the class representation system, identified in the Student Partnership Agreement (SPA), has been a key product of this review.

44   In response to recommendations from the 2012 ELIR, the University and the Students' Association have developed a more effective strategic partnership, with a new SPA signed in June 2014. The SPA outlines a number of areas of work covering four main themes: assessment and feedback; student representation and engagement; student personal development; and learning resources and the environment. The SPA links to the Strategic Plan (2015-20) and these areas are reviewed jointly and considered in the schools' and professional services' action plans.

45   The ELIR team heard from the University and Students' Association that the SPA had not yet been an effective mechanism for driving significant enhancement work because it lacked visibility. The team therefore encourages the University and Students' Association to reflect on the ways in which they could optimise the value of having an SPA.

46   Students are represented on the University Senate by the Students' Association elected sabbatical officers. A new approach to programme representation, jointly owned by the Students' Association and the University has been introduced with a class representative elected for each stage per programme, who then becomes a member of the Student Representative Council (SRC) and their school's programme committee (SPC). The SRC is

a forum for all class representatives and members of the Students' Association Executive to debate policy. A school's programme committee provides a forum for class representatives, and members of the programme team to meet and discuss student feedback on current performance and upcoming changes to the programme. Students are elected from the SRC to be members of the TLC and the SACs. Students who are members of TLC receive a full induction to the Committee, which students highlighted to the ELIR team as valuable in supporting them in their role. The team formed the view that the direct relationship between the student body, the schools and the Students' Association has been significantly strengthened through the connections between class representatives and the SRC.

47   Following changes to the University's committee structure, the Student Experience Subcommittee was discontinued (paragraphs 13 and 14). As part of the response to student representatives' concerns that this decision removed an important formal forum with a strong student voice, the University and Students' Association established the Student Life Network (SLN) in October 2015. The SLN is open to all students and relevant staff (invited dependent on agenda items) to discuss issues identified by the students as being important to their experience at the University. The ELIR team learned that there was a lack of awareness of the SLN among the student population. While the majority of students who met with the team were unaware of its role, those students who had experience of the SLN did acknowledge its potential as a forum for addressing student concerns. The University and Students' Association have recognised this lack of visibility and engagement with the SLN and are currently reviewing how best to use the Network to provide a forum for discussing the wider student experience.

48   Prior to elections, the Students' Association informs all students of the role of class representatives and newly elected representatives are offered training, which has recently been reviewed by the Students' Association in collaboration with Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs). Students who met the ELIR team described the training as effective, indicating that it had supported them in fulfilling their role. Class representatives are acknowledged for their role and their achievement is recorded on their Higher Education Achievement Record.

49   The ELIR team learned of some variability in student attendance at SACs and that in a minority of situations class representatives did not fulfil their role. Given the progress that has been made by the University and the Students' Association in strengthening student engagement, there would be value in identifying this as a focus for future collaborative working.

50   The ELIR team heard from students and staff that student engagement had been significantly strengthened at both University and subject levels, with student representation now formalised across the institution. The team recognised that the University has established a culture of encouraging and welcoming student feedback, and students who met the team confirmed that their feedback was responded to by the University.

75   The University has an effective approach to enhancing the student learning experience. Student representation and partnership working with the student body and Students' Association have been significantly strengthened since the 2012 ELIR. The University has fostered an open and responsive culture to encouraging student feedback, valuing this feedback and taking appropriate action to enhance the student learning experience. In continuing to enhance this approach it would be useful for the University and the Students' Association to reflect on the value more active use of the SPA might add in supporting strategic enhancement of the student experience.

82   The Abertay Teaching and Learning Fund (ATLEF) was established in 2013 as a competitive fund to support teaching and learning enhancement, and is aligned directly with

strategic institutional priorities and the national Enhancement Themes. The fund is open to both academic and professional support staff with a key condition of funding being the requirement to ensure effective dissemination from the project, such as presentation at internal TLE seminars, internal and external learning and teaching conferences and through the creation of shared resources within the University community. Student engagement in the ATLEF projects has developed over time, with students funded to undertake research and work as active members of project teams. At the time of the current ELIR, a call was being developed for student-led pedagogic projects which were to be supported by the Students' Association. The ELIR team noted that staff were very aware of ATLEF projects and recognised key benefits developing from them.

85   The Students' Association has a student-led teaching awards scheme with the awards used to identify good practice at institutional level, through individuals presenting at TLE seminars and case studies being developed, and at school level with discussions of positive practice taking place within SACs.

100   In the context of curriculum reform (paragraph 23), the University has undertaken a comprehensive review and revision of its Academic Regulations for taught undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and for its research degrees. The aims of the review of the Academic Regulations were to apply consistent practice across the University and produce substantially shorter regulations which were easier for students to engage with and understand. The Academic Regulations set out the University's minimum standards for an award and are supported by a set of policies relating, among other things, to academic appeals, admissions, and assessment, and by the external examiner webpages and the Research Degrees Student and Supervisor Handbook. The University indicated that taught academic regulations were also modified for implementation in 2015-16 to incentivise student engagement and performance. The new regulations ensure that students cannot pass a module without participating in every unit of assessment. A student who has failed to submit an assessment will not only receive a non-submission grade but also will fail the module outright and lose any reassessment opportunity. A student may be permitted to repeat a failed module in the following academic year within the progression regulations. Module grade for stages three and four of programmes, including failed modules, contribute toward the calculation of a GPA which is used to determine classifications. While none of the students who met the ELIR team had actually accessed the Academic Regulations themselves, their understanding of the regulations as applied to their individual programme of study and contained in programme handbooks was clear.

147   There is a limited connection between the Students' Association and partner college Students' Associations, although SEGi University and Colleges' students are able to submit individual feedback to the University on their student experience. The SEGi University and Colleges partnership manual contains guidelines for establishing a staff student consultative committee and indicates that there should be an opportunity for students to have a forum where they feel their voices can be heard. The University should explore further ways of ensuring that student feedback from collaborative activity is gathered and acted upon.

University of Dundee

40   Academic advisors of studies within schools assist students in academic decision-making such as module choices, degree pathways and progression. Students who met with the ELIR team confirmed that the system works effectively. However, student feedback also indicates that schools employ different approaches to pastoral support, and that there is no University-wide system, such as a personal tutor scheme, in place. While acknowledging variability, students were also positive about the pastoral support available in each school and commented that academic staff are accessible and willing to help, and that they were referred on as necessary to Student Services. The Dundee University Students' Association,

in collaboration with the University, is to lead a review of pastoral support during 2013-14. This is a positive opportunity to ensure equivalent access to support for students across the University.

45   The University has recently undertaken a number of interrelated initiatives to enhance its approach to assessment and feedback. These include participation in an evaluation of the Higher Education Academy *Transforming the Experiences of Students Through Assessment* (TESTA) methodology, a Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA)-led project to explore student views of policies and processes in relation to assessment practices, and the provision of a structured 'Toolkit on Feedback and Assessment' for staff, which was developed with consultancy support from student participation in quality Scotland (sparqs). The impact and effectiveness of these initiatives will be monitored by the Quality Forum, which includes assessment and feedback as a standing item on its agenda, and the Learning and Teaching Committee, as well as through the Learning and Teaching Strategy to 2017, which includes student satisfaction in assessment and feedback as a key performance indicator.

46   The University is committed to student engagement and has a strong partnership with the Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA). This was evident in meetings with staff and students and in a number of projects being led by DUSA or jointly managed by DUSA with the University. DUSA and the University are currently considering the development of a student partnership agreement and at the time of the current ELIR this was at an early stage of development.

47   Student representation is embedded at all levels of the institution. Students are represented through the Student Representative Council (SRC) and by the four DUSA Sabbatical Officers who each have responsibility for one of the colleges. At the school level there are class and module representatives as well as school presidents. DUSA is responsible for organising the election of school presidents and the training of student representatives and for 2013-14 has developed a new representative handbook. Students who met with the ELIR team commented positively on the usefulness of the training for student representatives.

48   Approaches to gathering and responding to feedback are tailored to meet the needs of schools and programmes. There is a requirement for formal reflection on student feedback as part of the annual review process and the National Student Survey (NSS) is also an important source of feedback which is used to enhance the student experience in an effective manner. The TESTA project and the DUSA-led project on assessment and feedback (see paragraph 45) arose as a response to NSS scores in the area of assessment and feedback. *NSS matters*, a joint publication produced by the University and DUSA, contains a 'you said, we did' section to highlight action taken in relation to feedback from the NSS. Students were able give positive examples of action taken as a result of the feedback they had provided and confirmed that their views are actively sought and contribute to the University's enhancement agenda.

58   The Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA) runs a student-led teaching award scheme where students are invited to nominate the best lecturer, advisor or tutor in a variety of different categories including: most inspirational teaching of undergraduates; most inspirational teaching of postgraduates; most inspirational teaching from graduate tutors; most innovative teaching; best student advisor or personal tutor; and best teacher for assessment and feedback. Judging is carried out by the DUSA Executive with input from the Policy, Governance and Legal Affairs Directorate and the Library and Learning Centre (Educational Development). Nominees are invited to attend a celebratory dinner where the winners are announced. The achievements of the winners of these student-led awards are celebrated in a special edition of *Highlighter.*

80   External examiner reports are, in some cases, brief but largely positive, with several taking the opportunity to address areas for enhancement through the standard template format of the reporting documentation which includes a section on areas for good practice and opportunities for quality enhancement. External examiner reports and PSRB reports are considered within relevant school and college committees. If students have representative roles they may see the reports, or references to them, through monitoring processes, but there is no systematic approach to making external examiner reports available to all students. This was not a concern for the students who met the ELIR team, however the University is encouraged to consider publishing the reports so that all students have the opportunity to engage with them.

University of Edinburgh

32   Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) is engaged with a variety of institutional teams making applications for equality and diversity awards, including the Race Equality Charter Mark and Athena Swan Institutional Silver Award (the Bronze award being achieved in 2006 and renewed in 2009 and 2012), and the University is progressing with student-focused activity to support this work. EUSA representatives work with the University and students to highlight issues raised through four student Liberation Groups (LGBT+, Black and Minority Ethnic, Women Students, Disability and Mental Wellbeing), and the international, postgraduate, and mature and part-time students groups. This work is regarded positively by both staff and students, but EUSA acknowledges that more could always be done for hard-to-reach students, demonstrating EUSA's recognition of the importance of continuing to work proactively on equality and diversity issues.

34   The University is committed to student engagement and has a positive and constructive relationship with EUSA. This is evident in the variety of projects and initiatives where the University works in partnership with EUSA and the wider student body. It was also evident from the ELIR team's discussions with student representatives.

35   Student representation structures are devolved to schools but supported centrally by EUSA, which provides training and support for student representatives throughout the academic year in partnership with Student Partnership in Quality Scotland (sparqs) and the National Union of Students. A joint EUSA/University student engagement statement recognises students as active partners and co-creators of their learning. There is student representation at all levels of the University and students are represented on all student-related institutional committees by EUSA Sabbatical Officers.

36   Since the 2011 ELIR there have been a number of developments aimed at strengthening student representation, including the creation of a single Student Council to allow EUSA Sabbatical Officers and student representatives to discuss all academic matters. The University has also taken steps to enhance representation at college level, including developing a Student Quality Forum in the College of Humanities and Social Science. Since 2012-13, five forums have been held and a College representative forum has taken place in the College of Science and Engineering. The University recognises that student representation at the college level could be strengthened further, for example the time and volume of committee meetings in one college were identified by students as barriers to engagement; a flexible model designed to allow a group of representatives to share the load of committee attendance had, to date, achieved mixed success. The devolved structure gives considerable decision-making power to the colleges, making it all the more important to have effective student representation at that level. The University is, therefore, encouraged to progress with work to promote and implement more effective representation at the college level.

37   The 2011 ELIR highlighted variation in the operation of class representative systems, which presented challenges for the University in resolving matters raised across programmes and schools. As a result, in 2012-13, EUSA implemented new guidelines for class representatives with the aim of ensuring greater consistency. In 2013-14, a set of Student-Staff Liaison Committee principles were implemented, which had been developed in partnership with the University's Academic Services. In 2014-15, building on these positive developments, EUSA worked with the University's Quality Assurance Committee to review the effectiveness of the current student engagement frameworks in schools, and has undertaken work to identify variations in experiences across schools with the aim of using the outcomes to develop school-specific guidance for class representatives during 2015-16.

38   During the current ELIR students highlighted a number of areas where representation at school and college level could be strengthened further. Students identified a lack of clarity among some academic and support staff regarding the role of student representatives on committees. They also confirmed there is variation in the ways in which class representatives are elected and in the mechanisms through which they engage with course organisers and fellow students, reflecting the variety of structures, courses and programmes across the University. The ELIR team noted that students identified instances where representatives were not automatically members of, or systematically invited to, school and college committee meetings. In some cases, this led students to believe their involvement was not valued and that the student views were not always being considered. Students who met the team emphasised that strengthening the representative structures at college and school level would ensure the 'student voice' reflected the student body more widely, placing less reliance on the views of EUSA Sabbatical Officers.

39   The University is encouraged to continue building on the existing constructive relationship with EUSA to ensure there is more effective student representation at college and school level. The University should review the processes for appointing students to school committees and provide more effective training and preparation for the roles, ensuring that staff in schools understand the student roles and are able to support students to contribute effectively. There would also be benefit in the University considering the best ways of providing feedback to the wider student body about the action that is taken in response to matters raised through school and college-level committees.

50   In 2014-15, to further support enhancements in ODL provision, the University undertook a thematic review of online/distance taught postgraduate provision in the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine, with one aim being to explore student representation for ODL students. There would be benefit in the University disseminating the outcomes of the review to all staff involved in ODL provision across the institution.

81   Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) also facilitates the identification of good practice through the EUSA Teaching Awards Scheme, which, in 2008-9, was the first student-led teaching award scheme in the UK. Students can nominate teaching staff, support staff, courses, and learning communities for awards, which are assessed by a student judging panel. EUSA has developed the criteria for judging these Awards, which are now divided into eight different categories: Best Feedback, Best Personal Tutor, Best Student Tutor, Best Research and Dissertation Supervisor, Supporting Students' Learning, Best Overall Teacher, Best Course, and Best Learning Community Award. EUSA has been working to strengthen the quality of the nominations by encouraging students to elaborate on why they are nominating particular individuals, courses, or programmes. Feedback given by students is shared anonymously with University staff to highlight what students value most, with the aim of improving the students' academic experiences. The number of nominations has been rising steadily over the years. For the 2014-15 Awards, 3,000 nominations were received and were accessible on the EUSA Teaching Awards website.

106   The University took a collaborative approach to producing the Reflective Analysis for the current ELIR, inviting engagement from colleagues across the institution and working in partnership with Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA). The work was overseen by an ELIR Steering Group, with EUSA being involved and making active contributions at all stages.

140   The University aims to provide students on collaborative programmes with a learning experience equivalent to students on campus in Edinburgh. The partnership approval process ensures that mechanisms are in place to support the student learning experience, for example ensuring that students are able to comment on their experience and engage in decision-making through student representation. All students on collaborative programmes are given access to pastoral and academic support.

Edinburgh Napier University

9   The University demonstrated an effective approach towards strategic development and implementation. The ELIR team recognised that senior leaders were open and responsive to staff and student views during the period of significant transformation and change while Strategy 2020 was developed and first implemented. More widely, there has been a cultural shift in the way senior managers engage with staff and students, placing value in open communication and consultation through a range of approaches, including: the Principal's Campus Conversations; regular e-newsletters from the Principal, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Secretary's Office; and University conferences and professional development workshops that are aligned to the strategic objectives. These approaches have promoted the wider engagement of staff and students in the strategic planning process.

14   The University has an effective approach to strengthening its partnership with the NSA. Partnership activities are linked to the University's strategic objectives and include: implementing the NSA's volunteering framework (VBase); establishing the Student Experience Committee; and seeking to form a clearer understanding of the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey results and enhancing the taught postgraduate student experience.

35   The direction of the development of learning and teaching practices has been underpinned by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2010-15. The new Academic Strategy builds upon and extends these objectives within its Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strand. This strategic approach is being used to encourage active engagement and participatory learning, including student-centred approaches that provide intellectual challenge and engage all students as co-creators of transformational learning experiences. During discussion with the ELIR team, staff provided examples of student involvement in curriculum co-creation, including: determining assessment timing and format; moving from classroom-based lectures in two-hour slots to fieldtrip activities over a six-hour period; and agreeing the mode and timing of assessment feedback to students.

36   The University aims to ensure that students are at the heart of its thinking and approach, and seeks to build on the strong record of working with the NSA to deliver strategic objectives. Student representatives sit on all major academic committees, are members of the University Court, and of committees at faculty, school and programme levels. Strong student engagement was demonstrated by the work of student representatives with the Strategic Review 2013-14 and the resulting student focus of the outcomes, now set out in Strategy 2020: Building Success.

38   Since the 2011 ELIR, a range of initiatives aimed at improving and enhancing the student representation structure have been implemented, including: encouraging student representatives to engage with quality systems; review of student staff liaison committees;

and implementation of Facilitating Student Staff Liaison Guidelines. A new Student Partnership Agreement is also being developed and will be approved through the University committee structure in March 2015.

39   The ELIR team noted the University's commitment to work in partnership with the NSA across a wide range of strategic and operational developments to provide an excellent, personalised student experience. Examples of partnership working include, contributing to the development of Strategy 2020, establishing the volunteering service VBase, and developing a Student Partnership Agreement. The NSA successfully campaigned to persuade the University to free Wednesday afternoons from teaching to allow students to better engage in the wider student experience, including sporting and volunteering activities.

40   NSA sabbatical officers and student executive have committed to support and promote the inclusion of all students, by taking responsibility for specific groups that are traditionally underrepresented or hard to reach, including: disabled students, faith groups, and part-time and distance learners. The NSA was developing a Support Services Navigation Map in partnership with the University's Centre for Learning and Study Skills at the time of this ELIR visit. This is a web-based tool that will help students to identify and access support services available across the University and NSA.

41   NSA and the University have also worked in partnership to increase participation in the National Student Survey, which has an important role in contributing to the enhancement of academic excellence through active campaigning on campuses and use of social media, which has contributed to response rates increasing from 63 in 2012 to 77 per cent in 2014.

42   In the general context of a very positive partnership between the University and NSA, the ELIR team identified some areas in which the NSA could enhance its profile. In discussions with the team, it appeared that a number of students were not aware of the ways in which the NSA represented them or influenced the University's decision-making. Some students also indicated that class reps could vary in their effectiveness. The team recognised that, since 2014, the NSA and University have taken steps to increase the visibility of the NSA through the use of communications and marketing, including high profile signage. There would be benefit in the University and NSA continuing to reflect on the ways in which they can inform the wider student population about their important work and about the student representative structures more generally, both of which play a key part in enhancing the student experience.

139   The experience, expertise and enthusiasm of programme leaders responsible for the delivery of equivalent modules in Edinburgh and overseas was evident to the ELIR team. Staff provided evidence of the ways in which academic practice is aligned and additional support tailored to partner staff and students. The importance of good communication between University staff, TNE partner staff and students was highlighted. Formal (for example, student staff liaison committees) and informal (for example, direct contact with University staff) communication channels are used extensively by partner staff and students, and were seen by students and staff to be effective. At present, the work of the NSA does not extend systematically to TNE provision, although the University intends to build this into future plans.

University of Glasgow

3   The strategic direction of the University is articulated in its strategic plan: Glasgow 2020: A Global Vision. The strategy was published in 2010 and it has three aims: a focus on student and research funders' needs; an ambition to extend its global reach to become a 'truly international' university; and the encouragement of multidisciplinary research.

Progress towards implementing the strategic plan has been supported by a series of transformational projects which the University sees as being key to the achievement of the strategy. These include: the restructuring of the University; the Student Lifecycle Project, which sought to support revised student support systems and led to the introduction of the MyCampus student information system; the internationalisation of the student population; and a sustained commitment to student engagement with a focus on enhancing the student experience. The University states that 'the transformative projects seek to enhance an already excellent student experience and maintain existing high academic standards'.

10   Since the last ELIR in 2010 the University has restructured in order to more effectively implement its strategic plan: Glasgow 2020: A Global Vision. The University recognises the importance of effective communication in managing change and has sought to engage staff and students in open consultation meetings, called Campus Conversations, to ensure understanding of and buy-in to its strategic objectives and future ambitions. The Campus Conversation events have been well attended and are viewed by staff and students as a positive means of engagement, and the University is planning to offer more of these events. In addition, the University has recently appointed an internal communications manager, which represents a change in focus for the University from external communication to enhancing its internal communication with staff and students.

27   The 2010 ELIR commented positively on the partnership between the University and the Students' Representative Council (SRC), and this continues to be a strong and effective relationship. The University restructuring has had a positive impact on student representative structures with the introduction of school-level SRC representation. The University is currently considering how it can establish appropriate metrics to measure the impact of student representation.

28   The University has a strong commitment to student engagement and students are clear that their contributions are valued and acted upon. There are opportunities for student views to be considered at all levels of the University, and formal student representation has been strengthened by the inclusion of 12 student members on the recently established Council of Senate. The University works closely with the SRC to provide training for student representatives, and there has been a significant increase in the number of students being trained over the last five years.

30   In addition to the graduate schools the University has made recent commitments to providing dedicated postgraduate space for academic, study and social purposes, including the Gilchrist Postgraduate Club. The Club is supported by a postgraduate development officer, who is employed by the SRC but funded by the University, and who has responsibility for postgraduate student engagement as well as facilitating a range of academic and social events and activities.

31   Both the University and the SRC are keen to enhance postgraduate student representation, particularly for postgraduate research (PGR) students, which continues to remain a challenge. The SRC has delivered specific PGR student representative training since 2011, and following restructuring the SRC has introduced the role of postgraduate convenor for each college to increase opportunities for postgraduate student representation. There has been some difficulty, however, in filling the postgraduate convenor roles through election. The opening of the Gilchrist Club has increased SRC engagement with PGR students, and it is anticipated that this will lead to better engagement in terms of postgraduate student representation.

32   The Student Voice portal was developed to promote student engagement and has evolved from the Student Voice website. Despite a clear understanding on the part of the

University about the intended role of the portal in facilitating student engagement and feedback, there is a lack of clarity about the purpose and ownership of the Student Voice portal among staff and students. The portal is intended to link students to their representatives and to facilitate student-to-student communication. However, use of the portal is intermittent and students and staff are using other media for such communication. The University is encouraged to consider the effectiveness of the portal in consultation with the student body.

40   The University's Teaching Excellence Awards are for innovation of provision, enhancement of the student learning experience, leadership in learning and teaching and the promotion of scholarship in learning and teaching. The awards are intended to raise the profile of learning and teaching and encourage the dissemination of good practice across the University. The Students' Representative Council (SRC) introduced a range of student-led teaching awards in 2011, which recognise excellence in teaching and support provided by a wide range of staff. Good practice identified by these awards is disseminated by inclusion in the winners booklet which is published by the SRC.

81   The University Learning and Teaching Strategy identifies, as part of its aim to deliver an excellent student experience, an objective to promote student engagement with learning and enhance student success. The University recognises that this commitment applies equally to students studying on collaborative programmes as it does to those studying at the home campus.

Glasgow Caledonian University

8   The University recognises its ambitious approach to enhancing the student learning experience, placing an emphasis on an integrated, cross-institutional, partnership approach with staff-student engagement embedded at all levels of the organisation. Staff and students are regarded as 'co-creators' of the student experience. The University identifies the learning experience as active, challenging, authentic and collaborative. This experience is reinforced at all levels within the institution and reinforced in policy, curriculum design and pedagogy. The introduction of School Officers, student representatives appointed jointly between the School and Students' Association, has improved the effectiveness of student engagement across the schools through their active involvement in initiatives such as Portfolio Refresh, co-creation of the curriculum, and development of the SfL.

12   The Engage initiative, a cross-university initiative led jointly by the GCU Learning Enhancement and Academic Development department (GCU LEAD) and the Student Experience Directorate and working in partnership with the Students' Association is key to the University's successful strategy implementation. Driven by SfL and SEF, it utilises a team partnership approach to co-construct a cross-institutional understanding of the distinctive nature of the GCU student experience. This approach ensures staff and student contribution to strategy policy and practice as well as institution-wide dissemination and implementation.

23   The Global Perspectives Project is the strategic change initiative for internationalisation of the curriculum led by GCU LEAD (see paragraph 40). This project supports academic staff in embedding international and intercultural aspects in all programmes. Steps have been taken to meet the needs of students from different backgrounds in relation to teaching methods and through training for teaching staff. Discussion with staff and students during the ELIR visit confirmed the curriculum has been informed and enhanced by the engagement of international students. Evidence acquired through the International Student Barometer provides evidence of the Internationalisation Strategy having a positive impact on the international student experience.

34   There is clear evidence of a partnership between students and staff at the University, particularly with undergraduate students. The student experience at the University is linked to the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code) and evidenced in the University's mapping against the Quality Code.

35   Engage, the cross-university initiative for enhancing the student experience through partnership working, is based on the sparqs framework for student engagement. The Engage initiative is led by the student experience directorate and GCU LEAD, the University's central academic department which directs and supports academic development and enhanced approaches to learning, teaching, assessment, participation and progression. Engage works closely with the Students' Association, academic schools and professional support services to promote cross-university understanding of student engagement through a defined programme of activity.

36   The University's partnership approach is evident through effective working relationship with the Students' Association and student-led initiatives such as the teaching awards and Student Leadership programme. The Student Action Group for Engagement (SAGE) parallels the staff-led LTQEN and operates in collaboration with the Students' Association. While SAGE is at an early stage of development, it provides a useful tool for engagement and has the potential to positively impact upon the student experience by capturing and reporting on the views of all the University's students.

37   The University has an effective student representation structure, delivering student representation on all key University and school committees on the Glasgow and London campuses. Representation is provided by formally appointed class representatives and school officers. Feedback from students during the ELIR confirmed they consider themselves part of University consultations on policy and strategy.

38   The ELIR team learned from discussion with senior staff and formal student representatives that these formal student representation structures and engagement processes relate to the University's students in Glasgow and London. While the University has collaboration and accreditation arrangements with a number of institutions such as Caledonian College of Engineering (CCE) Oman, formal feedback from students in these institutions does not feed in to the University's representative and enhancement structures. To further enhance the student experience, consideration should be taken to ensure parity of the student experience at all locations such as other campuses or institutions with collaborative arrangements, including postgraduate students.

42   The University provides formal and informal mechanisms for gathering feedback from students, including student representatives, student-staff consultative groups (SSCGs) and use of internal and external surveys. Student feedback is actively taken into account in the design and development of the curriculum: output from SSCGs is considered by programme boards and student representation is embedded in programme board membership. During the ELIR visit, students were able to identify examples of their feedback initiating change such as the introduction of role play in nursing modules and rescheduling building work on the Glasgow campus to ensure the most disruptive work was completed out with key study times.

55   Discussion with postgraduate research students indicated formal representative structures at postgraduate research level are not as clear or established as those at undergraduate level. While postgraduate research students were aware of the student representative system, there was less knowledge of, and engagement with, the SAGE and SSCG. Similarly, engagement with, and use of, PRES and PTES as external mechanisms for gathering student feedback were not as extensively used as the NSS in the

undergraduate community. The planned increase in research student numbers means that the University should review the representative structures for postgraduate research students.

62   The University has an effective approach to enhancing the student experience. The SfL is the basis for a strategic, consistent and collaborative approach to enhancing learning and teaching. Enhancement of the student learning experience is embedded at programme level through implementation of the SfL curriculum design principles. There is clear evidence of a partnership between the University and its undergraduate students. This can been seen in a variety of ways including student engagement with the key quality assurance and enhancement processes, the relationship with the Students' Association and the wider representation arrangements, and the range of student-led initiatives, such as the SAGE.

67   The University is asked to continue to develop the research student experience in a range of ways including reviewing the effectiveness of the structures and systems in place aimed at establishing a research community. The University should ensure the availability of appropriate physical space, learning resources and staff resources to provide supervision in support of the research student population, particularly in view of the strategic intention to double research student numbers by 2020. The University should also review the representative structures and arrangements for responding to the research student voice to ensure these are as effective as those in place for the undergraduate student population.

90   Overall, the University's committee structure makes an effective contribution to the oversight of standards and management of quality assurance and enhancement. *Senate* is the University's senior academic body; key standing committees include the Academic Policy Committee (APC), Research Committee, International Committee and school boards. There is appropriate student representation on these Committees. Since the 2011 ELIR, the University has reviewed APC and its subcommittees; LTSC has taken on additional work and its membership has been expanded and the International Steering Group redesignated as the International Committee.

103   The University's programme design, approval, monitoring and review processes require consideration of a range of external reference points including the Quality Code, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), Subject Benchmark Statements, and PSRBs. This was evident in documentation read by the ELIR team. There is appropriate externality in approval and periodic review processes and the latter includes student representation.

109   The University has robust, well established enhancement and assurance processes for programme approval, monitoring and periodic review. There is evidence of student engagement with quality and enhancement processes, promotion of an active culture of self-reflection and enhancement, and appropriate levels of externality embedded in processes. The University's revised annual monitoring system enables matters to be identified and addressed promptly to the benefit of the student experience and promotes greater staff engagement with the process, and is a feature of positive practice. The ELISR process is thorough and operates in line with sector expectations, although it gives less consideration to the postgraduate research student experience than to that of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. The revised Thematic Review process is making a useful contribution to the University's quality assurance and enhancement agenda.

130   The University has a strong culture of self-evaluation, a key feature of which is engagement of staff, students and other external stakeholders in its quality assurance and enhancement processes. There is increasing involvement of students in policy and planning. Deliberative structures provide a focus for evaluation and review. Annual overview reports

arising from committees and processes help support effective institutional oversight of standards and quality processes.

Glasgow School of Art

25   GSA is committed to student engagement and there is an effective relationship between the GSA Executive and the Students' Association. There is also an effective relationship between the President of the Students' Association and student representatives, and there is good attendance at staff student consultative committees. Students and staff who met with the ELIR team commented that student representation works well across the institution.

26   The President of the Students' Association is currently leading on the Review of Existing Student Representation and Engagement Structures (RES-RES). The aim of the Review is to try to obtain a clearer understanding of how student engagement works across the institution and to identify and disseminate any examples of good practice that currently exist across the schools. The project was initiated in March 2013 and it is due to report with recommendations to the May 2014 meeting of Academic Council.

27   The Students' Association currently has two sabbatical officers, although the President of the Student's Association is generally the only student representative on a large number of institutional committees. In recognition of the President's workload, GSA has recently created the role of Student Engagement Co-ordinator, to provide support to the President of the Students' Association. This post is funded by GSA but employed by the Students' Association, and is an effective mechanism in supporting the President of the Student's Association in developing new strategies for student engagement.

28   There are regular meetings between students and the Director and Deputy Director at the Director's Forum. Students set the agenda for the Forum and student representatives who met with the ELIR team commented that they found the Forum to be effective in enabling them to raise issues directly at the highest level of the institution. Notes of meetings of the Director's Forum indicate that it plays an effective role in the communication and dissemination of information.

42   Staff development activities are an important means of sharing good practice. In 2012 the first annual Learning and Teaching event was held, with assessment as its theme. Student engagement was the topic of the 2013 event, reflecting GSA's recognition that enhancement of learning and teaching depends on the effectiveness of student engagement.

Heriot-Watt University

17   The Learning and Teaching Strategy is effectively promoted throughout the University. The ELIR team found evidence in meetings with staff from academic and professional services areas, and in operational learning and teaching plans, that staff understand the objectives of the Strategy and its enablers, and have taken ownership for its implementation (see paragraphs 36, 52, 53, 63, 67 and 72). There was evidence from the ELIR case study, and from meetings during the ELIR, that development of the Strategy had been a consultative and collaborative process, and that the University had taken a considered approach to ensure staff and student engagement with, and ownership of, the strategy. This approach was viewed as being an area of positive practice by the ELIR team.

34   There is a well-developed student representative system in the Scottish campuses, which incorporates school and class level representation. This includes school officers: elected, non-sabbatical students who represent the collective student body at the individual

discipline level (and at the school-level at the Dubai campus). School officers provide a link between Student Union Sabbatical Officers and class representatives. During the ELIR, students and staff commented positively on the existing system. Students sit on the majority of University and school committees, with the exception of the Undergraduate Studies Committee and Postgraduate Studies Committee, both of which report to the Senate. Students are represented on the Senate and School Studies Committees, which report to the Undergraduate Studies Committee and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

35   There is student representation on the Learning and Teaching Board. A Student Union learning and teaching report, submitted annually, is used to shape the agenda for the business of the Board in the following academic year.

36   The case study submitted by the University for the ELIR confirmed that students had been engaged in the development of the Learning and Teaching Strategy, and that this had facilitated a constructive and effective partnership between the University and the Student Union. This partnership is also illustrated by the work the University and the Student Union are carrying out jointly on graduate attributes (see paragraph 49); the development of representative systems in Dubai and Malaysia; and the Student Union Learning and Teaching Oscars and Graduate Teaching Awards, which recognise and reward good teaching by University staff.

37   Arrangements for the representation and engagement of students are effective in the Scottish and Dubai campuses and are in development in the Malaysia campus. The Student Union is working proactively to develop student representation on both the Dubai and Malaysia campuses in ways that recognise local culture and context, within the overall University culture and ethos

38   The Student Union does not currently work with students in Approved Learning Partners (ALPs) or independent distance learners. Given the significant numbers of students in these categories, the University is asked to progress with the plans outlined in its Reflective Analysis to create representative structures for these students, building on the effective representation arrangements evident in the Edinburgh and Dubai campuses and emerging in Malaysia.

39   The University is implementing a Student Survey Framework to manage more effectively the process of gathering, evaluating and responding to student feedback (see also paragraphs 115 and 129). This will be managed centrally through the Student Survey Management Group. The ELIR team noted that the University uses student feedback to inform improvements to learning and teaching and the overall student experience. The team considered that the Student Survey Framework would strengthen these processes and help the University to consider more fully the feedback it gathers from students studying in different locations and through different modes of study.

43   The University is aware of some issues at the Borders campus; student feedback has identified challenges regarding access to support and services. The University is addressing the issues through the Student Survey Management Group. Students confirmed to the ELIR team that the student representative arrangements on the campus are very supportive and helpful. The University is encouraged to continue its efforts address the matters raised.

47   The timeliness of feedback is being progressed by the Student Learning Experience Committee as a priority in 2014-15. The Committee plans to gather information on current school practices and to consider the ways in which school-specific practices can be monitored and good practice shared. School officers will take the lead in investigating practices within schools, reporting through the Student Union to the Student Learning Experience Committee.

48   The University has re-developed its graduate attributes following a review undertaken since the previous ELIR. The review identified a lack of awareness among staff and students about University graduate attributes, which the University believes to have been caused by a lack of staff and student engagement at the development stage of the project.

49   The current Learning and Teaching Strategy prioritises the development of a distinctive set of University graduate attributes (Specialist, Creative, Professional, and Global) and the embedding of these within all taught programmes. This work is being overseen by the Curriculum Working Group. School-level learning and teaching strategies and operational, and Enhancement Plans are expected to drive and support the development and implementation of the graduate attributes across all programmes. The Student Union has taken the lead in training school officers on the new graduate attributes in order to engage the student body. The development stage had recently been completed at the time of the current ELIR, and schools had begun the process of mapping their skills provision to the new graduate attributes. The ELIR team considered that the pace of implementation was relatively slow, but recognised that the University was now making progress, and that the time taken to revise the attributes and gain staff and student engagement had the potential to deliver benefits.

53   There is a constructive and effective partnership between the University and the Student Union. There is clear evidence of the effectiveness of formal student representative structures and examples of students contributing to strategic projects, including work on graduate attributes (see paragraph 49), the development of representational systems in Dubai and Malaysia (see paragraphs 37 and 38), and the development of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The University is enhancing its processes for gathering and responding to student feedback and is working proactively with the Student Union to address issues and take action where necessary.

55   The University could strengthen its approach to enhancing the student learning experience by: considering the timing of formal induction processes for postgraduate research students; reviewing arrangements for postgraduate students who teach; and progressing with plans for representation for students studying with an APL or through independent distance learning. In addition, the University should ensure appropriate student access to online journals and e-books, and, in respect of the Dubai campus, progress with action on student feedback.

65   The Student Union also recognises staff performance in learning and teaching through their annual student-led Learning and Teaching Oscars and Graduate Teaching Awards, which are supported and welcomed by the University. The Learning and Teaching Oscars allow all University students to nominate staff who have most inspired or helped them over the academic year, and the Graduate Teaching Awards allow final year students to remember the staff within schools that have had the most impact on their learning experience throughout their time at University.

99   The University revised its annual monitoring process in 2012, with the intention of: integrating assurance and enhancement; increasing interactivity by introducing discussion sessions; incorporating review of academic performance data (including retention, progression, student success, student feedback and employability data); and enabling ALPs to engage effectively. SAMR includes taught and research programmes at all campuses, and programmes delivered in conjunction with partners or as independent distance learning. SAMR involves the consideration of feedback received from external examiners, which provides an external reference point for assuring the standard, level and currency of the curriculum. Feedback from other stakeholders such as employers and PSRBs is also considered as part of the process, alongside academic performance data. Students are fully

involved in the monitoring and review processes, and the Student Union provides training and support to those participating.

130   The University operates a highly effective student representative network on its physical campus locations. This network has yet to be replicated for students registered via collaborative programmes or independent distance learners (see also paragraphs 38 and 55).

University of the Highlands and Islands

35   UHI highlighted that it faces unusual challenges in student engagement given its geographically dispersed structure, its student profile and its blended learning delivery model. UHI's commitment to proactively seeking ways of overcoming these challenges in partnership with the student body is demonstrated by the Strategic Plan which has 'our students' as one of the three underpinning themes.

36   The University has a Student Engagement Manager whose role is to work with students, lead on student representation work, and to support staff engaging with students. The post-holder chairs the Student Engagement Group, comprising staff and students from all APs, which sends proposals to senior committees. A Student Engagement Plan was produced in 2016, which seeks to ensure that students feel part of a supportive institution, that they are engaged in their own learning and work with the University in shaping the direction of learning. These objectives are supported and facilitated by formal mechanisms of student representation on committees, participation in institutional reviews and involvement in the Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA), AP student associations and in a range of other activities including the involvement of student representatives from across the academic partnership at HISA Higher Education Regional Committee, Regional Council and national events.

37   The Highlands and Islands Student Association (HISA) was launched in June 2015 as a result of a two-year Scottish Government and SFC-funded project awarded to UHI to establish a new regional framework for student representation. This replaced the UHI Students' Association (UHISA) which was voluntarily dissolved in spring 2015. UHI provided extensive support for HISA in its first year of operation, including leading on the recruitment and training of its first permanent staff, and the election of the Depute Presidents based at the Academic Partners (APs).

38   HISA is a tertiary student association representing the interests of FE and HE students, aiming to bring 'significantly enhanced cohesion across the UHI partnership'. The HISA President meets monthly with the UHI Principal to focus on high-level issues and with the Deputy Principal to progress plans at an executive level and maintain effective communication.

39   Despite HISA being in its early stages at the time of the current ELIR and, consequently, some students remaining unaware of its establishment, staff and students attested to its positive impact. The willingness of both UHI and HISA to work in partnership to allow 'two-way communication from classroom to Court' was clearly evident to the ELIR team.

40   UHI was the first university to adopt a Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) in 2013, a formal agreement between the University and the student association. The SPA, which is renewed annually, sets out how students and staff will work together to improve the student experience. The SPA includes the general arrangements for engagement, including the ways in which an individual student can engage with the quality processes of the institution, and identifies three areas to be prioritised for development in each year. The first SPA

identified three work steams: student health and well-being; assessment and feedback; and social integration. The ELIR team noted that UHI reported progress in all three areas.

41   The staff and students who met the ELIR team were largely unaware of the current SPA. The team was informed that it had been reviewed recently and the Student Engagement Group was working to place an emphasis on developing the tertiary nature of the SPA to include all students, with initial support and advice being sought from Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs). Senior staff acknowledged that there would be benefit in raising awareness of the SPA, indicating that UHI planned to relaunch it later in 2016 (see paragraph 82).

42   The ELIR team learned that UHI is employing a variety of approaches to improve engagement with committees, identifying the Student Engagement Group as a particularly useful forum for the exchange of effective strategies across the University. In 2013, in response to student feedback requesting further action to ensure the student voice was heard, SEG produced the Students on Committees Protocol as an induction resource for students. The students who met the ELIR team were not familiar with the Protocol, but the team heard that UHI intends the work stream in the SPA on student representation to result in improvements in this area. The team also learned that HISA has plans to undertake an audit of student representation.

43   The University Court and all of the UHI academic committees have student representation, as do relevant AP committees, Subject Network committees and QAEC. Class representatives operate through programme committees or staff/student liaison groups and there was evidence that, where these committees were in place, there was effective communication between staff and students. Students indicated that agendas, generally, were circulated in advance and that some committees were very responsive to student views.

44   There are two postgraduate research (PGR) student representatives on the Research Degrees Committee (RDC) and one on the Research Committee. These representatives all meet regularly with staff from the Graduate School to ensure that the PGR student voice is heard. In discussion with the ELIR team, PGR students indicated student engagement had improved considerably this year and attributed this to the increasing impact of HISA. They recognised that it could be challenging to engage research students who are highly committed to their own projects.

45   Following the 2012 ELIR, UHI continued to develop the Subject Network Student Officer (SNSO) role. In 2014-15, five SNSOs were appointed and their remit reviewed and refined. These paid roles were intended to facilitate student engagement with strategic management and governance processes through the subject networks and strengthen communication between UHISA, the student body and University structures. UHI reported that these posts attracted high calibre students who worked closely with the Subject Network Leaders. The SNSOs produced project reports drawing on student survey and focus group data. Topics included assessment feedback, library resources and transition from undergraduate to postgraduate study. The transition topic was submitted as a poster presentation at the 2015 QAA Enhancement Themes conference.

46   UHI acknowledged that it had not been possible for all Subject Networks to appoint an SNSO each year and, as a result, staff and students had varied understandings of the expectations of the role. UHI has worked with HISA to enhance and embed the role and to make it more visible. A role descriptor was developed and the name changed to Subject Network Officer, although the focus remains that of effective two-way communication at Subject Network Level. HISA recruited three SNOs as paid posts in Semester 1 of 2015-16 and intended to run elections for the remaining posts in Semester 2. The ELIR team heard

that the SNO role is now secure and visible. SNOs attend all of the Subject Network Committee meetings, participate in the HISA Higher Educational Regional Committee (HERC) and the HISA Regional Student Council, producing reports on developments in their Subject Network and on the HE curriculum and quality enhancement.

48   The University took part in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) for the second time in 2015, with a 45 per cent response rate. Analysis and benchmarking of outcomes was undertaken by the Research Degrees Committee (RDC). RDC agreed an action plan in response to the issues identified, which is also reviewed by QAEC. The Head of PGR Student Development supports PGR student engagement in conjunction with PGR student representatives by providing a dedicated VLE space for PGR students and through the biennial staff/student research conference. UHI has committed to participation in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) in 2016.

52   UHI adopted Student-led Teaching Awards in partnership with NUS (Scotland) in 2009-10. Students from across the partnership are invited to nominate staff for a variety of awards. A panel of students considers the nominations and results are determined by the quality of the nomination and evidence, rather than the number of nominations. The feedback from students provides a valuable insight into the student experience and award winners have presented at staff development events. Students who met the ELIR team were aware of these awards and were enthusiastic to ensure that good teaching and student support were acknowledged in this way.

70   As an outcome of the 2013-14 Student Partnership Agreement, UHI collaborated with students to develop a Social Experience Policy, which aims to offer opportunities to develop interests and engender a sense of belonging to the University and support the formation of social relationships. In 2015-16, HISA funding was increased significantly to support social and extra-curricular activity such as societies and clubs.

Queen Margaret University

3   Staff have been closely involved with the development and implementation of the *Reorganisation for Sustainability* project and in meetings with the ELIR team gave examples of their involvement. Student representatives including sabbatical officers confirmed their engagement with strategic and operational decision-making and their involvement in early discussions on QM150. A strategic development fund is available for financially sustainable projects that aim to improve the student experience. Decisions on funding these projects are made by the Executive Board. Staff and students were also very positive about the benefits that the new campus had brought to learning and teaching.

24   The University carried out a review of the class representatives' experience in April 2012 and, as a result, has implemented a number of developments in 2012-13 including: additional class representative training sessions; a revised handbook; and trialling of a reflective diary. The Students' Union has also introduced two awards for class representatives and has established the Academic Council, chaired by the Students' Union President, for all class representatives across the University. Students confirmed that they are made to feel welcome at committee meetings and that these meetings adopt a partnership approach where they feel part of the decision-making process.

25   The University's Doctoral Students' Association (DSA) has no formal link to the Students' Union, but it promotes development opportunities for research students through collaboration with the Centre for Academic Practice (CAP), the Quality Enhancement Unit (QEU) or through external bodies. The Co-Chairs of the DSA also represent students on the Research Strategy Committee and the Student Experience Committee. Postgraduate

research students indicated that this was a beneficial representative system which offers various opportunities for development and support.

27   Student feedback is captured through the use of numerous internal and external surveys. Extensive work has been undertaken on the NSS leading to a number of enhancement projects and initiatives. The University will also engage with the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) this year. Students and staff commented on the extensive use of student surveys (see paragraph 66).

40   There is clear evidence of the effectiveness of formal representative structures and examples of students contributing to strategic projects and curriculum development. Student representation is in place at all levels of the University and students view this as effective and beneficial in capturing and championing their voice. In this respect, student feedback is recognised as important and it is clear that action is taken as a result of feedback on modules and the findings of surveys.

43   The University has an effective approach to identifying and sharing good practice. There is an overall strategic framework for the enhancement of learning and teaching, and individual staff and teams are empowered to develop new ideas that are relevant to their own practice. A Dissemination and Engagement Strategy gives the Centre for Academic Practice (CAP) a pivotal role as a change agent, innovator, and mediator of good practice. The Academic Team, an informal group comprising the Director of CAP, the Head of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Unit, the Deans, the University Secretary and the Deputy Principal, provides further support and leadership for enhancement. Student-led teaching awards also identify good practice and provide an imaginative way for students to recognise and reward staff.

58   External examiner reports are considered by the Programme Leader and responses are approved either by the Dean of School or, in the case of questions on regulations, by the Assistant Registrar. The Quality Enhancement Unit also monitors responses to actions requested by external examiners. Full reports are seen by student representatives on programme committees and annual summary reports are posted on the Quality at QMU website.

86   The University expects its partners to appoint student representatives and to operate formal mechanisms for gathering and responding to student feedback such as module evaluation and annual monitoring of the programme. The ELIR team considered documentation relating to two partners, which indicated that student representation and attention to student matters is well established in the collaborative partnerships.

[Robert Gordon University](#)

19   During the ELIR, it was evident that close relationships between the University and the Students' Association, RGU:Union, were also helping to ensure effective communication of strategic direction. The ELIR team found evidence of strong student involvement in the development of strategy through the Student Partnership Agreement (see also paragraph 38) and the completion of the relocation to the Garthdee campus, where there is continuing and effective liaison about campus development and operation (see also paragraph 34).

21   The ELIR occurred at a time of considerable changes for the University, some having just been completed and others being implemented just before or during the ELIR visits. Against such a background, the ELIR team noted particularly the extent to which the staff and student representatives whom it met were generally well-informed about the changes, recognised the importance of continuing open communication and saw alongside challenges, potential opportunities for positive developments. The team also noted the

widely held view among staff at all levels that in managing the change agenda, a high priority for the University would be to maintain, and indeed enhance, the quality of the student learning experience. The University was aware of the need to maintain the current rigour of its quality management processes during changes to its academic profile and was using effectively increased levels of granularity in its appraisal and review processes to identify those courses providing less satisfactory student outcomes and taking appropriate action (see also Section 5).

34   Partnership working between the University and RGU:Union has led to extended library opening hours during teaching semesters, assessment periods and non-teaching times and the University is continuing to work to make other support services more accessible to all students, including online distance learners, by providing round the clock careers advice, a help desk for library and VLE services, and ensuring that services available through the RGU:Union is accessible to students studying away from the Garthdee campus. The ELIR team also heard that the University and RGU:Union have begun to work on ways to improve representation for students studying at a distance, including work with student partnerships in quality Scotland (sparqs).

35   The University places a high value on student engagement and has an effective and proactive partnership with RGU:Union. Student representation and engagement are prioritised and clearly defined in the University's strategy and policies and the University uses a variety of methods to underpin partnership working with students including: the use of data from student surveys (see paragraphs 43, 59, 106-109 and 114); effective student representative structures (see paragraphs 36-37); the establishment and development of the role of Student Faculty Officer (see paragraph 37); the Student Partnership Agreement (see paragraph 38); external engagement with sparqs and formal reporting on student partnership/involvement in quality assurance and enhancement processes (see Section 5). The partnership approach between the University and RGU:Union has allowed for open and ongoing dialogue around the challenges and issues resulting from campus relocation from the students' perspective, including students' desire for more informal social learning spaces on campus as well as allowing for discussion around further benefits that could be realised from co-location.

36   Student representation is embedded at all levels of the University. Students participate in decision-making through staff/student liaison committees and, as student faculty officers, through their involvement in faculty quality enhancement subcommittees. Students also contribute to decision-making through the University-level Academic Council; Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee; Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee and the Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee. The University has placed significant emphasis on ensuring that students are able to contribute effectively to institution-led review processes (see paragraph 39 and Section 5). Participation in well-established training for representative roles is high, and the University and RGU:Union have a number of mechanisms for recognising student contribution to representative activity including certificates, and student achievement and extracurricular awards.

37   A key liaison and enhancement role is that of Student Faculty Officer (SFO), introduced in 2012. SFOs are part-time, paid roles, appointees having been trained by RGU:Union to work in partnership with academic course leaders and professional services staff across the University, particularly at faculty level. Student entry into these roles is open, with no requirement for previous representative experience. A key feature of the SFO role is that students are recognised and rewarded for their student engagement in the various enhancement activities conducted across the University. This includes the Student Contribution and Involvement Award, as well as the Extracurricular Award.

38   The University introduced a formal Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) in 2013, developed using guidance from sparqs, which consists of two parts – part one describing and promoting various ways in which students can work with the University and part two outlining annual themes which the University and the Students' Association want to progress. Themes identified and developed through the SPA have been clearly linked to strategic priorities and include: student representation, campus community and learning expectations on assessment and feedback (2013-14); and student representation at school level, campus socialisation and health and wellbeing (2014-15 and 2015-16) with a focus on creating a sense of identity and establishing what it means to be a student at RGU (2015-16). The ELIR team found evidence of actions resulting from SPA themes being clearly embedded in institutional practice. Work initiated through the SPA has extended opportunities for students to inform the development of policy and practice and strengthened the partnership between the University and RGU:Union. Examples include the development of a Staff and Student Charter at Gray's School of Art which extends and develops the idea of the SPA and tailors the partnership approach to a specific context; the use of paid student interns to work with DELTA to shape support service arrangements and VLE content; and a range of enhancement activities within Library Services. Both staff and students commented positively on the SPA and viewed developments in relation to assessment and feedback practice, established and implemented as a result of the SPA, as particularly important. The ELIR team was positive about the awareness, profile and use of the SPA and its impact on partnership working between the University and RGU:Union.

39   A particularly positive example of student engagement and the University's responsiveness to student feedback was the establishment of the Student-Facing Support Services Review (SFSSR) of IT resources. This adaptation of the institution-led periodic review process provided the ELIR team with clear evidence of an enhancement project being initiated in response to student feedback. The SFSSR found that students were satisfied with the effectiveness of the University VLE and students indicated to the team that IT Services were engaging students about ongoing system enhancements based on the user perspective following the SFSSR (see also paragraphs 99 and 103-105).

51   The University has a highly effective approach to enhancing the student experience and there is clear evidence that student partnership plays a central role. Student representative structures are effective and the SPA and resultant activity allows engagement of the wider student body in identifying priority areas for action from the student perspective, such as previous work on assessment and feedback and the current work to capitalise on opportunities to enhance the community atmosphere on the new campus.

59   DELTA provides other fora for sharing good practice in teaching and learning across disciplines, including its series of 'Focus On' events. The first of these, 'What our students tell us about Course Organisation and Management', addressed another of the areas that student survey data had suggested was in need of further development, by sharing the experience of one school that had obtained more positive student feedback. More recently 'Students as Partners' shared good practice from within and outwith the University in developing student engagement and embedding the Student Partnership Agreement.

68   Students also contribute to identifying and sharing good practice through the student-led STAR (Support Teaching Appreciation Recognition) Awards. Any student can make a nomination of any staff member that they feel has made a difference to their learning experience including support staff and other non-teaching staff. Previous recipients of awards told the ELIR team that the recognition the award represented was very welcome, as was the support given by senior managers to the ceremony.

70   In meetings during the current ELIR, staff commented that engagement in the current Student Transitions Theme, led by DELTA, has proved particularly valuable, given the close alignment between the Theme and the University's aspirations for widening participation and considering the learning experiences of different groups of current and potential students, including online distance learners. To help with scoping work for the Theme, the University appointed a student intern to investigate issues of transition from a student perspective and a new lecturer in student transitions to help to build engagement across the institution. In line with sector expectations, the University has a Theme Institutional Leadership Group. Inclusivity was demonstrated by membership of the Group comprising staff and students from across the University, and through development of a Theme partnership with RGU:Union to support student engagement with the Theme and to consider student-led transitions support.

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

21   The Conservatoire has an effective approach to engaging and supporting students. There is a strong staff-student partnership and a clear practitioner community with students being treated as professional practitioners from the point of their admission to the institution. There is a holistic approach to providing support for individual students, including academic and pastoral support, which enables the students to achieve their potential. Student support services are managed centrally and student access to them is coordinated through a single enquiry desk. There are opportunities for students to undertake study outside the Conservatoire and internationally, and the institution should continue to develop its arrangements for facilitating and promoting staff and student mobility.

23   The Conservatoire was careful to include students in every stage of the Curriculum Reform (CR) project, which students and staff consider has had a positive impact on the success of the project. In relation to regular student feedback mechanisms, the wide variety of ways in which students are able to provide their views is particularly positive. These mechanisms include: formal module surveys; informal weekly programme meetings with students; the annual staff student forum, which is facilitated by student representatives and addresses operational matters; the formal committee structure, which incorporates a Student Forum; and informal opportunities during performance rehearsals.

24   Students confirmed to the ELIR team that the representative system works well and that all students would know who to approach with any issues relating to their programmes. Student representatives all receive training provided through the national body Student Participation in Quality Scotland, sparqs. Student Union office bearers receive additional training, which they indicated was useful in preparing them for their specific roles, particularly in supporting them to make an active contribution to the committees they sit on.

25   The small cohort sizes and high contact hours mean that students receive regular oral feedback on their performances. However, the results of an internal survey using the National Student Survey (NSS) questions indicated that a substantial proportion of students were not content with the feedback they receive on their assessed work. In discussion with the ELIR team, student representatives indicated that this was likely to have been a reaction to delays in students receiving written feedback on their formal assessed work. Staff confirmed that, in response to the student survey, a two-week turnaround time had been introduced for written feedback to be provided. However, it was indicated that it can be difficult to meet this deadline in practice, especially in view of the large numbers of part-time staff. The ELIR team noted that the Conservatoire was conscious of this challenge and that the institution would keep the matter under review. Through the introduction of the learning contracts in the undergraduate curriculum, the Conservatoire is developing a thorough approach to identifying the intended learning outcomes and sharing with students the extent to which these are being achieved. It is likely that, as this approach becomes embedded,

students will become increasingly aware of, and engage with, the feedback they are receiving on all of their assessed work. The ELIR team recognised the Conservatoire's intention to keep monitoring this area.

63   There is active and extensive student engagement in the committee structure. This is positive, providing a powerful mechanism for students to present their views on planned changes and contribute to strategic change. This aspect of student engagement is very likely to be strengthened by the new programme committee model which includes student-led, as well as staff-led, meetings. As noted elsewhere in this report (see paragraphs 8 & 23), students were also extensively involved in the Curriculum Reform project. There is less extensive use of formal, paper-based student feedback approaches, such as module-level questionnaires. However, staff and students reported to the ELIR team that student feedback through staff-student fora or through student dialogue with staff was extensive (see paragraph 23).

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)

14   At the time of the current ELIR, SRUC was still principally operating under the learning and teaching policies and procedures of the legacy colleges. Exceptions to this included admissions processes, student financial hardship support and the establishment of the cross-institutional Students' Association and student representation mechanisms. A new Education Manual was under development which would align to the four SRUC strategies (see paragraphs 83, 108 and 113).

30   As was evident from the case study submitted for ELIR, SRUC has made significant progress in establishing a single Students' Association (SRUCSA) to replace the very different arrangements that were in place in each of the legacy colleges. SRUC and SRUCSA have worked together, with the support of student participation in quality Scotland (sparqs) and NUS (Scotland) and have taken external reference points into account in devising the student representative arrangements, for example the relevant chapter of the Quality Code. There are two full-time sabbatical officers (a President and Vice-President), supported by six campus officers who receive a bursary in recognition of their contributions. In addition, there is a part-time student officer to represent postgraduate students. Senior SRUC staff indicated a willingness to continue to keep under review the representative arrangements and the support available for SRUCSA, which is positive.

31   At the time of the current ELIR, student representation at programme level remained as it was pre-merger. Class representatives are elected by peers and this process is facilitated by year/course tutors within timetabled activities. There are two learner engagement officers one of whom has responsibility, along with the SRUCSA campus officers, for facilitating the class representative system. A variety of training and development opportunities are available to all SRUCSA executive members and class representatives through NUS and sparqs. The ELIR team learned that work would begin in spring 2014 to develop a Student Partnership Agreement, as part of SRUCSA's business planning agenda. It was proposed that this would begin part of the annual responsibility of the Student Experience Sub-Committee.

32   In discussion with the ELIR team, student representatives highlighted a number of challenges that had been experienced in establishing SRUCSA and the wider representative structures. At times SRUCSA and SRUC staff at officer level had different priorities and this had led to tensions. Students identified a need for staff support within SRUCSA itself, rather than relying on SRUC officer support. This is something SRUC could consider as it seeks to embed the representative arrangements. It was evident from discussions with students and staff that student engagement in the committee structure and related activities is valued. Student views are actively sought and appreciated by senior colleagues.

33   Both SRUC and the ELIR team recognise the significance of implementing a multi-campus Student Association and representative system. The team considers that positive progress has been made and would encourage SRUC to keep their effectiveness under review as they embed, continuing to listen carefully to the views of the elected student representatives.

35   SRUC has internal arrangements for students to provide feedback on their experience, for example through the student representative structure and student liaison committees. Discussions with students during the ELIR visits suggested that the student liaison committee meetings could operate more effectively. Students reported a tendency for the same issues to be raised repeatedly, minutes not always being available and a lack of clarity around whether or how matters had been resolved. SRUC acknowledged that these views are confirmed by the NSS outcomes and were also raised during focus group discussions with students carried out as part of preparing for ELIR. The Reflective Analysis stated the SRUC view that the issue concerns the systematic harnessing of feedback, agreeing action and reporting this back to students. As one way of addressing this, SRUC indicated that it intends to introduce a 'you said, we did' approach to reporting on student liaison committees. The ELIR team would endorse this analysis and encourages SRUC to keep the matter under review.

54   SRUC has made positive progress in prioritising student representation and engagement, including developing a learner engagement strategy and identifying staff and structures to support its implementation. Priority has been given to the establishment of the Student Association and relationships at the most senior levels are positive, with evidence of student views being well received in the institution-level committees. A number of these developments are in the early stages and SRUC is encouraged to retain an active oversight of their effectiveness as they embed, listening carefully to the views of the student representatives, including through the Student Experience Sub-Committee of Academic Board.

66   In line with sector practice, an institutional team has been established to coordinate, and promote staff and student engagement with, the Enhancement Theme activities. This team is chaired by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Manager for higher education, who also represents SRUC on the national Theme Steering Committee. The team includes staff and student representation from all three SRUC divisions. In the former SAC, Divisional Management Team and Education Management Group meetings regularly considered progress with Theme activities. Meeting minutes are archived on the SRUC intranet site for wider dissemination. In future, the Themes will be considered by the SRUC Academic Board.

111   New academic governance arrangements were implemented following the merger in October 2012. The Education Board and Research Board were established in October 2012 as sub-boards of the Group Board, with responsibility for the governance of education. A newly-formed Academic Board held its first meeting in December 2013. Students are represented on these boards. SRUC expressed confidence that appropriate governance arrangements are in place but acknowledged that work remained to be done in embedding the new governance structure and ensuring that the roles of the Boards are developed appropriately in the medium-term.

University of Stirling

15   The Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC) remit includes responsibility for the University's suite of strategies relating to learning, teaching, quality enhancement, and the wider student experience. This includes ESEC monitoring implementation of these strategies at school level, including the extent to which school-level plans align with University strategy. In addition to the Deputy Principal (Education and Students), ESEC membership includes the seven directors of learning and teaching, and three representatives from the Students' Union.

16   In November 2014, a working group was formed to conduct a review of the effectiveness of ESEC following one full year of its operation. The working group comprised two directors of learning and teaching, representatives from the Academic Registry and Governance Services, and the Students' Union President. A brief interim report was made available to the ELIR team, and senior staff informed the team that, overall, ESEC was found to be working well, with some minor changes being identified by the working group.

37   The University works collaboratively with the Students' Union and the wider student population, which enables the student voice to be heard at key stages of the decision-making processes and facilitates a student contribution to the ongoing development of learning and teaching policy and practice. The ELIR team saw a number of examples of this collaborative working, for example in relation to the student-led teaching awards (see paragraph 65) and the consultation around developments in the University estate. The University does not currently have a student partnership agreement in place but indicated that it recognised the potential benefit of establishing one to further strengthen the collaborative and partnership working between staff and students. The ELIR team would support that view. The University was in the process of developing a student charter for implementation during 2015-16, setting out the respective expectations of students and the institution.

38   Since the 2011 ELIR, the University has initiated a considerable number of student facing and institutional business process projects, many of which are reflected in the Transforming the Student Experience project. It was evident to the ELIR team that the University and the Students' Union officers had an exceptional commitment to extensive consultation and collaborative ways of working to enable these initiatives to be delivered. Particular examples include the introduction of School Officer training delivered jointly by schools and the Students' Union; consultation with students around the change in the number of teaching weeks; an increasing emphasis on student participation in learning and teaching reviews; and student involvement in the development of the Personal Tutor role.

39   The Students' Union sabbatical officers are members of key University committees, including ESEC; Joint Policy, Planning and Resources Committee; Academic Council; and University Court. The sabbaticals also meet on a regular basis with senior academic staff, including the Senior Deputy Principal (Education and Students), as well as with members of staff from the Academic Registry and Governance Services.

40   Since the 2011 ELIR the role of School Officer has been developed further. School Officers engage with course representatives and directors of learning and teaching, among others, to facilitate dialogue and feedback. They also undertake specific projects during their term of office, for example engaging in working groups and gathering information from students. School Officers are recruited and trained by the Students' Union in conjunction with the relevant school, and report to the Students' Union Vice President (Education). They work closely with sabbatical officers and staff in the Students' Union as well as with University staff.

41   School Officers who met the ELIR team were enthusiastic about their role, indicating that they had an important facilitative effect providing a valued interface between student course representatives and school staff. Both staff and students in the wider population spoke very positively to the ELIR team about the benefits of School Officers. Through a combination of the periodic learning and teaching reviews and student focus group feedback, the University has identified some variation in the impact of School Officers across schools. The University and the Students' Union are addressing this by providing additional support to enhance communication with course representatives (and Staff Student Consultative Committees) and are enhancing the training provided to School Officers during 2015-16. This is positive evidence of the University reflecting on its activity and seeking to enhance it.

42   The ELIR team learned that the University plans to introduce a Graduate School Officer role aimed at the postgraduate student population. The University intended to recruit seven taught postgraduate and seven research postgraduate School Officers for 2015-16. Based on the positive impact of the current School Officers, the team considered this was likely to enhance the partnership between the University and the postgraduate student population.

58   There is an effective and systematic approach to enhancing the student learning experience. A commitment to engage with its students is embedded in the University culture. There has been a substantial volume of change and this has provided considerable opportunity for students to influence policy and practice, for example through the Transforming the Student Experience project. It is evident that the University and the Students' Union have established a productive partnership to ensure that the student voice is heard. The School Officer role, which was being piloted at the time of the 2011 ELIR, has been extended successfully to the whole University, with plans in place to appoint Graduate Officers for the research student population.

66   In 2010-11, the University introduced the Recognising Achievement in Teaching Excellence (RATE) awards scheme. RATE is a student-run nomination-based annual awards programme, which recognises exceptional teaching. The awards ceremony takes place during the annual learning and teaching conference. A new initiative, in 2014-15, was for the Students' Union to provide every nominated staff member with the text of the nomination submitted in relation to their teaching practice. The ELIR team considered that disseminating the nomination text is an excellent way of sharing good practice and providing positive feedback to teaching staff.

67   Topics relating to the national Enhancement Themes are visible in the University's Learning and Teaching Quality Enhancement Strategy (LTQES), the Transforming the Student Experience project, and in a range of other activities and events. The University's engagement with the current Enhancement Theme, Student Transitions, is managed through an Enhancement Themes Steering Group that establishes, initiates and promotes work in the institution. The Steering Group is chaired by the Dean of Student Affairs, and members include academic, administrative and support staff, as well as a student representative.

68   The Stirling Enhancement of Learning Fund (SELF) supports developments in learning, teaching and assessment that align with the LTQES, and the QAA Enhancement Themes Institutional Fund provided support for the Students' Union to host an inaugural Accessing Higher Education Conference. The Conference was designed to encourage and support non-traditional students entering higher education. The Enhancement Theme agenda is reflected in the focus of the University's Annual Learning and Teaching Conference. In 2014, the theme for the Annual Conference (formerly known as Edufair) was centred on the Developing and Supporting the Curriculum Enhancement Theme. In 2015,

the Dean for Student Affairs spoke on the Quality Enhancement Themes and another keynote speaker gave a talk relating to facilitating effective transitions into and through higher education. In 2016 it is intended that the Conference will focus on 'Changing Places: Student Transitions in Higher Education'. Staff who have received funding through SELF are expected to present at the Conference.

69   The engagement with the current Enhancement Theme, Student Transitions, includes work on transition into university, reflection of students on first year and integrated degrees, international experience, transition from second to honours year, and navigating work places. The Enhancement Themes Steering Group meets regularly and has held an awayday dedicated to the work on Student Transitions. The ELIR team heard about the move from a consultative approach to more active student engagement in the most recent Enhancement Theme work and the positive experiences of actively involving the Students' Union in this work. In addition, the ELIR team heard about the early impact of the engagement with the Student Transitions Theme through the development of a four-year-long e-module, which is planned to flow through the student journey and is intended to facilitate the transition of the student between each year. It was at an early stage of development at the time of the current ELIR but clearly had the potential to provide valuable student support.

87   The University indicated that, since the 2011 ELIR, it has enhanced its process for programme development and approval, including increased engagement of students in the process. The development of new programmes and modules is initiated at school level, and the initial approval and quality assurance process is managed through the LTCs. ESEC has final institutional oversight and responsibility for programme approval. The process involves two stages. Following initial approval by the relevant Head of School, a programme panel (which can meet physically or virtually), comprising academic and professional support staff and students, develops the programme. Programme panels are expected to take account of a range of external reference points, including PSRBs, external examiners and industry views, although the University acknowledged that the nature of engagement with and by industry varies. Programmes are signed off by the LTCs, with final approval through ESEC. The University confirmed that ESEC approval was given through chair's action, and this was evident in ESEC minutes. While the design and development stage of the process involves a number of internal staff and external stakeholders, the documentation provided to the ELIR team relating to programme development did not demonstrate how proposals meet the requirements of external reference points, such as the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and Subject Benchmark Statements, and there is no external academic involvement in the approval process. The University is encouraged to involve academic expertise from outside the institution in its programme approval arrangements, in line with the Quality Code (see paragraphs 99 and 113).

99   Students are represented on LTCs where external examiner reports are considered. The University expects that external examiner reports are made available to students by schools on request. Students who met the ELIR team were generally aware of the role of the external examiners in the assessment process, and this is set out in modules and programme handbooks. Students were less clear how they would access external examiner reports, and this would benefit from clarification.

102   In its Reflective Analysis the University noted that its approach to self-evaluation and management of information is informed by a commitment to the delivery of its strategic objectives, and that this is supported by the effective use of data and the development of new technologies. The ELIR team found evidence of the University's approach in minutes of the Academic Council and Education and Student Experience Committee (ESEC), where it was clear that the University regularly reviews its academic policies and procedures. The University's approach to self-evaluation is also reflected in its Transforming the Student

Experience project, a significant and extensive project that addresses the enhancement of a number of elements of the student experience, from revised regulatory frameworks to student support through the revised personal tutoring system and institution-wide engagement (including staff and students) with the development of the new Strategic Plan.

112   The University routinely seeks student feedback through a wide range of means, including: external surveys (NSS, PTES and PRES); module evaluations; internal surveys; School Officers; course representatives; SSCCs; LTCs; the Student's Union; and annual programme, and the periodic learning and teaching, reviews. Module evaluation feedback, following a pilot of an electronic system, is now gathered uniformly across the University; a comprehensive document showing analysis of student feedback was presented in the AIS. The University seeks to identify themes arising from its analysis of student feedback and the ELIR team noted this being given careful consideration in the committee structure, including at the Academic Council, ESEC and LTCs, with actions being taken in response. The quality of student feedback was commended in the external examiner reports. Overall, the ELIR team recognised that a commitment to engage with the student voice is part of the University's regular way of operating.

University of Strathclyde

27   A dedicated Equality and Diversity Manager post was established in 2011. In addition, responsibilities around equality and diversity are shared across the professional services and are clearly defined. As an example, the Estates Service has established an Equality and Diversity Working Group that includes student representatives from the University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA) with the aim of addressing inclusivity issues on campus. In addition, USSA works in partnership with Professional Services through the Equality and Diversity Manager to promote inclusive events, and has plans to work more closely with academic departments in the future to roll-out these opportunities across the institution*.*

34   The University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA) conducted a detailed analysis of the data from their 'Teaching Excellence Awards' to produce a 'Best Practice Report' that outlines the characteristics and attributes in their teachers that students respond most positively towards. This was well received by the University and discussions are taking place between USSA and the University about whether this will become an annual piece of work. The ELIR team considered this was an imaginative and valuable addition to this initiative.

38   The University is committed to student engagement and has a strong relationship with the University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA). This was evident in meetings with staff and students and in a number of projects led by USSA or jointly managed by USSA and the University, for example peer support (see paragraph 44).

39   Student representation is in place at all levels and USSA are included in senior committees and in regular meetings with senior institutional managers, including monthly meetings between the Principal and the Student President.

40   The Annual Student Congress is a full-day event intended to engage and inform student representatives at the University. The Principal, senior management, and heads of professional services regularly attend (by USSA invitation). This provides an opportunity for USSA representatives to discuss issues affecting the learning experience at the University and suggest future developments. Outcomes from Congress are reported back to the Education Strategy Committee. Communication and collaboration between and within different layers of student representation and senior University managers is supported by the Annual Student Congress.

41 An effective class representative system is in place with student representatives at class, department and faculty level for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students. Student representatives receive training from USSA and from Student Participation in Quality Scotland (sparqs), with class representatives being offered training, including online training, in both semesters.

42 Postgraduate research students are represented on the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. A Postgraduate Students' Society was established in 2012 with a view to creating a sense of postgraduate community across the institution and the University considers that this will improve student representation for this population.

44 USSA, in partnership with the University, is leading on the development of peer-support pilot initiatives at departmental level with a view to strengthening the student community and improving retention rates. Student representatives are highly invested in this project and aim to extend peer-support across the whole University in the future. Student communities are also strengthened by several subject-specific societies, which benefit from the engagement and support of their respective departments.

53 The University has an effective and systematic approach to enhancing the student learning experience. Students are very positive about their experience, and the University has a positive and constructive partnership with USSA.

92 Student engagement in representation supports evaluative activity. Students are engaged formally through student staff liaison committees, membership on University committees (including Senate and Court) and in periodic reviews. Informally, the University also seeks to engage students through meetings between USSA officers and senior staff, including the Principal.

98 A number of professional services have key roles in the management of information, specifically the Strategy and Policy Directorate, the Education Enhancement team and the Student Surveys team (within the SEES Directorate) and the Marketing and Development Services Directorate. Collectively, they manage reporting to HESA including the Key Information Set (KIS), led by Education Enhancement. The University has used the KIS as an opportunity to develop a new, more consistent approach to collating and presenting undergraduate information. The University has also engaged with USSA to produce student-friendly policy web pages explaining academic policy.

University of St Andrews

8 In 2013, the University created the new post of Vice-Principal (Enterprise and Engagement) to lead on the strategic areas of business and research partnerships, enterprise education, and enterprise opportunities for students and staff. An Enterprise Working Group was established in 2013, including student representation, to develop the existing provision in enterprise education. Supported by funding from a commercial bank, the University runs an in-house enterprise competition. With support from the Vice-Principal (Enterprise and Engagement) students have led on developing the profile of enterprise activities across the University, including setting up conferences and events such as an Enterprise Week.

14 Overall, the University has an effective approach to implementing strategies relating to learning and teaching. The closer links between academic and professional services achieved through the Proctor's Office have further strengthened strategic effectiveness. The Proctor's Office works closely with the directors of teaching and CAPOD to provide an enhanced strategic overview. Student representatives are involved in supporting the

implementation of strategies, for example the work relating to enterprise education and school presidents are involved in key processes, such as the Annual Academic Monitoring dialogues (paragraph 105). It was evident from discussions with staff and students that the Proctor's Office is regarded as an agency for change and enhancement across the University.

35   There is an effective approach to student representation with a strong and constructive relationship fostered between the Students' Association and the University. Staff have welcomed the School President system, which had recently been introduced at the time of the 2011 ELIR. This system allows students to have a more strategic engagement in learning and teaching within the schools, for example the recent project relating to feedback on assessment (paragraph 44). Since the 2011 ELIR, a new tier of student representation has been created at the faculty level. Faculty presidents operate as a senior support and mentor for school presidents. Faculty presidents sit on the University Academic Council along with the Student President and allow an effective flow of student opinion from schools to institutional level. This system of representation is mirrored at a postgraduate level. Senior managers acknowledged there may be a gap for student engagement when school learning and teaching committee meetings take place during the summer, and indicated that they would address this.

36   School and faculty presidents and class representatives are all offered training which is delivered by CAPOD and the Students' Association. At the time of the ELIR visit, around 95 per cent of student representatives had been trained. Some students commented that the training they received had not adequately prepared them for their role, and there would be value in the University reflecting on the ways in which it could enhance this to ensure student representatives are supported in the schools.

37   Although not all students who met the ELIR team were clear about who their school president was, or the precise nature of the role, there was general agreement that the system has produced effective changes that have enhanced the student experience. As the student president arrangements embed, there would be benefit in the University and Students' Association considering additional ways of promoting these roles to the wider student body.

39   Taught postgraduate representation is facilitated through a system of programme representatives supported by the Postgraduate Convenor, an elected member of the Students' Representative Council. Postgraduate student representatives who met the ELIR team were satisfied with the effectiveness of the representation arrangements and could identify changes that had been made following their involvement.

40   Module evaluation questionnaires (MEQs) are completed by students at the end of each module and students commented that these contained generic questions about learning and teaching. From 2014-15, the University has moved to an online system for administering MEQs which has had a negative impact on response rates. The Students' Association is working on a campaign involving the student president network to boost return rates. Some students expressed the view that the generic nature of the MEQ made it difficult to identify particular changes that would enhance their experience.

44   During the current ELIR, a student-led project considering feedback on assessment was underway. The Director of Representation had led a group who interviewed class representatives from all schools to produce a snapshot of feedback practice across the University. The study found that detailed and prompt feedback was being provided in many parts of the University and that most schools were performing well. By the time of the Part 2 visit, students had presented a report on the project to the Presidents' Forum and the next stage was to prepare a more formal paper for the University LTC. The ELIR team noted that

the project findings were largely positive with the report likely to focus primarily on disseminating good practice. In discussion with the team, teaching and support staff were aware and supportive of the project, expressing confidence that its outcomes would be implemented. There was a clear commitment from the Proctor's Office to support students to develop the paper for the LTC to ensure a successful outcome and implement any recommendations.

56   CAPOD provides training for the students who have coordinating roles in the student societies and students were very positive about the support and encouragement they received. In partnership with the Students' Association, CAPOD has developed the Professional Skills Curriculum which comprises over 20 different professional skills topics delivered through a series of online workshops, lectures and practical skills sessions. Students who complete the Professional Skills Curriculum will have the achievement recognised on their degree transcript. Work has also been undertaken to review how curriculum and assessment can provide scope for the acquisition of skills that are directly relevant to the workplace. The University recognises this as an area for further activity in order to support students to identify these skills.

61   The University has a highly effective approach to enhancing the student experience. There is very clear evidence that student engagement and representation play a central role in the learning and teaching environment. The school and faculty president structures allow students to be represented across the institution as well as through the Students' Association. Student representatives are very positive about their experiences and are proactive in identifying areas in which to engage, such as the current work on assessment and feedback.

80   There are two Teaching Award Schemes that aim to recognise and reward excellence in teaching, an institutional University Teaching Excellence Award and a Students' Association Teaching Award. Representatives of each scheme sit on the other's awarding panel. Undergraduate students who met the ELIR team appeared to have limited awareness of these awards. The team also considered that the students' own criteria for nominating teaching staff seemed to be quite high. However, members of staff with a development and enhancement role emphasised the positive experience of the award ceremony, drawing together teachers and students from across the University.

106   In addition to formal AAM reporting, a third of the schools had a dialogue each year with the Proctor, deans, the Director of CAPOD & Quality Monitoring, and the Student Association Director of Representation. Interviews rotate around the schools over a three-year cycle, but a school where quality and standards are deemed at risk would be called for interview regardless of their place in the cycle. Additionally, a school can request a meeting if it wishes to discuss an issue arising from the AAM process.

111   The URLT process runs on a five to six-year cycle and includes professional service departments as well as academic schools. Up to 10 URLTs may be conducted during a year. Review panels include a postgraduate research student representative, the Student Association Director of Representation and discipline experts from outside the University. The ELIR team recognised that the Director of Representation can bring continuity to the URLT exercise, but also sees an opportunity for the University to engage a wider group of students from the pool of school and faculty presidents.

114   Student involvement in evaluative processes is guided by the Director of Student Representation (DoRep). This is an important post and among the duties of the DoRep is representing student views on senior committees, training of student representatives and leading a cadre of faculty and school (student) presidents. In a meeting with the ELIR team, student presidents and class representatives confirmed that they made a positive

contribution to evaluative practices. The school and faculty presidents also discussed University initiatives relating to evaluative practice, for example module evaluation, through the Presidents' Forum, a twice-semester meeting with the Proctor and deans.

University of the West of Scotland

37   Academic and pastoral advice is provided for all students, and students who met the ELIR team commented positively on this support. As part of the planned focus on programmes as the key unit of the student experience, the University intends to review and develop the operation of the Personal Tutor System to consider variation in local implementation of institutional strategy and student engagement. This culture of personalised learning support, coupled with the ongoing evaluation and activity to improve services already available, represents positive practice.

38   The University's arrangements for the involvement of students in quality processes are inclusive and embedded at all levels. There is a clear framework for student representation, with sabbatical officers from the Students' Association of the University of the West of Scotland (SAUWS) involved at the University Court, Senate and senior level committees, such as the Education Advisory Committee, the Research and Enterprise Advisory Committee and the Graduate School Board. Each School Board also includes student representatives. At sub-school level, student representation at Student-Staff Liaison Groups (SSLGs) has been a key part of ensuring that the student voice is heard at school level. Students are now represented on programme boards and the school education forums to enable more effective engagement of students at the subject management level.

39   There are differences in the election processes and appointment terms of class representatives, with some students expressing the view that ineffective representatives were not always replaced as alternatives could not be found. While the ELIR team recognise that these issues are not unique in the sector, the University is encouraged to review the election processes, in partnership with SAUWS, to ensure effective operation of the process and to promote the benefits of becoming involved in student representation to the student body.

66   The University has effective arrangements for engaging and supporting staff in enhancing learning and teaching, from their initial employment and throughout their careers, with responsibility distributed and owned across a number of areas of the institution including CAPLeD and the academic schools. The recently-established Department of People and Organisational Development (POD) aims to ensure that staff are supported throughout their career to meet the developing needs of both the individual and the institution. POD is responsible for systematic, formal processes such as new staff induction, Performance and Development Review (PDR), and tailored career support programs such as leadership and mentoring. The University also formally recognises staff contribution through its Staff Recognition and Reward Scheme. The Students' Association of the University of the West of Scotland (SAUWS), also plays a role in recognition and awareness raising of good teaching practice through its own Student-Led (21st Century) Teaching Awards.

90   Students' Association of the University of the West of Scotland (SAUWS) sabbatical officers sit on SHR panels and the panels meet a wide selection of students (UG, PGT, PGR). In a meeting with student representatives the ELIR team heard that the representatives experienced good engagement with the SHR process. Panels reviewing collaborative provision also met students. At programme level, student feedback is mainly through module evaluation questionnaires. Students are made aware of outcomes of reviews and evaluations in a number of ways which includes access to SHR review minutes and the student-staff liaison groups. In the latter there is commonly a focus on module evaluation outcomes with informed discussion and actions required of module co-ordinators.

91   Overview of evaluative processes is provided by the EAC principally through its subcommittee Academic Quality Committee, in addition to the QEU. Formerly faculties also provided oversight and it was confirmed that in the new administrative structure schools will now take on this responsibility. Minutes of senior committees show there is careful consideration of the outcomes of reviews and actions arising may include the creation of short life working groups to address particular themes or issues. Dissemination of the findings of reviews to staff and students is through the committee structure and includes a newsletter to students on the outcome of a SHR in which their programme has been considered. Student engagement in reviews and monitoring is effective and recent practice is to foreground the student experience with student presentations opening review events, which the ELIR team considered to be an area of positive practice. The institutional committees also identify areas of University operation for review and evaluation. Committee members gave a clear explanation of how they disseminate the work of these groups to their colleagues.

109   Communication with students studying at partner institutions is through student representation and student-staff liaison groups that have equivalence with arrangements on the home campus sites. Staff communication is through the Joint Programme Panels and Collaborative Contact meetings where, for example, the University's intention to move to validated models of programme partnership was discussed.

QAA1336 - Oct 16