

Enhancement-led Institutional Review of the University of Dundee

Technical Report

November 2013

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About the Enhancement-led Institutional Review method

A dedicated page of the QAA website explains the method for [Enhancement-led Institutional Review](#) of higher education institutions in Scotland and has links to the ELIR handbook and other informative documents.¹ You can also find more information [about QAA](#) and its mission.²

Further details about the enhancement-led approach can be found in an accompanying [ELIR information document](#),³ including an overview of the review method, definitions of the judgement categories, and explanations of follow-up action. It also contains information on the Scottish Funding Council's response to ELIR judgements.

About this review

This is the Technical Report of the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at the University of Dundee. The review took place as follows: Part 1 visit on 16-17 October 2013 and Part 2 visit on 18-21 November 2013. The review was conducted by a team of six reviewers:

- Professor Graham Caie (academic reviewer)
- Dr Tess Goodliffe (international reviewer)
- Ms Elizabeth Marshall (coordinating reviewer)
- Professor Diane Meehan (academic reviewer)
- Mr Conor Murray-Gauld (student reviewer)
- Professor Clare Pickles (academic reviewer)

In advance of the review visits, the University submitted a self-evaluative document (the Reflective Analysis) and an advance information set, comprising a range of materials about the institution's arrangements for managing quality and academic standards. In addition, the University submitted two case studies: 'Assessment and Feedback - Enhancing Practice and the Student Experience' and 'Review of the Academic Year - Effective Consultation and Engagement with Students and Staff'.

About this report

In this report, the ELIR team:

- delivers an overarching judgement on the current and likely future effectiveness of the institution's arrangements for managing academic standards and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience.

The overarching judgement can be found on page 3, followed by the detailed findings of the review given in numbered paragraphs.

ELIR Technical Reports are intended primarily for the institution which hosted the review, and to provide an information base for the production of thematic reports which identify findings across several institutions.

¹ Further information about the ELIR method: www.qaa.ac.uk/institutionreports/types-of-review/pages/elir.aspx

² Further information about QAA: www.qaa.ac.uk/aboutus

³ ELIR information document: www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/ELIR-information.aspx

Technical Reports set out the ELIR team's view under each of the report headings. Shorter Outcome Reports are provided which set out the main findings of the ELIR for a wider audience. The [Outcome Report](#) for this review is on the QAA website.⁴

⁴ Outcome Report: www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/Reports/Pages/ELIR-Dundee-13.aspx

Overarching judgement about the University of Dundee

The University of Dundee has **effective** arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. These arrangements are likely to continue to be effective in the future.

This is a positive judgement, which means the University has robust arrangements for securing academic standards and for enhancing the quality of the student experience.

1 Institutional context and strategic framework

1.1 Key features of the institution's context and mission

1 The University of Dundee (the University) became independent in 1967, having formerly been a college of the University of St Andrews since 1897. The University experienced a period of rapid growth from 1994-2001 as a result of mergers with Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Tayside College of Nursing and Midwifery, Fife College of Health Studies and the Dundee Campus of the Northern College of Education.

2 The majority of the University's activity is based on its city centre campus with its medical school and part of its nursing provision being located at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee and Kirkcaldy respectively. In recent years the University has made significant investment in new and refurbished buildings, with the aim of enhancing the student learning environment.

3 The University is structured around 15 schools and four colleges: Art, Science and Engineering; Arts and Social Sciences; Life Sciences; and Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing. The colleges vary in size with the College of Arts and Social Sciences having the most students, followed by the College of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing.

4 Each of the four colleges is led by a vice-principal, who has additional University-wide responsibilities, and the schools are led by deans. The University has recently appointed a Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching who has institution-wide responsibility for the strategic management of learning and teaching. The University also has four deputy principals who have University-wide responsibilities for internationalisation, knowledge exchange in the creative arts, research governance and public engagement.

5 A recent development is that of a 25-year Vision for the future which focuses on the theme of transformation. The University's Vision centres on transforming lives locally and globally through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge, with the ultimate goal to become Scotland's leading university. The first phase of the 25 year Vision will be delivered through the University Strategy to 2017.

6 In the ELIR methodology institutions are asked to identify areas on which they particularly invite the ELIR team's view. The University indicated it would welcome feedback on its approach to enhancement and in particular on its new Metastrategy for Enhancement of the Student Experience.

1.2 Strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching

7 The University's approach to the enhancement of learning and teaching is embedded in its Learning and Teaching Strategy to 2017. This is one of the key enabling components of the University Strategy to 2017. The Learning and Teaching Strategy is based around the principle that the education students receive will be 'high quality,

internationally focused, a transformational experience informed by research and offering a breadth and depth of experience, preparing students for leadership and global citizenship'.

8 The Directorate of Policy, Governance and Legal Affairs (PGLA) has responsibility for the Learning and Teaching Strategy and contains the Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching, the Director of Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation and the Director of Quality Assurance. The role of Director of Learning and Teaching Strategy Implementation is relatively new and has a focus on communicating the Strategy and helping to ensure its implementation.

9 The University Metastrategy for Enhancement of the Student Experience is under development and is complementary to the Learning and Teaching Strategy. The Metastrategy for the Enhancement of the Student Experience aims to pull together the various quality enhancement strands from the nine component strategies of the University Strategy to 2017 (see paragraph 12). Although at an early stage of development at the time of the current ELIR, the Metastrategy has a clear focus on enhancement and is a positive development with the potential to provide a more strategic and systematic approach to the enhancement of the student learning experience. The Metastrategy was commented on positively by staff who met the ELIR team.

10 Institutional oversight of enhancement initiatives is through the Learning and Teaching Committee, which includes representatives from the schools as members, and which reports to Senate. The Learning and Teaching Committee is supported by the Quality Forum, whose remit is to act as an advisory group to the Learning and Teaching Committee on quality assurance and quality enhancement matters.

1.3 Effectiveness of the approach to implementing strategies

11 The University has an effective approach to implementing strategies and there is a clear link between institutional strategy and operational planning. A key and effective feature of the University's approach to implementing strategies is that each of the enabling strategies and cross-cutting themes is overseen by a formal committee with senior academic leadership.

12 The University Strategy to 2017 is underpinned by nine component strategies, with three top-level categories (learning and teaching, research, and wider impact), two cross-cutting themes (internationalisation, and employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship) and four enabling elements. As noted above (paragraph 9) the Metastrategy for Enhancement of the Student Experience is in the early stages of development.

13 The development of the University Strategy to 2017 involved significant consultation with staff and students and through relevant University committees. The consultation process has been successful in enabling staff and students to have a clear understanding of the strategic direction and objectives of the institution.

14 Guidance on strategy development and planning is provided by the Director of Strategic Planning, who is based within the Strategic Planning Office. The Strategic Planning Office has a central role in the development and monitoring of the key performance indicators (KPIs) associated with the University Strategy to 2017 and its related strategies. Progress against the KPIs is monitored through Court and Senate and the University also benchmarks its performance against its chosen comparator group of institutions.

15 The University has recently implemented a new approach to its operational planning process. Schools and directorates comment on the actions being taken to deliver the aims of

the University Strategy and progress in achieving these. School operating plans are coordinated by colleges and are evaluated by the Senior Management Team to ensure the University's strategic aims are being delivered. Feedback is provided to schools and directorates on the areas where further development is required. Comprehensive guidance on the planning process is made available and staff indicated that, while relatively new, this was a maturing and effective process.

2 Enhancing the student learning experience

2.1 Composition and key trends in the student population, including typical routes into and through the institution

16 The University has approximately 16,500 students and over 3,000 staff. Around 66 per cent of students are studying at undergraduate level, 30 per cent are studying taught postgraduate programmes and 4 per cent are postgraduate research students. Approximately 60 per cent of undergraduates are female and undergraduate students come predominantly from the UK. A high number of postgraduate taught students are part-time and/or distance learners. The University has a significant number of distance learners (around 1,000 undergraduate and 3,700 postgraduate taught students) predominantly in the College of Arts and Social Sciences and the College of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing.

17 The proportion of international students at the University is around 10 per cent and the University has a specific sub-aim in its internationalisation strategy to recruit more international students. Figures provided by the University show that it has a lower percentage of international students than the comparator group against which it benchmarks itself. The University Strategy to 2017 also sets out the aim of increasing the number of postgraduate students, particularly through the development of international partnerships.

18 The University sets out its commitment and approach to widening participation in its Learning and Teaching Strategy and its Outcome Agreement 2012-13 with the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). The University was awarded additional student numbers for 2013 entry by the SFC to support widening access and articulation.

19 The University's 2012-13 Outcome Agreement with the SFC shows that in 2010-11 the University's proportion of MD20 students was 10.8 per cent against a sector average of 8 per cent and its proportion of MD40 students was 25.4 per cent against a sector average of 20.8 per cent. The equivalent figures for young full-time entrants only were 7.6 per cent against a sector average of 6.3 per cent in relation to MD20 and 19.8 per cent against a sector average of 17.4 per cent in the case of MD40.

20 Students with disabilities comprise 6 per cent of the student population and this proportion has remained relatively stable over a number of years.

21 The University uses key data sets effectively to monitor its performance in relation to its student population. Data in relation to admissions, retention and progression, award outcomes, student satisfaction and employment is considered through the University's committee structures and its quality assurance and enhancement processes such as annual monitoring and periodic review.

2.2 Supporting equality and diversity in the student population

22 The University has an effective approach to supporting equality and diversity. It is committed to providing inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for prospective and current students, and has appropriate policies and guidelines in place to support this

commitment, including its Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcome Plan. The University also provides equality and diversity training for all staff (see paragraph 65).

Widening participation

23 The University has a clear commitment to widening participation and to recruiting a diverse student population. The University's aims in this area of activity are reflected in its Learning and Teaching Strategy to 2017 and Outcome Agreement 2012-13 with the Scottish Funding Council. The University has an inclusive admissions policy and associated practices. A recent development (from September 2013) has been the creation of the Student Recruitment and Admissions Committee, reporting to the Senior Management Team, which has subsumed the University's Widening Participation Group and which now oversees this area of activity.

24 Retention and progression rates are key performance indicators (KPIs) for the University and retention is a key consideration in its Outcome Agreement 2012-13. The University's retention rate is above the sector average in the overall Scottish student entrant population and the MD20 group, but has shown a small decline since 2008-09. The University is responding to this by the recent establishment of the Retention and Progression Committee, chaired by the Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching, which will facilitate systematic monitoring and associated action planning in relation to student progression and retention.

25 The University delivers a number of outreach initiatives aimed at widening participation, including its 'Discovering Degrees' programme for pupils from low progression secondary schools; 'Reach Scotland' and 'ACES', national initiatives supporting and enabling young people interested in 'high demand' professions such as Medicine, Dentistry, Law, Architecture and Art; articulation routes; and the Dundee University Access to Learning (DUAL) Summer School, which helps to prepare and qualify applicants for entry to a range of undergraduate programmes by providing academic and study skills support. The DUAL Summer School is particularly targeted at MD40 students and historically has helped those from all non-traditional backgrounds, and students who had experienced the programme were very positive about the support and preparation it provided for entry to the University.

Students with disabilities

26 Students with disabilities are supported through Disability Services, whose staff work closely with schools and services across the University to ensure that support is coordinated effectively. Each school has a dedicated disability support officer whose role is to liaise with Disability Services and provide programme-specific advice to students who have disclosed a disability. Data is used effectively to target resources and annual reports of the effectiveness of the Service are published on the Disability Services website. Student feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction with the comprehensive and responsive nature of the services provided.

27 The University is committed to an ongoing programme of accessibility improvements to its estate, for example by providing pager systems for people with hearing difficulties, and plans to increase the number of wheelchair accessible rooms in student residences by 2013-14. This work is overseen by the Campus Accessibility Group which identifies and approves priorities for action.

International students

28 Information and support for international students, pre and post arrival in the UK, is provided through the Student Service Directorate's International Advice Service. The University runs specific induction events for international students. International students who met with the ELIR team commented on their positive experiences of induction, stating that the induction events had assisted them in settling into both the University and the city.

They were also positive about the wide range of events and societies available to them on an ongoing basis. English language teaching for students for whom English is not their first language is provided by the Academic Skills Centre and both pre-sessional and in-sessional programmes are available.

Distance learning

29 The University has a significant number of both UK and overseas students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels studying as distance learners (see paragraph 16). Key to study for distance learners is the University's virtual learning environment (VLE), which includes module materials as well as discussion boards and programme-related information. Distance learning students are allocated an academic or personal tutor with whom they can communicate via Skype, phone or email and staff are able to monitor a student's engagement with their programme of study via the VLE. The University is aware of the impact of VLE down time or access issues (which may be due to a student's geographical location) and has put in place contingency measures, such as the provision of course materials on alternative media, to provide continuity for students experiencing these difficulties. Library and Information Technology services are accessible online and the University's support services provide tailored support for distance learning students, for example the Careers Service offers telephone and email guidance to off-campus learners regarding career choices, study options, vacancy searches, applications, interviews, funding, and work experience, and a version of the Career Planning Module is also available online.

30 The interests of distance learners and the development of distance learning as a method of course delivery are represented through the E-Learning Sub-Committee which reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee. The University is planning to review the remit and membership of the E-Learning Sub-Committee to ensure that there is sufficient focus on enhancement of the distance learner experience.

Postgraduate research students

31 Enhancement of the postgraduate research student experience is overseen by the Postgraduate Research Degrees Sub-Committee which reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Research Committee.

32 The University's Code of Practice for Supervised Postgraduate Research has recently been revised and takes account of *Chapter B11: Research Degrees* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The University's Code of Practice is a comprehensive document which sets out to clarify University procedures and facilitate quality assurance and enhancement of the University's research degree provision.

33 The University stipulates that all postgraduate research students will have two supervisors, a main supervisor and a second supervisor. There is an approved exception to this which is an historical arrangement. All postgraduate research students are now expected to have two supervisors.

34 The University has a proactive approach to supporting the progression and development of postgraduate research students. All schools have thesis monitoring committees, consisting of at least two members of academic staff other than the student's supervisor, which provide an opportunity for the independent assessment of a student's progress and the quality of their research supervision. Students normally have to write a short report and give a 15 minute talk to their thesis monitoring committee every six months, and they value the role of the committee in 'keeping them on track'. Thesis monitoring committees also provide students with a forum to express any difficulties in the student-supervisor relationship and to discuss their development needs.

35 Postgraduate research students are expected to discuss their training and development needs with their supervisor and their thesis monitoring committee at least on an annual basis. Generic skills training for postgraduate research students is provided by Organisational and Professional Development and is aligned with the Researcher Development Framework (RDF). It comprises both compulsory and optional elements and provides a wide range of opportunities for postgraduate research students to develop the high level transferable skills necessary for successful professional career development. All research students are expected to undertake the equivalent of two weeks per year of activity that will contribute to their transferable skills set. Opportunities are also provided through schools and colleges for students to attend conferences and other external events. Postgraduate research students are very positive about the support provided by the thesis monitoring committees and the generic skills training delivered by Organisational and Professional Development.

36 Postgraduate research students who met the ELIR team described variability of practice in being offered formal training and support to teach and assess undergraduate students, with some students having received no formal training to undertake these activities. Postgraduate research students are eligible to undertake modules offered by the Library and Learning Centre (Educational Development), which can be used towards the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education. However, awareness of the available opportunities among the students who met the ELIR team was variable, and they indicated that participation relied on individual supervisors encouraging them to engage with the training. The University is asked to ensure that appropriate training and support is in place for all postgraduate students who are involved in teaching and assessment.

2.3 Engaging and supporting students in their learning

37 The University has an effective approach to engaging and supporting students in their learning.

Induction

38 The University's approach to induction, through its Welcome Week, is carefully designed to support students in their transition to higher education through a variety of social and other events, supported by tailored induction and orientation events at school and college level. The University also runs specific induction events for postgraduate and international students. This approach is reflected in the University's pre-enrolment support whereby applicants to the University are given access to the University's virtual learning environment (VLE), email system and student management system, which provides them with generic and subject-specific information and advice. Students who met the ELIR team commented positively on the effectiveness of their induction experience in helping them prepare for their programmes of study.

Academic and pastoral support

39 The Student Services Directorate provides a comprehensive range of advisory and pastoral support services including careers, health and wellbeing, international advice, peer connections, the nursery, a 'nightline' support service, accommodation, student advice, student funding, a student support worker, and a pastoral support officer. At the time of the current ELIR the proposed development of a one-stop shop, co-located with the students' union, to provide a central hub for student advice and guidance was at an early stage of development. Students commented that they find the services to be well signposted and accessible.

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.

41 Students confirmed that they are provided with module and programme handbooks through the University's VLE and found these to be useful. Mandatory, recommended and optional elements of the handbooks are described in the Student Handbook Policy. Responsibility for ensuring that accurate information is provided to students in the handbooks lies with the schools. During 2013-14 the University will be undertaking an audit of module handbooks to assist in a review of the Student Handbook Policy and the development of a handbook template. This is a positive development which should help to ensure the consistency of information provided to students across the University.

Learning environment

42 The Academic Skills Centre provides literacy and numeracy support for students. The Centre's Writing and Academic Support Programme covers a range of skills including academic reading, writing and research skills, critical thinking skills, English as a foreign language, examination techniques, independent learning skills, interpersonal skills, listening skills, numeracy, presentation skills, and revision skills. In addition, its 'Count Me In' programme provides help and support with mathematics and statistics. Students were positive about the support provided which they had found useful.

43 The University places a strong emphasis on its Library and Learning Centre (LLC) in supporting the student experience. The University maintains six library sites and has made recent investment in a number of these. Student satisfaction with library facilities is high, as evidenced by National Student Survey (NSS) scores and positive comments made by students who met the ELIR team. The LLC supports a range of online learning software including the virtual learning environment (VLE), online assessment tools and collaboration and documentation systems. Student feedback regarding the VLE was mixed; some students noted the variability of use by their tutors, difficulties in finding and accessing materials and problems with reliability. As noted above (see paragraph 29) the VLE is also key to supporting distance learners, and the University has put contingencies in place in relation to the reliability of the VLE.

Feedback to students on assessed work

44 Students who met the ELIR team commented that while schools each have a policy relating to turnaround times for providing feedback on assessed work, these are not consistently implemented in line with the normal expectation of three weeks (see paragraph 74).

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.

Student representation and feedback

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 to 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.

2.4 Approaches to promoting the development of graduate attributes, including employability

49 The University has an effective approach to promoting the development of graduate attributes which is communicated effectively to students.

50 Teaching provision at the University has a strong focus on the professions, with approximately half of students graduating with professionally accredited degrees. The percentage of the University's graduates in employment or further study has declined over the past five years, although the University outperforms the UK and Scottish averages. The University recognises this as a priority area and the University Strategy to 2017 includes employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship as one of the cross-cutting, enabling strategies, and the Learning and Teaching Strategy to 2017 details the importance of embedding graduate attributes into curricula.

51 Students are very positive about the Careers Service which provides support and advice on a range of employment and career related issues including: help with CV writing; finding placements and internships; volunteering through the Placement Base, which is a 'one-stop-shop' for work experience; and finding work through the Careers Service JobShop. Subject advisers located within the Careers Service provide an effective careers advisory service to each of the schools.

52 The University provides a range of employability initiatives including: postgraduate modules which contribute to the Scottish Internship Graduate Certificate (with a placement in Scotland) and the Global Internship Graduate Certificate (with a placement in India); the Dundee Graduate Skills Award, which provides recognition for extracurricular activities such as volunteering and student representation; employability modules; the Enterprise Gym, which helps students from all disciplines to develop their entrepreneurial skills; and the Greenhouse, a business pre-incubator facility for students and staff with ideas for business start-ups. The University is also planning to set up an employability, enterprise and entrepreneurship hub which will be a physical centre comprising the Careers Service, the Enterprise Gym and aspects of Research and Innovation Services.

53 Students who met the ELIR team commented positively about the range and relevance of the employability initiatives offered by the University.

2.5 Effectiveness of the approach to enhancing the student learning experience

54 The University has an effective approach to enhancing the student learning experience and students are very positive about their experience of the University. The University is successful in supporting a diverse student population with academic and professional services providing integrated support across individual services for all students, both pre and post enrolment. Feedback from students is particularly positive in relation to Disability Services, the Careers Service and the Library and Learning Centre.

3 Enhancement in learning and teaching

3.1 Approaches to identifying and sharing good practice

55 The University has in place a number of mechanisms for the identification and sharing of good practice including through key bodies such as the Quality Forum and the Learning and Teaching Committee. At school level, the annual module and programme enhancement reports provide evidence of effectiveness in this area and ensure that there is a focus on good practice at all levels of activity. The Library and Learning Centre (Educational Development) also plays a key role by providing a link between schools and colleges and ensuring that good practice is integrated into professional development programmes.

56 The University has a range of approaches to the dissemination of good practice including initiatives such as the 'Friday Fry-Up' a monthly lunchtime networking opportunity for staff to share ideas on effective teaching practice, and the *Highlighter* newsletter which includes a regular column on the institution's national Enhancement Theme activities and also features examples of effective or innovative academic practice from across the institution.

57 The University makes a range of learning and teaching awards, including awards for innovative teaching, inclusive practice, excellence in teaching and lifetime contribution to teaching, which present opportunities for sharing innovative learning and teaching practice. University award winners present their examples of good practice at the annual Discovery Day where the newest professors and award-winning teachers are invited to showcase and share excellence in teaching and research. The Inclusive Practice Award is open to individuals and teams from student and academic support services, as well as academic staff. A condition of this award is the demonstration of a commitment to disseminate the

practice within the relevant college or directorate and to the wider University community. Winners are also required to submit a report or case study for publication on the University's inclusive practice website.

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*.

3.2 Impact of the national Enhancement Themes and related activity

59 The national Enhancement Themes are used to support the institution's own strategic development, and ideas which have been developed in the context of the Developing and Supporting the Curriculum Theme have been embedded in the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy to 2017. Work in relation to the current Theme includes raising awareness of the Curriculum for Excellence across a variety of University groups, and considering the idea of the flexible curriculum in relation to Life Sciences and Engineering from the perspective of staff, students, the institution, and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

60 In line with sector practice, the University engages with the Enhancement Themes through an institutional team which includes representation from a wide range of disciplines. This is a deliberate strategy, designed to support impact at the subject level, and is an approach which worked well for the institution with previous national Enhancement Themes, for example Research-Teaching Linkages, where there was significant engagement with the Theme from the School of Life Sciences.

61 However, widespread engagement with the Themes across the University remains a challenge and, although staff are engaging with a variety of enhancement initiatives which have been informed by the Themes, they do not necessarily recognise these as such. There would be value in the University reflecting on the extent to which it would be desirable for staff to be aware of the link between the enhancement activity and the sector-wide approach to the Themes.

3.3 Engaging and supporting staff

62 The Library and Learning Centre (Educational Development) is responsible for academic staff development in approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. It provides a range of professional development opportunities, including the accredited online modules Learning and Teaching Online and Assessment Online, which can contribute to the Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (PGCert THE). The PGCert THE is accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and delivered by the School of Education, Social Work and Community Education. Newly appointed staff are required to take the Learning, Teaching and Assessment module of the PGCert THE and successful completion of the module is a condition of probation. Staff who had engaged with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment module commented that it was effective in providing support for their learning and teaching practice.

63 The Library and Learning Centre (Educational Development) also organises the 'inspirED' educational development programme which comprises a range of workshops and lunchtime meetings to support staff in learning and teaching and academic practice. Topics include designing flexible curricula, employability and graduate attributes, and giving effective feedback on assignments. The workshops provide continuing professional development opportunities for new and experienced academic staff, and facilitate networking and the sharing of good practice.

64 The Library and Learning Centre (Educational Development), in collaboration with the Policy, Governance and Legal Affairs (PGLA) Directorate, provides staff development sessions for supervisors of PhD students. The student's main supervisor must meet the University's criteria for accredited supervisor status which includes compulsory attendance at the training run by the Library and Learning Centre (Educational Development). New supervisors are also expected to attend training. Staff who met with the ELIR team confirmed the utility of the training provided which had included an overview of the University's new Code of Practice for Supervised Postgraduate Research.

65 Online equality and diversity training is available for all staff and includes an additional module for teaching staff which is completed as part of probation. The University's Human Resources Committee is responsible for monitoring completion rates and, although the University states that it is compulsory for all staff to undertake the training, at the time of the current ELIR only around 30 per cent of staff had done so. The University has now included on the proformas for annual module and programme quality enhancement reports a requirement to confirm that staff teaching on the module or programme have undertaken the equality and diversity training, and the University envisages that this will help to support increased participation in the training in future.

66 In some schools the monitoring of staff undertaking equality and diversity training is picked up through the Objective Setting and Review (OSAR) process. The OSAR process, which was introduced in 2010, is viewed positively by academic staff who commented on its value as a reflective process which allowed them to focus on key achievements, and on its clear link to the identification of professional development needs.

67 The University acknowledges that the development of a formal policy to reward teaching excellence in terms of promotion is challenging. However, it is positive that the Learning and Teaching Strategy to 2017 states that procedures for the 'reward and promotional recognition of excellence in teaching and supporting learning, including significant contributions to the curriculum and to professional and disciplinary standards, and for excellence in the management of programmes and teaching teams' will be in place for the 2014 promotions round.

3.4 Effectiveness of the approach to promoting good practice in learning and teaching

68 The University has an effective approach to promoting good practice in learning and teaching. There is an integrated approach to staff support and development, with clear linkages between induction, the Objective Setting and Review (OSAR) process, and the range of learning and development opportunities provided by the Library and Learning Centre (Educational Development) and Organisational and Professional Development.

69 The University has also been successful in ensuring that the design of its quality processes contributes to the enhancement of the student learning experience by, for example, including quality enhancement as a standard heading in templates for annual monitoring reporting and the external examiner system (see paragraphs 55 and 80).

The quality assurance processes, alongside the committee structures and college roles, also facilitate the deliberate and systematic sharing of good practice across the institution.

4 Academic standards

4.1 Approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards

70 The University has systematic processes in place for setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards.

71 A distinctive feature of the University is its highly devolved nature and at the local level committee structures vary to suit the different sizes and levels of complexity of the colleges. The University recognises the inherent risk of the devolved structure and mitigates this risk in a number of ways including through its committee structures and Quality Assurance Framework.

72 Each college has a head of learning and teaching and a head of quality enhancement/assurance who is responsible for oversight of University processes within the devolved schools. These postholders are members of the Quality Forum which reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee, and this provides University oversight of quality assurance and enhancement issues.

73 The University's Quality Assurance Framework is comprehensive and encourages self-reflection and quality enhancement. The quality assurance processes are aligned to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and support for their effective use is provided by the Director of Quality Assurance and the Library and Learning Centre (Educational Development).

4.2 Management of assessment

74 The University's assessment policy applies to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students and allows for local college interpretation. Although the University's assessment policy requires schools to ensure that appropriate and timely feedback is provided on students' assessed work, there is variability of practice in relation to feedback on assessment, particularly in relation to turnaround times.

75 There is also variability of policy and practice across colleges in relation to extensions to the submission dates for assessed work, varying from no extensions being permitted in one school to a process of locally-agreed email requests made directly with the relevant member of academic staff in another school. Where practices differ across colleges, such as extensions to the submission date for assessed work, these are detailed in student handbooks. Students who met the ELIR team were aware of differences in policy and practice across schools, and commented negatively about it.

76 The University accreditation of prior learning (APL) policy dates from 1997, although there are more recent policies on the accreditation of prior learning and the accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) operating in the schools. Again, there is variability of practice in relation to the accreditation of prior learning, with guidance in one school stating that double counting of credit will not be allowed, whereas the University offers a second master's degree scheme in which students who have already completed, or are due to complete, a taught postgraduate degree at the Centre for Energy, Petroleum and Mineral Law and Policy (CEPMLP) or the Centre for Water Law Policy and Science (CWLPS) may gain exemptions for a second taught postgraduate master's degree at CEPMLP or CWLPS. Credit of up to 50 per cent may be transferred into this second master's degree.

77 The University is encouraged to progress the planned review of its assessment policy, including the policy for the recognition of prior learning. It should ensure that, following the review, policy relating to exemptions granted for the award of second taught postgraduate master's degrees meets sector expectations.

4.3 Use of external reference points in managing academic standards

78 The University makes effective use of a range of reference points in managing its academic standards.

79 The University has mapped the Quality Assurance Framework to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education to ensure that the Framework continues to meet sector expectations. Validation documentation, annual reviews and periodic reviews demonstrate comprehensive and effective use of external reference points. All programmes are designed to meet the principles embodied in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

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.

4.4 Effectiveness of the arrangements for securing academic standards

81 The University has effective arrangements in place for securing academic standards. There is significant devolved responsibility for implementing University policies and procedures at the school and college level and the University's Quality Assurance Framework allows for variation in approaches between colleges. However, the University is asked to consider the extent to which variability of practice impacts on the student experience, particularly for students studying across colleges, and to ensure it has oversight of policy development and implementation across the colleges.

5 Self-evaluation and management of information

5.1 Key features of the institution's approach

82 The University's approach to self-evaluation and the management of information meets sector expectations including the Scottish Funding Council guidance and the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. The University uses a range of data sets to inform planning at various levels, including the National Student Survey, the International Student Barometer and the Higher Education Academy Postgraduate Research Experience Survey. Student support services use key data sets to inform resource allocation and academic schools use relevant data to inform quality assurance and enhancement processes. The University uses KPIs to monitor progress towards the achievement of strategic initiatives.

83 The University has devolved much of its management of information to colleges and schools with oversight through the Information Management Committee, which reports to the Senior Management Team. The Student Information Technology Services - Student

Management System (SITS-SMS) is managed by Student Services and provides all matriculation and assessment-related student data. The SITS-SMS database is integrated with the University's virtual learning environment (VLE) to allow easy access for students to VLE modules and course information. A comprehensive range of data sets is provided to schools to inform their self-evaluation. Progress has been made since the 2009 ELIR to provide more accessible and timely data sets to programme teams.

5.2 Commentary on the advance information set

84 The University provided a comprehensive advance information set (AIS) as well as additional information that allowed the ELIR team to develop a good understanding of the arrangements in place for quality assurance and enhancement. The AIS assured the team that the University's quality assurance framework is benchmarked against the UK Quality Code and other appropriate reference points. The AIS also confirmed that the University has an appropriate balance between quality assurance mechanisms and quality enhancement within its annual monitoring, validation and review processes.

5.3 Use of external reference points in self-evaluation

85 The University makes use of a wide range of external reference points to inform its self-evaluation processes. Monitoring and review processes at the programme and school level make reference to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), professional, regulatory and statutory body (PSRB) requirements, subject benchmark statements and the views of external examiners. A number of the University's support services are accredited by external agencies, for example the Careers Service has Matrix accreditation.

86 The University uses HESA data from other institutions to benchmark its performance, considers information published by ranking bodies to compare its performance to other universities, and uses the national Enhancement Themes to inform its strategic planning.

5.4 Management of public information

87 Effective arrangements are in place to ensure the accuracy of the information provided about undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Colleges and schools are responsible for the accuracy of public information, guided by the University's policy on records management. Records Management Services, under the direction of the Records Manager and the Information Compliance Officer, is responsible for the control of records and information management as well as compliance with information legislation.

88 Information for the key information sets (KIS) is provided by the Strategic Planning Office, working in partnership with Student Services. Information is collated centrally where possible and is checked for accuracy by the relevant academic units before it is submitted to HESA.

89 Prospective students are provided with information via Admissions and Student Recruitment Services (ASRS). The University's quality assurance procedures for making changes to programmes require engagement with ASRS to ensure that public information is accurate and up-to-date.

5.5 Effectiveness of the approach to self-evaluation and management of information

90 A strong culture of self-reflection and action-planning supports the University's enhancement processes. This is evident across colleges and support services. Deliberative structures including the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Quality Forum support a process of systematic self-evaluation by academic and professional services. The University has in place effective policies and procedures for managing public information.

6 Collaborative activity

6.1 Key features of the institution's strategic approach

91 The University has taken a cautious approach to collaborative activity and has only one formal collaborative partnership agreement which is with Ballyfermot College of Further Education in Dublin for the delivery of a Bachelor of Arts in Animation.

92 The Internationalisation Strategy to 2017 is in its early stages of being implemented and has four key aims: to build sustainable high-level international partnerships; to bring the world to Dundee; to take Dundee to the world; and to develop capacity and resource to support internationalisation. The initial task of the Internationalisation Committee has been to review the University's partnership activity in order to develop a greater understanding of the context and range of current provision.

93 The Director of Legal Services and the Director of Quality Assurance have to date provided tailored advice on the legal and quality assurance aspects of new collaborative proposals on a case-by-case basis, however the University intends to develop future collaborative activity within a more strategic framework. The Learning and Teaching Strategy to 2017 and the Internationalisation Strategy to 2017 both highlight the University's current strategic commitment to creating new and stronger international partnerships while recognising that a robust approach to the consideration of responsibilities, due diligence and risk registers is needed.

6.2 Securing academic standards of collaborative provision

94 The University has effective arrangements in place for securing the standards of its collaborative provision.

95 The University's policy statement on collaborative provision outlines expectations for all types of collaborative activity, stating that the University will only validate external provision which is equivalent to the University's own provision in terms of both standards and quality.

96 Collaborative provision is monitored through the annual monitoring and periodic review processes, and the external examiner system, to ensure a comparable student experience. External examiner reports for the BA in Animation indicate that the programme is subject to the same oversight as a programme delivered at the University and that academic standards are being monitored in line with the University's quality assurance systems.

6.3 Enhancing the student learning experience on collaborative programmes

97 Although the University has only one formal collaborative partnership, it recognises that all of its students should be given appropriate opportunities to engage with the student representation system and should have equivalent opportunities and support from the University, irrespective of where they are studying.

98 External examiner reports for the BA in Animation have highlighted opportunities for enhancement by, for example, encouraging research-informed practice and the use of student self-assessment. In addition, the revised procedures for the annual review of taught provision have a specific requirement that the effectiveness of collaborative arrangements is considered as part of the annual programme quality enhancement report.

6.4 Effectiveness of the approach to managing collaborative activity

99 The University has an effective approach to the management of its collaborative activity.

QAA642a - R3602 - March 14

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786