University of St Andrews
Updates to ELIR follow-up report

The ELIR 4 follow-up report, submitted by the University to QAA Scotland in February 2022, focused on actions taken in response to the four formal recommendations and 11 areas for enhancement identified by the ELIR review team.

This was complemented by a student friendly ELIR 4 follow-up report in the form of a 'QAA said, we did'. Produced by the Academic Policy Officer (Quality) and Academic Representation Co-ordinator in the Students' Association, this was distributed to students at the beginning of semester 1, Academic Year (AY) 2022/23.

This report provides an update on actions taken in response to the recommendations and areas for enhancement as of December 2022.

1. Recommendations

a. Oversight of postgraduate research students (PGRs) who teach

Recommendation: Develop more effective oversight of the training and support provided at school level to PGRs who teach. The University has put in place clear guidance regarding the mandatory generic teaching training provided to PGR students, but schools are responsible for overseeing teaching and marking activity, and students report a variable experience in terms of the provision of guidance, support and workload management.

PGRs who wish to teach must complete the mandatory courses provided by CEED as well as appropriate training and support throughout their time teaching provided by the Schools. They must first register on the Mandatory training for postgraduates who teach programme in the Personal Development Management System (PDMS). This allows participants to keep track of which of the five components that they have completed, and which are incomplete, and displays the dates of all upcoming sessions.

Every School has two staff members who have been granted access to the completion data in the programme (usually the DoT and a member of the admin team), so that the School can check whether a prospective PGR teacher has fully completed the mandatory training. In accordance with the Doctoral students who teach policy, it is the School's responsibility to check that mandatory training has been completed before a teaching contract is offered.

The Director of Teaching (DoT) induction process has been refreshed in AY 2022/23 and includes a series of "coffee with" sessions with key colleagues around the University, including CEED's Head of Educational Development and Head of Technology Enhanced Learning. That session enables the Head of Educational Development to explain the Doctoral students who teach policy and the specific support available for PGRs who teach, as well as support for teaching more generally. It also allows new DoTs to raise any concerns/queries they have. Every year CEED also offers a short briefing at a School committee meeting to outline the support for teaching available from CEED (although not all Schools take up the offer).

Training and support for PGRs who teach is now a key theme and standing agenda item for University-led reviews of learning and teaching (URLTs). Of the five reviews held in AY 2021/22, three Schools received a formal recommendation and one School an area for enhancement regarding School-based training and support for PGRs who teach. Progress is monitored by Academic Monitoring Group via actions plans and year-on updates, which are prepared by Schools in response to review recommendations. A report will be considered by the Academic Monitoring Group and Head of Educational Development at the end of semester 2, AY 2022/23. The report will provide an overview of: URLTs held in AYs 2021/22 and 2022/23; support and training in place for PGRs who teach in each School (as outlined in the Reflective Analysis and discussed on the review day); relevant recommendations and/or good practice; and progress updates. Regular feedback from students via the PGR academic forum and SSCCs will also inform enhancements in the area.

Post-covid, discussions are ongoing on how to share best practice in relation to School-based support and training for PGRs who teach. Last year the top priority for the Head of Educational Development was launching the brand-new Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP), and this year the focus is on getting the PGCAP accredited by AdvanceHE. By the end of semester 2 AY 2022/23, the accreditation application will be submitted, and focus can return to these activities.

The St Andrews PGCAP is relatively unusual in that PGRs who teach can complete the whole programme, so that provides a new avenue for PGRs to learn about excellent practice from across the University.

b. **Engagement with staff development**

Recommendation: Continue developing and implementing systems to monitor staff engagement with mandatory areas of training and support, such as academic induction. The University should also implement the system currently under development by Organisational and Staff Development Services (OSDS) to monitor the completion of all required training for staff, in particular PGR supervisor training.

All University employees are required to complete a suite of mandatory training to support the University in its efforts to mitigate institutional risks and comply with statutory and regulatory duties. The online training courses that make up the mandatory training suite are: Data protection (GDPR); Information Security Essentials; Diversity in the workplace; Unconscious bias; and Safeguarding and the Prevent Duty. To support the maximisation of training completion, OSDS provide Mandatory Training Completion reports to Heads of School and Directors of professional service units biannually, in June and December. Hiring managers and recruitment panellists are required to attend a 'Recruitment and selection' course, which is monitored by the Recruitment Team.

As noted in section 1a, PGRs who wish to teach must complete the mandatory courses provided by CEED.

There have been ongoing meetings between OSDS and the Associate Provost Education to finalise provisions for the mandatory PGR supervisor training. The Academic Staff Development Programme now offers two instances of the training for new PGR supervisors per semester instead of one, one online and one in person. The Moodle provisions for new PGR supervisors have been updated to include information on research data management and videos from the careers service on employability. There is now a separate Moodle page for PGR refresher training, with dedicated information on policy and guidance that may have changed since the initial new supervisor training.

The University's Postgraduate Research Committee (PGRC) agreed that, from 2023, the refresher training will comprise the Moodle resource (for policy guidance) plus one synchronous session organised either centrally or through a School's Director of Postgraduate Research (DoPGR). Monitoring will be carried out via an overall report on engagement and/or the completion of a new and improved quiz. The quiz will be added to the Moodle site to ensure that supervisors have read through the material.

A QlikView dashboard is in place to report on the completion of "PGR Supervisor training" and "PGR Supervisor Refresher training", which are mandatory for PGR supervisors. School-level training completion reports for all eligible persons are being distributed biannually to Heads of School and DoPGRs in December and June each year, commencing in January 2023.

An annual report on overall completion rates per School will be submitted to the University's Academic Monitoring Group to enable further follow-up where required. DoPGRs will work with OSDS to organise refresher training for colleagues who received their most recent training outwith the applicable refresher period for their funding bodies. The minimum refresher period is five years as per QAA Scotland.

OSDS has worked with the Proctor's Office and the DoPGRs to improve and enhance the centrally organised "PGR Supervisor training" for new supervisors. Work is also underway to enhance update training, in line with feedback from DoPGRs on areas where supervisors require more support and after reflection on the UKCGE's survey of supervisors. OSDS, the Provost's Office and PGRC will liaise on discussion of quality assurance mechanisms for refresher sessions delivered by Schools to meet internal and regulatory requirements.

c. **Student access to external examiner reports**

Recommendation: Ensure that all students have easy access to external examiner reports for their programme of study by the end of academic year 2020-21.

A mechanism for sharing External Examiner reports with students was implemented in AY 2020/21. However, the Quality Code remapping exercise in November 2021 informed us that not all schools are publishing their External Examiner reports and reports are not easily located by students.

An annual reminder to share reports with students is issued to schools via email by the Education Policy and Quality team. At the March 2022 meeting of the

Learning & Teaching Committee, the Associate Dean Education (Science) reminded schools to share their reports with students.

The Education Policy and Quality team are continuing to monitor the sharing of reports for AY 2021/22 and further reminders will be sent to those schools who have not shared their reports. To address the visibility of reports to students, the Education Policy and Quality team, in consultation with the Students' Association, will add a hyperlink to the central [Student Handbook](#) early in semester 2 of AY 2022/23. The hyperlink will lead to a webpage providing information on the role of an External Examiner and a link to External Examiner reports.

d. External examiner engagement in degree classifications

Recommendation: Implement, from AY 2020/21, the University's intended approach to sharing a final analysis of degree classification with external examiners and asking them to reflect on the distribution patterns when submitting their final reports.

Classification data, together with an explanatory letter, continues to be shared with External Examiners on an annual basis. External Examiners receive four years of data broken down into single and joint honours degrees for their own school. No issues have arisen from the sharing of this data and the process seems to be working well.

2. Areas for enhancement

a. More focused training for postgraduate representatives

Postgraduate (PG) representatives felt that the training provided by CEED and the Students' Association was more appropriate for undergraduates in terms of the information provided and the approaches to activities such as surveying student groups. The University may wish to consider providing more focused training for the PG representatives.

The appointment of a new Academic Representation Coordinator in the Students' Association led to a redesign of PG Representative training for AY 2022/23 based on PG representatives' feedback. PG Representatives were added to an Academic Representation MS Teams site and worked through a MS Sway training document. The training covered an overview of academic representation, the PG representative role, gathering student feedback, working with staff, and support and guidance. CEED was able to contribute to the resource and signpost to further skill development opportunities.

This online resource was complemented by an in-person session which again looked at the responsibilities of the role and provided the opportunity for a Q&A session. For those who couldn't attend there was an online check-in session which was recorded and made available. The MS Teams site has acted as an ongoing community hub for PG reps who can ask questions and communicate with their representative colleagues easily. There was high uptake and engagement with the suite of resources, and feedback showed that participants had found it valuable

(100% of respondents agreed that the online training had been useful, and 67% agreed that the in-person event had been useful).

b. Recruitment of sufficient numbers of counsellors

Students expressed concern about the University's plans for the expansion of student numbers in light of the existing challenges for the recruitment of sufficient numbers of counsellors.

In the past 13 weeks, Student Services has been in touch with 5,000 students, and recorded 20,000 contacts. Counselling is available as either 'one at a time' or 'ongoing'. There are also appointments for crisis response and de-escalation. An unintended consequence is that students feel they must be in crisis to get an immediate appointment and perceive referral to self-help while waiting for an appointment as being rejected.

Student Services has increased resource for more responsive, non-appointment-based services. They now have four staff in the wellbeing team each day who do not have appointments, but instead manage and triage incoming cases. They provide timely advice that often helps to signpost the student without the need for an appointment. Where an appointment is needed, they can provide advice on internal and external resources to help the student until the appointment date. This triage process means that all students in crisis can be seen immediately.

c. Institutional directive regarding the return-time for individual assessments

There is no institutional directive regarding the return-time for individual assessments, other than the guidance that: 'feedback should, whenever possible, be delivered in time for students to benefit from it in their next assignment'. Academic staff confirmed that, whilst there was no overarching policy specifying turnaround times, students were informed in advance of the return dates and that work was returned prior to submission of the next assignment.

The Associate Deans Education, Associate Provost Education and Assistant Vice Principal (AVP) (Dean of Learning and Teaching) & Provost consulted all schools on their approach to feedback then hosted a DoT lunch on the topic. It was noted that: feedback times may vary from 1-3 weeks depending on the size of the assessment and the number of students on the module; receiving teaching timetables sooner would help staff plan their time so that feedback could be returned in a timely manner; clear timely communication to students is crucial in cases where the feedback will be delayed and to explain the consequences of submitting work late in terms of the receipt of feedback; and student training and support offered at School-level and centrally via CEED on how to make the most of assessment feedback, should be reiterated.

Schools are regularly encouraged and supported in continuing to look for ways to reduce the volume of assessment and to consider efficient moderation of marking is an important linear step to speed feedback return times.

As a result of the consultation, it was agreed that a feedback reminder tool will be developed with the University's Module Management System (MMS) system to

remind markers when assessment is due to be returned. The MMS team presented potential approaches and identified the requirements of any proposed system at a subsequent DoT lunch. The team was tasked to use the feedback gathered to develop a proposal for the system, which would then be implemented. The AVP (Dean of Learning and Teaching) & Provost and Associate Dean Education (Science) discussed electronic marking solutions with the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) team. An electronic marketing tool, Gradescope is currently being piloted with the School of Mathematics and Statistics.

The Assessment Working Group has been updated on these activities at meetings.

d. **Associate Fellowship of the HEA**

PG tutors can obtain Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) through taking the two modules 'Introduction to University Teaching'. None of the PGR students met by the team, who engage in teaching, were aware of this route to recognition, which may reflect an area for further signposting.

The PGRs lack of awareness of this route is not surprising, since this option ended in 2017 when the University decided not to renew its subscription to the HEA, and therefore the HEA accreditation of the Introduction to University Teaching modules also ended. As an alternative, CEED introduced a [comprehensive programme of support](#) open to all staff who wish to make individual route applications for any category of Fellowship. Support is signposted via the University memos, the Education update, CEED social media, and other internal communication channels. About half of the applications received are from PGRs, and the University has a 100% success rate for individual route applications.

However, at the moment, only the Head of Educational Development (HED), a Senior Fellow, has the specialist expertise to review applications to offer feedback, which creates a bottleneck. An exciting development in semester 2 of AY 2022/23 is a major push to increase the number of Senior Fellows in the University, so that there will be a broader pool of staff who can run application workshops and provide feedback on draft applications. AdvanceHE will run a Senior Fellow application workshop on 22 March 2023; we will seek to have participants from each Faculty, permitting subject/affiliate-subject specific support for applications. We have also commissioned AdvanceHE to provide both written and verbal feedback on draft applications to this pool of applicants.

Around semester 1 of AY 2023/24, AdvanceHE will run two further workshops for us; one on how to mentor prospective applicants, and one on how to make Fellowship recognition judgements. This will enable us to launch the greatly enhanced support scheme by semester 2 next academic year. In addition, it will lay the groundwork for us to apply for an accredited CPD Framework at D1 & D2 from AdvanceHE in the next accreditation cycle. (In this cycle the focus is on working towards accreditation of the [Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice](#)).

e. Peer observation

Peer observation is a requirement for PGR students who teach. However, engagement by staff more generally is inconsistent across schools with no evidence of systematic monitoring. The team encourages the University to consider ways to encourage greater awareness and engagement with the scheme.

The University's Academic Staff Developer (ASD) is liaising with staff across different schools to scope opinions and uptake of the peer observation scheme in general. At a DoT lunch, the ASD highlighted the scheme's benefits and asked for feedback on all matters arising from a wider implementation of this across each school.

The ASD is currently compiling a paper for the Education Strategic Management Group (ESMG) outlining the importance of the scheme and asking for approval to begin implementing a more uniform approach to this across the university. Such changes may include creating a selection of templates that each school can use (selecting the one that is most relevant to their discipline), and consideration of a name change to represent the peer reflection element of a peer observation scheme.

In early 2023 the ASD will present this report with examples of ways in which certain schools currently run the scheme and will be improving the online resources so that they provide the most up to date information on the scheme for staff across the university.

Of the five URLTs held in AY 2021/22, one School received a formal recommendation to further enhance its teaching related support and mentorship, including exploring the implementation of a voluntary peer observation scheme.

f. Interaction between CEED, CHER and SALTI

The review team recognises the need to clarify the roles of, and interaction between CEED, the Centre for Higher Education Research (CHER) and the St Andrews Learning & Teaching Initiative (SALTI).

The St Andrews Learning and Teaching Initiative (SALTI) initially made good impact across the University but progress stalled during the pandemic. After extensive consultation on revising SALTI, it was felt that a name that more closely aligned with the aims of the groups involved, and which emphasised the collaborative nature of intended new group, was required. The St Andrews Community for Evidence-Led Practice in Education (CELPiE) evolved from these discussions. The name reflects the aim of bringing diverse groups together while identifying the overarching interests of the various groups.

Established in March 2022, CELPiE is a partnership initiative established by the Proctor's Office and CEED. CELPiE works with the Enhancement Theme Steering Group, CHER and OSDS to create a community of evidence-led practitioners and researchers within the University.

CELPiE's administrative functions are supported by a steering group composed of members of the Education and Student Experience Office and CEED. Colleagues from CHER, the Enhancement Themes and OSDS, as well as representatives for academic and professional service staff make up a CELPiE Expert Advisory Council. The Advisory Council is consulted on matters related to the core activities delivered by CELPiE. As CELPiE is a community, anyone is able to run an event under the CELPiE banner, or any other grouping can promote and showcase their events.

The St Andrews Learning and Teaching conference and funding calls coordinated by CELPiE will be collaborative between CELPiE, CHER and CEED. The community now consists of over 250 members and the online community of practice has become an area whereby advice is sought, good practice is discussed, HE practice debated and events advertised. The community has active members from CEED, CHER, Quality Monitoring, the Enhancement Themes and many more groups.

CELPiE held its first in-person event in October 2022, the CELPiE showcase. A wide range of short talks from the community on a range of topics were delivered. Speakers included academic staff, members of CHER, members of the Enhancement Theme, Professional Service staff and students. The event was delivered via a hybrid approach, allowing three external universities, two of which were overseas to engage with the event. Talks will be cropped into short videos that will become part of CELPiE's 'inspiration centre' an online resource aimed at supporting learning and teaching enhancement in the institute and beyond. Further in-person and online events are planned throughout the year. An exciting activity for the community that has recently begun is the development of a collaboration with the University of Bonn, as part of St Andrews strategic partnership with Bonn.

g. **Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQ) response rates**

The review team noted variability in the MEQ response rates.

As part of the MEQ review, the review team are exploring how response rates can be raised. For the Semester 1, AY 2022/23 cycle of MEQs, the Education Policy and Quality team made attempts to raise response rates. For example, distributing posters to Schools and professional service units such as the Library, displaying a digital notice in the Library, advertising opening/closing dates of MEQs to staff and students in the University's 'Wednesday memos', sending reminder emails to Schools, and School Presidents/Class reps added some text to the bottom of their emails. The impact of these measures will be considered at the January 2023 meeting of AMG.

h. **Mapping to the UK Quality Code**

Following the introduction of the new Quality Code, the University carried out a comprehensive mapping exercise. It intends to undertake such an exercise each year which will be monitored by the ESMG.

The Education Policy and Quality team carried out a re-mapping of policy and practice to the 12 Advice & Guidance sections of the Quality Code in November 2021. Outcomes including areas identified for enhancement were reported to ESMG and Academic Monitoring Group (AMG). The next remapping exercise will commence in January 2023. Minor enhancements were noted in six of the Quality Code sections and a significant number of actions were raised by the Students' Association in the Student Engagement section.

The University has been working closely with the Students' Association and many of the actions in this section have been completed or are in progress. For example, the Reimagining Representation project being led by the Academic Representation Coordinator is in progress, many suggested enhancements were incorporated into the annual URLT review, some of which have been completed and others are under review, and some of the actions have been incorporated into the working groups of the new Student Engagement Strategic Management Group (SESMG).

i. **Renewal of collaborative agreements**

There is ongoing work around the renewal of collaborative agreements and the framework to support them and ensuring the timely signing of memoranda of agreement.

The Global Office and Education Policy & Quality team are working with key individuals across the institution following the Stage-Five Agreement Renewal Review of the Sustainable Aquaculture programme to explore further enhancements based on the experience of conducting this activity. An additional stage-five review (of a long-established Philosophy partnership with Stirling University) was recently undertaken and provides further opportunity for reflection and development of the ways we review collaborative activity in the university.

Collaborative review timelines have also undergone consideration to ensure that recommendations to continue, revise, or withdraw from collaborations can be woven into Agreement renewal timelines effectively and ensure a continuous contractual relationship is in place. In addition, increased risk assessment and due diligence activity has been introduced to anticipate potential concerns during a partnership, as well as to focus on areas which are of greater concern than was hitherto the case, such as cyber security, research ethics, academic freedom, and export control. These increased measures preparatory to the initiation of a collaborative Agreement bolster existing practice and provide surety against problematic developments during the lifecycle of a relationship.

j. **Enhance the experience of students on collaborative programmes**

The University has a programme of work underway to enhance the experience of students on collaborative programmes, including the development of new websites, provision of information, an expansion to the joint programme with the College of William and Mary, and a fresh approach to transition between institutions and careers development.

The launch of academic transition resources and events for the BA International Honours cohort has been highly successful in ensuring good preparedness for

students moving between locations and giving them the means to understand different pedagogical approaches. The activities have also increased the cohort identity, and along with less formal provision, such as invitations to student interaction events in the Global Office, and opportunities to purchase joint programme clothing, give impetus to the creation of a culture of belonging.

More widely, increased activity within the Global Office arising from focused interns dovetails with a greater focus on management of communications, events and activities which can aid the creation of cohort identity and increase engagement with existing University-wide student-focused opportunities. A new Global Opportunities Representative in the Global Office, as well as increased resource devoted to communications means that there is greater capacity to improve the experience across a range of collaborative programmes and other student groups. A clearer communications strategy also allows for targeted interactions and more successful promotion.

k. **Remit and structure of Joint Committees**

The University is aware of the areas where further development [in terms of the oversight of collaborative provision] is required, for example the remit and structure of Joint Committees, and is taking appropriate action.

As partnership agreements are created, renewed or amended, the requirement for, and remit of joint committees is emphasised and highlighted. Existing good models, such as the annual joint committee within the validation programme with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland provide a good example for wider dissemination and allow us to point to the positive outcomes of this type of engagement.

Recent examples of development in the area include recommendations for amended reporting structures and membership of an existing joint committee within the St Andrews and Stirling Philosophy programme, the inclusion of a joint committee as a fundamental principle within the development of a new joint Masters degree with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the creation in 2020 of an institutional joint committee covering all Global PhD programmes and involving relevant colleagues from the Provost's Office, the Global Office and St Leonard's College which provides the same opportunity for reflective analysis and enhancement in terms of quality, student experience, and institutional process as do other joint committees.

December 2022