

ELIR 4 update: Actions taken in response to formal recommendations and areas for enhancement

Actions taken in response to formal recommendations identified by the ELIR review team	
Recommendation	Actions/updates
1. Develop more effective oversight of the training and support provided at school level to PGRs who teach.	<p>a. The DoT induction process was refreshed in 2022/23. During one of the “coffee with” sessions, the Head of Educational Development explains the Doctoral students who teach policy, the specific support available for PGRs who teach, and support for teaching more generally.</p> <p>b. Support for PGRs who teach was a standing agenda item for discussion at University-led reviews of learning and teaching (UTLTs) in 2021/22 and 2022/23. Recommendations arising from UTLTs are monitored by Academic Monitoring Group (AMG) via action plans and year-on updates.</p> <p>c. In March 2023, feedback from the PG Academic Convenor and PG Officer (Graduate Teaching Assistants) delivered a presentation to the Associate Provost Education and Head of Education Policy and quality on key issues related to support and training for PGRs who teach.</p> <p>d. In April 2023, DoTs were asked to provide a summary of the system in place in their School to: Advertise teaching opportunities to PGRs; select Tutors/Demonstrators and allocate teaching; provide School/module-specific training for PGRs; support PGRs while they are delivering teaching/ demonstrating; support PGRs in their marking/assessment/moderating duties; give PGRs access to their students’ feedback; and collect PGRs’ feedback on their experience as teachers at the end of the semester.</p> <p>e. Outcomes from points 1c, 1d and 1e were shared with AMG in April 2023. In July 2023, a proposal was presented to Education Strategic Management Group (ESMG) to make enhancements to the Doctoral students who teach policy. As of 2023/24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools confirm will with AMG at the start of each academic year the point of contact who has responsibility for teaching assistants. • The DoT or delegate will put in place an administrative process to ensure that an up-to-date list of teaching assistants is available at the beginning of every academic year to allow communication with all teaching assistants throughout the academic year. Schools are asked to ensure that all students in the list have completed the requisite training. • The DoT or delegate will facilitate an end of year meeting inviting all teaching assistants to comment on their teaching experience and on the support and development received in their teaching role.

	<p>Written comments from teaching assistants will also be invited. The DoT or delegate will produce a short report summarising comments from teaching assistants and the school's response for submission to AMG. The report will be received annually and presented AMG.</p> <p>f. At the DoT Start of Year Briefing in September 2023, DoTs noted that it would be helpful to have an overview of what is covered in the essential courses for PGRs who teach (delivered by the Centre for Educational Enhancement and Development, CEED) so that Schools can tailor their own provision to complement CEED's offer. This information was shared via email by CEED.</p>
<p>2. Continue to develop and implement systems to monitor staff engagement with mandatory areas of training and support, in particular PGR supervisor training.</p>	<p>a. A new QlikView dashboard was implemented in 2020/21 to capture staff numbers and engagement in mandatory training and support. (Mandatory training comprises the following online courses: 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, Organisational and Staff Development Services (OSDS) now provides biannual Mandatory Training Completion reports to Heads of School and Directors of professional service units.</p> <p>b. PGR supervisor training is categorised as essential training. In 2021/22, OSDS carried out an audit of all current PGR supervisors to identify who had not undertaken the new supervisor or refresher training and additional and enhanced training was organised. Each section of PGR supervisor training is now recorded separately and uploaded to Moodle. There has also been an increase in frequency of training for new supervisors (from two to nine times every academic year). A 'course completion tool' in Moodle enables PGR supervisors to confirm they have watched the recordings in full and they must also complete the Moodle quiz. An annual report on overall completion rates per school will be submitted to AMG. The University now has a dedicated Moodle course for the refresher training. To monitor participation further, those requiring refresher training now need to attend an additional synchronous workshop where attendance is noted.</p>
<p>3. Ensure that all students have easy access to external examiner reports for their programme of study by the end of 2020-21.</p>	<p>a. External Examiner reports are available to all students via Moodle. A new process was implemented for 2020/21 and students have access to reports from 2019/20 onwards.</p> <p>b. A Quality Code remapping exercise in 2021/22 revealed that not all schools were publishing their External Examiner reports and reports were not easily located by students. Schools receive an annual reminder to share reports with students and the Education Policy and Quality team monitors the sharing of reports and issues further reminders until all reports are published. All reports for 2021/22 were published. The central Student Handbook now includes a hyperlink, which takes students to a webpage providing information on the role of an External Examiner and a link to External Examiner reports.</p>

<p>4. Share a final analysis of degree classification with external examiners and ask them to reflect on the distribution patterns.</p>	<p>a. As of July 2021, External Examiners have sight of classification data covering a four-year period to allow them to identify any significant trends. A new question '<i>Do you have any comments on the classification data provided?</i>' was added to the report. Feedback received from external examiners on the classification data is reviewed via the annual reports. Any actions required, following this feedback, is considered and implemented if appropriate. As an example, at PGT level in 2021/22 no actions required follow up. The section provided an opportunity for externals to reflect if they wished on the pandemic mitigation measures which were generally agreed to have been appropriate and ended at the right time.</p> <p>b. As of 2020/21, classification data is also shared with students.</p>
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Action taken in response to areas for enhancement noted in the evaluative report	
Area for enhancement	Actions/updates
<p>1. More focused training for postgraduate (PG) representatives</p>	<p>a. The appointment of a new Academic Representation Coordinator in the Students' Association led to a redesign of PG representative training for 2022/23 based on feedback from PG representatives gathered in 2020/21. PG Representatives are added to an Academic Representation MS Teams site and work through a MS Sway training document. The training covers an overview of academic representation, the PG representative role, gathering student feedback, working with staff, and support and guidance.</p> <p>b. The online resource is complemented by an in-person session, which helps build a sense of community. It covers the responsibilities of the role and includes a Q&A session. An online check-in session is recorded for those unable to attend in person. The MS Teams site acts as an ongoing community hub for PG reps who can ask questions and communicate with their representative colleagues easily.</p> <p>c. There is high uptake and engagement with the suite of resources, and feedback showed that participants had found it valuable. (In 2021/22, 100% of respondents agreed that the online training had been useful, and 67% agreed that the in-person event had been useful). The Academic Representation Coordinator delivers, reviews and enhances the PGT and PGR specific training each year based on student participant feedback.</p>
<p>2. Recruitment of sufficient number of counsellors</p>	<p>a. Student Services are well-staffed and wait times are remarkably short compared to NHS services. Wait times are published for all services weekly on Facebook and Instagram to alleviate student concerns. The unit also continues to engage with students directly via several platforms to develop the service in accordance with student need. Counselling is available as 'one at a time' or 'ongoing'. There are also</p>

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.

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.

- b. 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. Students Services participated in a URLT in 2021/22. The unit was commended for its strong engagement with and response to the student voice and for offering alternatives to 1-1 support including psychoeducational groups. The review team recommended that the unit reflects on how student expectations are managed prior to entry and during their studies and explores possible routes to address the gap in NHS support.

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

a. An assessment workstream, which reports into ESMG, is reviewing all policies relating to assessment and feedback to ensure they are clear, consistent and represent best practice in the sector. The group will reflect on an institutional directive regarding the feedback return-time for individual assessments as part of this process and make recommendations for the amendment of policy as required.

b. In 2022/23, schools were consulted on their approach to feedback. Feedback from DoTs: 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.

c. As a result of the consultation, from September 2023 a feedback reminder tool in the University's Module Management System (MMS) will remind markers when assessment is due to be returned. Electronic marking solutions were also explored and Gradescope was piloted in the School of Mathematics and Statistics prior to the institution entering an initial one-year contract with Gradescope in January 2023. All schools have been advised of its availability for coursework and class tests. (It is not currently approved for use with examinations). Resources and workshops are being offered by the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) team.

	<p>d. Schools are regularly encouraged and supported in looking for ways to reduce the volume of assessment and to consider efficient moderation of marking as an important linear step to speed feedback return times.</p>
<p>4. Additional signposting to raise awareness amongst PG tutors of HEA accredited introduction to teaching modules.</p>	<p>a. HEA accreditation of the Introduction to University Teaching modules ended in 2017 following the University's decision not to renew its subscription to the HEA. New support for staff seeking Fellowship was introduced in 2018-19 via feedback on a full draft submission and covering the cost of a direct application to AdvanceHE.</p> <p>b. In 2021-2022, CEED launched a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP), which incorporated revised and expanded versions of the previous <i>Introduction to University Teaching</i> modules as the first two core modules. PGR teachers who meet the individual module pre-requisites can complete all four modules to be awarded the PGCAP during their doctoral studies. The PGCAP elective modules can also be taken by all teaching staff as "stand alone" professional development even for those not enrolled on the PGCAP.</p> <p>c. In July 2023, the University was awarded Advance HE accreditation for a new St Andrews Recognition Scheme (STARS) for Descriptors 1-3 (one of the first universities to be accredited against the Professional Standards Framework 2023). The University will run its own Recognition Panels for Associate Fellow, Fellow and Senior Fellow, with the aim of having 20 participants on the first scheme intake in 2023-24. Priority for places on the scheme will be given to PGCAP participants, and STARS has been designed to integrate closely with the PGCAP (e.g. the same Teaching Observation templates are used for both).</p> <p>d. The PGCAP and STARS are signposted to PGR teachers in the following ways: Emails to Schools with request to circulate, University memos, Education update, CEED social media and other internal communication channels (e.g. webpages). Whenever anyone expresses an interest in the PGCAP and STARA (e.g. via an email query), this is recorded, and they are then emailed directly before the next opportunity to enrol.</p>
<p>5. Greater staff awareness of/ engagement with the peer observation scheme.</p>	<p>a. The value of teaching observations is now highlighted at the New Staff Induction.</p> <p>b. In 2022/23, the University's Academic Staff Developer consulted with schools to scope opinions and uptake of the peer observation scheme. The scheme's benefits were highlighted at a DoT lunch and colleagues were asked for feedback on all matters arising from a wider implementation of this across each school. A paper will be presented to ESMG to support the implementation of a more uniform approach to peer observation across the university. This timeframe for this is now Semester 2, 2023/24. The existing peer observation webpage will be updated with additional good practice case studies and guidance.</p>

	<p>c. Peer observation was added to the key themes for exploration at URLTs in 2021/22 and 2022/23. Three of the eight schools noted that they offer a peer observation scheme. One school noted plans to introduce a voluntary peer-evaluation of teaching scheme. The URLT Reflective Analysis template was updated in 2022/23 to ensure greater reflection in this area. For 2023/24, Review Chairs have been asked to pay close attention to the commentary provided for this area and follow-up on the review day/make a recommendation where appropriate. A paper containing more detailed outcomes will be considered by AMG in September 2023.</p>
<p>6. Clarification of roles and interaction between CEED, CHER and SALTI.</p>	<p>a. The St Andrews Community for Evidence-Led Practice in Education (CELPiE) was launched in March 2022 replacing the St Andrews Learning and Teaching Initiative (SALTI). CELPiE works with the Enhancement Theme Steering Group, CHER and OSDS to create a community of evidence-led practitioners and researchers within the University.</p> <p>b. CELPiE provides a mechanism whereby diverse groups with interests in educational enhancement, pedagogy and educational research can come together to support one another and to share ideas. The individual responsibilities of CEED (Educational Enhancement and Development) and CHER (Higher Education Research) therefore remain unaltered, with CELPiE acting as a mechanism to enhance dialogue and interaction across the respective groups.</p> <p>c. 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 can run an event under the CELPiE banner, or any other grouping can promote and showcase their events.</p> <p>d. The St Andrews Learning and Teaching conference and funding calls coordinated by CELPiE are 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.</p>
<p>7. Variability in MEQ response rates across schools.</p>	<p>a. In consultation with colleagues in Professional Services, Schools, and the Director of Education (DoEd) in the Students’ Association, an MEQ guidance document for staff and students was produced and made available to staff and students. The document includes examples of how students can be encouraged to complete MEQs.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. MEQ response rates are now included in the Advance Information Set for URLTs and AMG reviews response rates at the end of each semester. A summary of findings from the URLTs held in 2021/22 and 2022/23 is being considered by AMG in September 2023. c. For the S1, 2022/23 MEQ cycle, attempts were made to raise response rates via: the distribution of posters to Schools and professional service units (e.g. the Library); displaying a digital notice in the Library; advertising MEQ opening/closing dates in the University’s ‘Wednesday memos’; sending reminder emails to Schools; and asking School Presidents/Class reps to add text to the bottom of their emails. Response rates remain low. d. The holistic review of MEQs is ongoing and response rates are being considered as part of this.
<p>8. Areas identified for further development via Quality Code mapping exercise (e.g. around assessment and appeals).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Quality team carried out a re-mapping of policy and practice to the Quality Code in 2021/22. Outcomes including areas identified for enhancement were reported to ESMG and AMG and are monitored by the Quality team. 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. b. The University has been working closely with the Students’ Association and the actions in the Student Engagement section have been completed or progress is ongoing. Some of the actions were incorporated into the working groups of the new Student Engagement Strategic Management Group (SESMG). c. The appeals process and policy undergo continuous review and enhancement. The Appeals policy has recently been updated to clarify existing process. Both the staff and student guidance for Academic adjustments for disabled students are currently being updated and the timeline for the review of the Academic adjustments for disabled students policy has been extended to allow for a substantive review. d. The latest remapping exercise was completed in summer 2023. Outcomes will be presented to ESMG and AMG in S1, 2023/4 and monitored by the Quality team.
<p>9. Work ongoing for the renewal of collaborative agreements and the framework to support them and ensuring the timely signing of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A process for the renewal of collaborative programmes is embedded following a successful trial in 2020/21. In S1, 2023/24, outcomes from Stage Five reviews held since 2020/21 will be considered collectively to further enhance the framework and learn from successes. b. Since 2022, collaborative review timelines have 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. c. 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

<p>memoranda of agreement.</p>	<p>preparatory to the initiation of a collaborative Agreement bolster existing practice and provide surety against problematic developments during the lifecycle of a relationship.</p> <p>d. More recently, the university has introduced additional focus on the UK government’s Trusted Research agenda, and partnerships contracts investigate needs in this area too, with directed support and advice given to academic Schools to guide them through necessary processes. This is the most recent example of a continuous improvement approach to due diligence mechanisms. Beyond the legislative, attention is also given to programme operations and streamlining of process for enhancement of student experience, which is reviewed and developed through input from students, reporting to AMG, and interaction across professional services and Schools led by the Global Office as reported under section 10 below.</p>
<p>10. Programme of work underway to enhance the student experience in collaborative programmes.</p>	<p>a. In 2021/22, two new five-credit modules were launched for students on the BA (International Honours) programme to consolidate the transition events currently in place for the programme. The resources and events were highly successful in ensuring good preparedness for students moving between locations and giving them the means to understand different pedagogical approaches. The activities 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.</p> <p>b. New University travel webpages, published in 2021/22, provide a comprehensive travel checklist for all students and staff travelling abroad, as well as comprehensive visa guidance, and facilitate the transition between institutions for all students on study abroad, work placement and collaborative programmes. The content of the visa guidance webpages is reviewed annually, and information provided is amended to incorporate student feedback and regulatory changes. A dedicated Travel and Events Co-ordinator provides more tailored and individual advice to mobile students than was previously the case, and a new travel tool captures the details of a student’s travel plan, allowing for interaction and support in emergent cases.</p> <p>c. The Global Office restructured its Student Intern positions to provide more co-ordinated support across all cohorts supported by the Global Office, including undergraduates and postgraduates on international programmes, as well as cohorts such as China Scholarship Council students and sanctuary scholars. The return of in-person activities has allowed for a more collaborative approach to student events, allowing students from different cohort to integrate and socialise. Additional work is underway to provide cohort or programme-type sessions designed to integrate students to their studies at St Andrews, to introduce them to the Global Office and to ensure a clear point of contact for in-programme assistance.</p> <p>d. 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</p>

increase engagement with existing University-wide student-focused opportunities. A new Global Opportunities Representative, 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. The Global Opportunities Representative role is now in its second year and supports events such as the Global Opportunities festival which showcases international opportunities for various student cohorts. In 2023/24, the role will also focus on the creation of clear roadmap of activities and events which can built upon each year.

- e. The University's joint MLitt in German and Comparative Literature with the University of Bonn is a good example of new developments in support for students involved in a programme which involves study in two locations dedicated to their transition between universities. In 2023/2024, events and communication will be designed to ensure a sense of cohort belonging, and to allow for contact with central support for any current or future issues. Following the lead established by transition activities which have recently been embedded into the programme pathway for our BA International Honours degree with William and Mary, this will in turn provide the model for similar approaches to student transitions in a new joint PGT degree with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to be launched for 2024 entry. Whilst student experience has been very positive on the Bonn programme as reflected by student feedback and a 100% retention rate to date, this enhancement is designed to provide a sense of belonging to each institution through the two years and will work alongside other mechanisms outlined across this document to ensure good programme operation and student experience.
- f. Global PhD activity has expanded significantly since 2017 and the inception of a framework concept, in which selected partner institutions work with St Andrews to create a programme to which students may apply, be recruited, and to which funding can be attached. Working with two key partners, at Bonn and Macquarie, we have established co-funding models for limited scholarships, and in doing so have enhanced programme co-operation. Regular communication is in place to allow for student cases to be quickly escalated and managed, and each partner meets with St Andrews online to consider programme enhancement throughout the cycle. At Macquarie this has resulted in a steering committee and regular meetings, as well as an online shared space through which student cases and enhancement projects are discussed. Due to the in-depth nature of the Bonn partnership, measures are discussed through other routine mechanisms and established channels. The mixed approach meets the needs of the individual relationship, and both are examples of successful partnership management. In 2023-2024, both programmes intend to undertake targeted work to better highlight mutual process requirements and provide channels for support to students and project supervisors.

<p>11. Further development in terms of the oversight of collaborative provision including the remit and structure of Joint Committees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Global Office staff webpages now include enhanced information about academic monitoring and Terms of Reference for Joint Committees. All new collaborative programmes will follow this model. Minor changes are being made to some existing Committees, though these are generally robust and fulfil the Terms of Reference requirements. b. A new role description for Academic Co-ordinators for collaborative programmes has been approved. Proposal and approval processes including workflows are published online, and relevant documentation to support programme proposal are regularly reviewed and updated. Approval is relevant to the programme type and involves decanal or curriculum approval group support. c. Academic Monitoring Group (Collaborations & Partnerships) meets once a semester to review collaborative provision and international programmes. d. 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. e. In 2020, the University established 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. The model is successful and allows the university to maintain oversight of all Global PhD programmes in a way which the joint committees for programmes at undergraduate or postgraduate taught level do at an individual level. The committee considers quality aspects, but also student experience, partnership relations, funding and scholarships, and recruitment. f. The remit and structure of Joint Committees is explored as part of the Stage five agreement renewal review for collaborative programmes.
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October 2023