



## **University of Strathclyde**

### **Follow-up Report to the Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)**

**July 2020**

#### **Preface**

One year after publication of their ELIR Outcome and Technical Reports, institutions are asked to submit a Follow-up Report to QAA Scotland. These reports are also submitted to the Scottish Funding Council. Follow-up Reports are written in the institution's own words and require to be endorsed by the institution's Governing Body prior to publication on the QAA website. Guidance on the content and structure is provided by QAA Scotland.

Institutions are asked to focus on the action they have taken since the review and to include an indication of the effectiveness of that action. ELIR reports highlight positive practice as well as areas for development, and institutions are encouraged to comment on key areas of activity relating to good practice that they have prioritised since the ELIR.

Follow-up Reports are discussed with institutions as part of the ELIR annual discussion meetings.

## 1. Context

- 1.1. The University of Strathclyde formally engaged with the QAA Enhancement-led Institutional Review 4 method through institutional visits during January and March 2019. The overarching judgement from the ELIR team noted that the University has effective arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. This judgement confirms the team's confidence that these arrangements are likely to continue to be effective in the future. Alongside this positive judgement, the University received the formal Outcome and Technical Reports from the ELIR team, which commended areas of positive practice and made recommendations on areas for development.
- 1.2. This external reflection on the effectiveness of our strategic approach to quality enhancement and assurance of the student experience provides helpful and welcome recognition of the strength of our systematic framework for the enhancement of education. It has informed reflection and action through the University's Senate, Executive Team and the wider leadership for Education at institutional, Faculty and School/Department/Service level. Senate has led the oversight and reporting of the outcomes of the ELIR process, with detailed monitoring undertaken through the University's Education Strategy Committee, convened by the Vice Principal, and its reporting committees (*Quality Assurance Committee, Learning Enhancement Committee, Strathclyde Online Learning Committee and the Student Experience Committee*). These groups, supported by and working in partnership with the faculties and student facing professional services, are responsible for building on the ELIR outcomes and driving education strategy to enhance the Strathclyde student experience.
- 1.3. A refreshed [University Strategic Plan<sup>1</sup>](#), covering the period 2020-2025, was launched in February 2020. This Strategic Plan outlines our aims for the next five years and how we will use our distinctive position as a leading international technological university to be innovative in delivering our ambitions – questioning, challenging and developing our approaches, operations and processes to ensure that we are effective in all that we do. Coupled with our relentless commitment to continue pursuing a globally socially progressive vision, these two overarching characteristics define the authentic passion we have for making definite, high value contributions; truly 'useful learning' in the 21st century.
- 1.4. At the time of preparing this report, the University has been responding to the impacts of the global Coronavirus pandemic. This has had immediate implications for the implementation of some aspects of the formal outcomes, noted in paragraphs [3.3.3, 3.4.5, 4.5.6, 5.3] and will have implications into the future, as yet to be determined. It is noted here for additional context as to how actions have been addressed and progressed within each outcome.

## 2. Embedding the outcome: follow-up preparation

- 2.1. The University's Education Strategy Committee, reporting to Senate, oversees the implementation of the University's education strategy. Our strategic activity is delivered through a combination of frameworks, working groups and targeted institutional projects, all of which are driven and managed through our education committees. Our ELIR 4 follow-up action plan is embedded within this and regularly monitored and scrutinised through Education Strategy Committee. Key messages from the ELIR Outcome and Technical Reports are embedded within our frameworks, working groups and institutional priority projects.
- 2.2. Supplementing this approach, the main Education Committees, working groups and sub-committees continue to provide annual reflective reports, in addition to reporting formal updates to Senate and

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/1newwebsite/documents/Strategic\\_Plan\\_2025.pdf](https://www.strath.ac.uk/media/1newwebsite/documents/Strategic_Plan_2025.pdf)

quarterly business reports to Court. The annual reports include reflection upon highlights, successes and areas for further discussion and/or focus in the forthcoming session and facilitate broader engagement in the business of the committees, at Senate and Court. This engagement extends across the institution through consideration of the content of the annual reports at Faculty Academic Committees and supporting enhancement fora, facilitating deeper connections between University priorities and faculty-level business. A final meeting of Education Strategy Committee is scheduled in the early summer to provide an opportunity for reflecting across all committees and sub/working groups on progress and headline priorities for the coming academic session.

- 2.3. The University's student representation structure has facilitated student engagement in both high-level reflection on priorities, processes for ongoing monitoring and direct engagement in specific projects and activities arising from the Outcome Report. This has been achieved through: University of Strathclyde Student Association (StrathUnion) active participation by sabbatical officers in formal committees of the University; representation on working groups; and continued engagement of student interns on enhancement projects monitored through the committees, including standing items on StrathUnion-led enhancement projects. In 2019-20, Senate welcomed the increase in student membership, with 10% of Senate's membership now formed of representatives from the student body. Supplementing this are regular meetings between the StrathUnion executive, senior management of the Student Experience and Education Enhancement Directorates and Deputy Associate Principals; regular meetings between StrathUnion and the Principal and Vice Principal; and at a disciplinary level, regular Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs). The Student Experience Committee, chaired by the President of StrathUnion and attended by sabbatical officers from the student executive, in addition to student faculty representatives has played an active role in contributing to and informing the direction of follow on actions from ELIR 4.
- 2.4. The first draft of the *Follow-up Report* was prepared by colleagues in Education Enhancement for consultation with the University Vice Principal, DAPs, staff and student membership of the University's Education Strategy Committee. Formal consideration of this report was sought through submission to the University Senate (3 June 2020), prior to endorsement by University Court (17 June 2020).

### 3. *Actions and reflections on Recommendations*

- 3.1. The Outcome Report indicated the following recommendations which have been incorporated into the University's education priorities for 2019-20:
- 3.2. ***Training for postgraduate research students who support teaching***
- 3.2.1 *Ensure that all postgraduate research students receive formal training before commencing teaching or assessing others. These arrangements, along with the facility to monitor attendance at training, should be introduced by the start of next academic session.*
- 3.2.2 The University responded swiftly to address this recommendation and established two short-life working groups to review policy and processes for PGR students who support teaching under two workstreams (i) Policies and Systems and (ii) Training and Development. This was informed by the outputs of a survey conducted by StrathUnion of PGR students to gather information around the teaching activities they undertake.
- 3.2.3 The Policies and Systems working group was set up to revisit PGR teaching policies and propose any required changes to ensure they are fit for purpose as well as ensure that the policy is followed by all Departments and Schools. It considered departmental/school systems for the recognition of PGR teaching activities, including what acknowledgement there is of contact time vs. marking time. The working group confirmed to ESC in October 2019 that revised systems were in place for the start of AY 19/20.

- 3.2.4 This prompt solution was welcomed by PGR students and commended by the President of StrathUnion when reported at a subsequent Education Strategy Committee meeting. StrathUnion planned to conduct another survey of PGR students towards the end of AY 2019-20 to assess the impact of the revised policy guidelines developed by the working group and this was due to be carried out in April / May 2020.
- 3.2.5 The training and development working group was comprised of senior Faculty representatives (Vice Deans Academic), members of the University's Researcher Development team and Organisational and Staff Development Unit, the Chair of the student-led Doctoral Researchers Group and the Vice President Education from StrathUnion. The Group reviewed existing training provision across Departments, Schools and institutional level support teams, alongside the mechanism in place to ensure that PGR students were adequately prepared to undertake support for teaching responsibilities. Revised policy and guidance has been prepared, aligned with external expectations from the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the QAA Scotland *Statement of Expectations for the Support of Postgraduates who Teach*. to address responsibilities, training and monitoring.
- 3.2.6 In 2019-20, the University appointed a new Associate Principal for Entrepreneurship and Education, incorporating strategic leadership for the enhancement of the PGR student experience. The Associate Principal is also the Director of the Strathclyde Doctoral School, leading on PGR enhancement activities, reporting in to the Education Strategy Committee. This embedding of strategic institutional leadership for our PGR population, provides a further mechanism for ensuring that our strengthened policy, procedure and training opportunities deliver the anticipated enhancements to the PGR student experience. At the time of writing, a new online course to support the training and development of PGR students who support teaching is in preparation for the start of the new academic session, and will be launched in Summer 2020.

### 3.3. **Student Engagement with external examiners**

- 3.3.1 *Share information with students about the work of external examiners including their role and the recommendations and commendations they make relating to programmes.*
- 3.3.2 The University took the opportunity ahead of AY 2019-20 to update its *Procedure and Guidelines for External Examiners of Taught Programmes*. These have been updated to reflect (i) changes to internal finance systems (for the processing of annual fees and expenses), (ii) the introduction of legislation around data protection, (iii) sectoral changes to the UK Quality Code for HE and the creation of Advance HE and (iv) revisions to related University policies and procedures. The revisions included: outlining the roles and responsibilities of all groups involved in the management of the External Examining processes; updating references to the revised suite of Assessment and Feedback Policies and Procedures applicable from AY 2019-20; updating the submission and departmental response dates for annual reporting; highlighting the QAA's Concerns Scheme; guidance for notice periods for resignation; and an updated GDPR statement. These were approved for implementation within 2019/20.
- 3.3.3 The *Procedure and Guidelines for External Examiners of Taught Programmes* states that, "Examiners' reports will be made available in full to students as appropriate, with the sole exception of any confidential report made directly and separately to the Principal, reflecting the general principles of engaging students in quality management processes. This will be facilitated via existing Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) mechanisms". In order to monitor compliance, the Faculty Annual Report template has been updated to include a new section under Quality Assurance Arrangements requiring Faculties to confirm receipt of all expected external examiner

reports for the corresponding academic year; confirmation of how external examiner reports are made available to students; and ensuring full responses for matters raised by external examiners are recorded. Faculties have confirmed that summaries of external examiner reports are provided to students through SSLCs, and Faculty Academic Committees which provide an opportunity for students to discuss the comments and the process with staff. With regards to wider engagement of students with this process, and in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic, Faculties are running Boards of Examiners online, and making arrangements for External Examiners to meet with students via web conference.

- 3.3.4 A new appointment was made in 2019-20 to the Quality Enhancement and Assurance Team within the Directorate of Education Enhancement. This role incorporates responsibilities to oversee and co-ordinate our external examining activity, providing further opportunity to maximise the effectiveness and impact of this activity.

#### 3.4. **Review of professional services**

- 3.4.1 *Pursue the University's intention to implement a process for reviewing the professional services which contribute to the student experience. The University is strongly encouraged to make demonstrable progress within the next academic year.*
- 3.4.2 At the time of the review, the intention to implement a process for reviewing the professional services which contribute to the student experience was on the horizon as part of our Internal Review strategy and a draft of our intended approach was shared with the ELIR Panel. In order to take this forward the University undertook analysis of approaches in the sector and found that review of student-facing services is undertaken in two ways; service-led review and thematic review. Options were consulted on with our stakeholder groups and it was confirmed at Education Strategy Committee (ESC) in September 2019 that the thematic review approach would be of most value to us, as it would allow us to identify service connectivity, potential gaps and opportunities for enhancement. ESC oversees the Thematic Review process and approves the selection of themes. Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) receives reports and considers outcomes in the context of its responsibilities for the oversight of Institution Led Review processes of learning and teaching, reporting findings to ESC. The Policy & Procedure were endorsed by QAC, Student Experience Committee and ESC in December 2019 with final approval granted by Senate in January 2020.
- 3.4.3 Thematic Review at Strathclyde has been designed to be a quality enhancement and assurance process that is holistic and forward-looking. Approaches within the institution are reviewed, and best practice and emerging initiatives across the sector inform discussions. The purpose is to evaluate the provision for students around themes in order to ensure the University is providing high-quality support. It is also intended as a means of engaging with colleagues, identifying connectivity across the institution and potential opportunities for further enhancement and alignment of provision.
- 3.4.4 QAC agreed that the Thematic Review process would be piloted in AY2019-20. Workshops with Heads of Service helped inform the selection of potential topics for Thematic Review and student representatives were consulted through Student Experience Committee. The theme of 'Student Mental Health' was nominated for the pilot and approved by Education Strategy Committee. Institutional engagement with the Thematic Review process has been run by Education Enhancement and Disability and Wellbeing Services. Consultation workshops with stakeholder groups to gather evidence for the Reflective Analysis were undertaken in February 2020. The information gathered has contributed to the drafting of a Reflective Analysis, which, in addition to supplementary evidence, will form a narrative for the review panel to gain insight into our current provision on Student Mental Health.

- 3.4.5 Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the University was planning for submission of the Reflective Analysis to be completed on 31 March 2020 and the Thematic Review panel meetings to be undertaken on 26-27 May 2020. In response to Covid-19, the University has prioritised the transition of essential services (including counselling services) to online and distance formats. This has had a fundamental impact on staff availability to engage with Thematic Review preparations. The staff and externals that would be members of the review panel are also heavily engaged in their own University's or Department's Covid-19 mitigation and would be unlikely to be able to dedicate the necessary time to preparing for the review. The students who would have contributed at the review event (a panel member and those to be involved in meetings) are in the process of navigating alternative assessments and adjusting to the social distancing measures that have been put in place by the Government.
- 3.4.6 Unfortunately, these factors have impacted the original Thematic Review pilot timeline. Reflecting on this situation and recognising this is a pilot year, it was concluded that it would not be possible to have the same quality of engagement and dialogue, were the University to proceed with the review within the original timescales. It would also make the sourcing and involvement of students in the review meetings problematic and that would render the pilot an inaccurate reflection of what Thematic Review is intended to be. Collectively these factors meant that, with regret and following consultation, the University postponed the pilot. It was agreed that the work already undertaken to consult on and draft the Reflective Analysis will still be of value, and the final submission to the review panel will consist of this evidence, plus an addendum outlining developments since the postponement to provide context for the reviewers. This decision was formally approved by QAC on 22 April 2020, and reported to Education Strategy Committee in May 2020. A revised review date for 2020/21, remains under consideration, and will be reported to the QAA.

### 3.5. ***Institutional oversight of collaborative provision***

- 3.5.1 *Reflect on the information about collaborative programmes and student numbers made available to the Collaborative Provision Agreements Sub-group in order to support its institution-level oversight of collaborative activity.*
- The University recognised the opportunity for further connectivity between the Collaborative Provision Agreements (CPA) Sub-group and the data sources on collaborative programmes and student numbers. The CPA Sub-group considered a number of interventions to address this recommendation including the implementation of a mechanisms for the Sub-group to review: current student numbers on active collaborations against predicted numbers, with narrative from the Faculties; agreements with no current student cohort, with Faculty evidence on currency of curriculum matching (i.e. review date and mapping); and the addition of an annual meeting of the CPA Sub-group to the existing committee schedule of business to monitor student numbers and performance, informed by: numbers and narrative from Faculties; summary statement from Quality Assurance Committee, confirming detailed agreements reviewed in the QA review of collaborative programmes. These will be implemented in the 2020/21 committee cycle.
- 3.5.2 QAC is revising the review template to focus purely on the quality assurance aspects of the agreement including the student experience. QAC will submit a summary report on the outcome of this review to CPA Sub-Group noting any matters which require consideration in respect of partnership renewals and terms of the agreement. Faculties will be responsible for implementing any recommendations which arise in respect of the learning, teaching, assessment and student experience (with appropriate support from PS, if wider issues emerge, relating to the student experience across a number of programmes).

- 3.5.3 The measures above are being implemented to support the provision of student numbers and greater detail on the quality of the experience to the CPA Sub-Group. The CPA Sub-Group continues to report into Senate Business Committee and performs an effective role in ensuring that the appropriate approvals are in place for all collaborative arrangements. Furthermore, in 2019-20 the CPA Sub-Group undertook oversight for the implementation of institution-level Study Abroad agreements, providing the opportunity for further reflection, harmonisation and consistency of the student experience across the University, with partner institutions. All CPA Sub-Group activity is scrutinised through the Senate Business Committee with final approvals made through Senate.

#### 4. *Commendations: embedding areas of positive practice*

- 4.1. The Outcome Report identified seven commendations, which we continue to build upon and use to inform ongoing enhancement priorities and projects.

##### 4.2. ***Institutional approach to articulating and implementing vision***

- 4.2.1 *The University has a clearly articulated vision which is implemented in a coordinated manner enabling it to enhance the curriculum and the wider student experience.*
- 4.2.2 The University reviewed its institutional strategy and launched the refreshed Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 in 2019-20 [1.3]. The new Strategic Plan builds on our collective achievements over recent years in realising our vision of Strathclyde as a leading international technological university. The key themes underpin strategic planning processes at all levels: institutional; faculty/department/school/service; and individual. This cohesion in core message permeates all our activities (operational and strategic) and has facilitated the focusing of efforts and resource on key institutional priorities. Staff engagement with and commitment to our vision and strategy is further reinforced through our University values and the Strathclyde Medal Awards in recognition of staff who consistently demonstrate the University's values in their work and relationships.

##### 4.3. ***Benefit to learning and teaching of institutional links with industry***

- 4.3.1 *The University has well-established links with industry which impact positively on curriculum development, pedagogy and the student learning experience. Related to this, the implementation of the Graduate Apprenticeship and Degree Apprenticeship schemes has informed the enhancement of the University's other provision.*
- 4.3.2 Since launching our first Graduate Apprenticeship in 2017, we have broadened our portfolio of programmes to offer both undergraduate and masters qualifications across various disciplines. We now offer five Graduate Apprenticeship and two Degree Apprenticeship programmes, with further programmes planned for commencement in 2020-21.
- 4.3.3 Our campus-based undergraduate programmes are benefiting from the learning and experience drawn from our Graduate Apprenticeship programmes, with online content and activities now being adapted for delivery in campus-based provision. The ongoing partnerships with industry through our GA and DA activities are leading to extended engagement across campus-based activity including further opportunities for projects and employer engagement in campus provision.
- 4.3.4 In 2019-20, the University extended its engagement with alternative modes of provision through the delivery of short upskilling courses, underpinned by the SFC Upskilling Funds. These courses provide an additional mechanism through which the University is engaging with industry, business and the public sector to provide effective learning opportunities to a diverse student population.
- 4.3.5 Our Strathclyde Online Learning (SOL) Committee, which reports into Education Strategy Committee, continues to ensure the quality of provision, highlight effective practice and opportunities for development. SOL, and the reporting Graduate and Degree Apprenticeships Steering Group, provides opportunities for identification of further opportunities to expand industrial engagement, national partnerships and potential international partnerships, complementing our existing collaborative education portfolio.

#### **4.4. Working in partnership with students**

- 4.4.1 *The University's approach to student partnership has continued to evolve since the previous ELIR. Student partnership is evident in a range of ways including in the work of the student-led Student Experience Committee, engagement with substantial campus infrastructure projects and in the opportunities provided by the University's use of student interns.*
- 4.4.2 We are proud that student partnership plays a vital role in all of our major projects and all activities focused on enhancing the student experience across our diverse student population. The University ethos is underpinned by the belief that students are partners in improving the learning experience, engaging in decision-making and in enacting change. This partnership is manifested through both formal and informal means to ensure that the student voice informs all our developments and education structures: within academic governance; throughout quality assurance processes; and embedded within our enhancement projects, with a commitment to the incorporation of student interns as equal contributors.
- 4.4.3 The Student Experience Committee continues to provide an effective mechanism for engaging on key matters of importance to students, across the student body. This has facilitated the approval of key decisions at institutional level, such as the removal of graduation fees, as well as championing enhancement projects such as the *Student Transitions: Leadership and Retention* project, to provide support, development, training, and opportunities for under-represented groups, societies and liberation groups. The Committee has also played an influencing role in the development of University policy including enhanced mechanisms to protect Wednesday afternoons for extra-curricular, sporting and wellbeing activities, and the provision of emergency short-term accommodation for vulnerable students.
- 4.4.4 The SEC has provided an effective mechanism to progress the first student-led digital transformation project, funded through the University's Digital Campus Sub Committee. This project will provide a unified system for the management of student class reps across the University and Strath Union, using Myplace, the Strathclyde App, and the Corporate Integration Hub (StrathReps project). It will extend and enhance existing University systems and processes, harnessing the capabilities of University services for the sharing of information between systems, to achieve consistency in the management of StrathReps for both the University and Strath Union.
- 4.4.5 Alongside this, members of Strathclyde Students' Union Executive Team are full members of education related University committees, such as Education Strategy Committee, Learning Enhancement Committee, Quality Assurance Committee and the Strathclyde Online Learning Committee. They have full member status in both University Senate and University Court, attending associated strategic planning events. Additionally, the Strathclyde Students' Union President and Vice President Education have direct access to the Principal and Vice-Principal with whom they meet regularly throughout the year.
- 4.4.6 Our approach to working in partnership with students was approved and endorsed by the StrathUnion executive through our Student Partnership Agreement, underpinning our commitment and belief that students and staff have equally vital roles and responsibilities in educational enhancement and ensuring an outstanding learning experience for all.

#### **4.5. Availability and use of data to inform decision-making**

- 4.5.1 *The University makes extensive suites of data available to academic and professional services staff which are widely and actively used to inform evaluation and decision-making.*
- 4.5.2 Our approach to decision making is informed by reflection, self-evaluation, action and monitoring, which is enabled by consistent use of data across the different levels of the organisation. In recent years, the University of Strathclyde has invested in various data driven, evidence based and technology-based projects, which are mapped to our Strategic objective to provide an outstanding student experience.
- 4.5.3 The Surveys and Metrics Working Group continues to play a key role in examining and reflecting on key surveys, internal and external, to identify areas for cross-institution action and reflection, for



onward reporting to Education Strategy Committee. The Group is informed by sector analysis, external metrics and key trends which help contextualise the University's approach and focus on the effectiveness of our support for the student experience.

- 4.5.4 Exploration of the effective use of student survey data has increased awareness of student feedback themes and contributed to the phased implementation of our institutional system for module evaluations in AY2019-20. The SMWG receives reports on the progress of the University's Student Module Evaluation project, informing the decisions on consultation, implementation and emerging policy.
- 4.5.5 The University is continuing the development of the Learner Experience Framework, a measure of tracking Strathclyde's distinctive learner journey leading to positive graduate destinations, which is providing valuable insights to course design. This will help inform the development of a renewed institutional strategy for employability, which was initiated in 2019-20.
- 4.5.6 In parallel to these developments, learning analytics continues to be piloted across all four faculties, capturing evidence of impact on learning, teaching and student success. While recruitment challenges placed a pause on the progress of an institutional project to consolidate the early pilot work within institutional systems, this resumed towards the latter part of 2019-20. The Covid-19 pandemic will have implications for how this work is progressed, with a focus on making effective use of data to support our mitigations and actions to prepare for the forthcoming academic session.

#### **4.6. Approach to digital education**

- 4.6.1 *The collaborative approach adopted by the Strathclyde Online Learning Committee towards the development and delivery of online courses, has transformed the way in which expertise and resources are shared across the University. As a result, the University's use of digital technologies and online resources has acted as a catalyst for enhancement across its portfolio of provision.*
- 4.6.2 Our Strathclyde Online Learning portfolio has continued to expand throughout 2019-20. The SOL Committee introduced enhanced processes for quality assurance of online course and class development, including light-touch peer review, to maximise the effectiveness of online pedagogies and quality of student learning experience. The University invested in the development of three new studio spaces to support the expansion of digital media production. An effective model of cross-institution skills, resources and knowledge sharing has been implemented to ensure we make most effective use of our resources in this area.
- 4.6.3 Additional projects to support the continued expansion in the use of technologies for learning and teaching have been resourced by the University's Digital Campus Sub Committee. These include: an online proctoring pilot to support online assessment; and a parallel installation of our institutional VLE to support industry-facing and corporate education. The University's Electronic Management of Assessment project successfully concluded in 2019-20, harmonising the marks return process through the institutional VLE to the corporate student records system. This project now provides the baseline for the continuing enhancement of online assessment processes through the consistent and systematic presentation of assessment data.
- 4.6.4 Throughout 2019-20, all Faculties were involved in the development and delivery of a 20-credit cross-institutional online learning elective module which launched in January 2020, providing a unique opportunity for multidisciplinary, collaborative learning and teaching available to all undergraduate students across all four faculties. Content is focused on specific UN Sustainable Development Goals and further similarly-focused modules will be developed in the future.

#### **4.7. Alignment of staff development with institutional strategy**

- 4.7.1 *The University's staff development opportunities are aligned to the institution's strategic ambitions and to supporting staff in delivering institutional strategy, particularly in the areas of digital education.*
- 4.7.2 The University continues to maintain its strong alignment between institutional strategic ambitions for education and support provided for staff in delivering this strategy. The University's Learning

Enhancement Committee has oversight of academic staff development for the enhancement of learning and teaching and receives regular reports from the key professional services that provide this support and Faculty reports on local enhancement developments. Professional Services teams in the Directorate of Education Enhancement and the Organisational and Staff Development Unit within the Human Resources Directorate, collaborate to provide a range of support for digital education covering online & blended course development, 'demystification' sessions focused on School/Department upskilling and the STEP:TECH programme to bring together staff to share their own experiences, learn and be inspired about technology-enhanced teaching.

- 4.7.3 A focus within 2019-20 has been the rollout of staff support tailored to underpin the implementation of the University's new Assessment and Feedback Policy. This has incorporated: practical 'at a glance' guides and infographics; online marking and feedback guidance and videos; assessment design; coordinating assessment at programme level; preparing students for assessment; and using technology to support assessment. Aligned to this, the University has implemented a new IT solution for a University-wide marks return process, embedded within the University VLE, Myplace. The rollout of this system has been strengthened by online support, tailored department/school demonstrations and training sessions supporting the implementation.
- 4.7.4 Over 2019-20, a renewed Leadership in Learning and Teaching Network provides a further mechanism for supporting current, experienced, and emerging leaders within a learning and teaching context. The network is led by the Professor of Learning and Teaching, and convenor of two committees/working groups reporting in to Education Strategy Committee (Strathclyde Online Learning Committee/Careers and Employability Working Group), in partnership with OSDU. Over 40 staff have been engaging in this network, taking forward projects which are focused on progressing existing and emerging institutional priorities, for example around student transitions, employability, international student experience, and education for sustainable development.
- 4.7.5 Mechanisms have been introduced to recognise and reward Teaching Excellence at Faculty level from 2018 onwards and these have been endorsed by the Education Strategy Committee. Mechanisms for Faculty recognition include: awards recognised within the Accountability and Development Review process; certificates and funding towards educational activities. This is in addition to the well-established Strath Union Teaching Excellence Awards.

#### 4.8. **International outlook and opportunities**

- 4.8.1 *Students are provided with an international element to their experience, drawn from a diverse range of opportunities including study or work abroad. In addition, there are positive examples of the University's links with international partners being used to inform the curriculum.*
- 4.8.2 Throughout 2019-20, the University has continued to strengthen its focus on the diverse range of international opportunities for incoming and outbound students, as well as creating opportunities for extending the international outlook of home-based students. Alongside our existing mechanisms for extending our collaborative provision partnerships, the University's Recruitment and International Office (RIO) has worked alongside Faculties to deliver a growing number of Study Abroad arrangements, providing the opportunity for a consistent University-wide approach to incoming students.
- 4.8.3 The range and diversity of international study and work opportunities are captured in the Faculty Annual Reports and also within an annual Student Exchange Activity Report prepared by RIO, all of which are shared with the Quality Assurance Committee to strengthen opportunities for cross-institution sharing of good practice for curriculum design and student experience. Faculties embed good practice through a range of mechanisms, tailored to the demographic and subject area of the Faculty.
- 4.8.4 Our tailored support includes a range of types and durations of international experiences to suit our diverse student population. This approach has provided parents, young carers, students from SIMD 0-40 and care experienced students the opportunity to have an international experience in a way that suits their commitments and their budget. Departments and Schools have extended the support mechanisms in place for all international students through effective use of Personal Development Advisors and PGT-specific student-staff liaison committee meetings. These activities

are reflected upon through Faculty Learning and Teaching Fora, which encourage the sharing of good practice and alignment with the University's Learner Experience Framework with the aim of ensuring that all students have an industrial and/or international experience during their degree.

## 5. *Final commentary and future plans*

- 5.1. The process of preparing for, engaging with and evaluating the outcomes of ELIR 4 continues to be an important driver in continuing to enhance our ongoing quality assurance and enhancement processes, the functions of our committees and the onward connections with schools, departments, faculties and professional services.
- 5.2. Reflecting on our engagement with sector best practice, the Technical Report highlighted our long-term engagement with the QAA national Enhancement Themes. This has continued in 2019-20 with widespread engagement in the current theme, *Evidence for Enhancement*, with our three strands of activity reaching their evaluation phase. At Strathclyde, our projects have culminated in defining an outstanding student experience through the Learner Experience Framework, exploring data potential and its impact on teaching and learning through Learning Analytics and using data effectively for enhancement of the student experience through our Programme Directors. We have seen great value in the sector-wide engagement on this theme, not only by leading a collaborative cluster on Learning Analytics, but through engaging with the QAA sector events and resources that have been shared by peers. The Enhancement Themes model offers colleagues across the sector opportunities to share knowledge, collaborate and provides momentum for progress on each theme. We look forward to engaging with the QAA international Enhancement Themes conference later this year, as well as the announcement of the next Enhancement Theme and the new opportunities it will bring.
- 5.3. Informed by our refreshed strategic plan, the Education Strategy Committee (ESC) will continue to lead institutional reflection and action on our strategic approach to ongoing enhancement of learning, teaching and the student experience. As detailed earlier within the report **[2.2]**, the end of year annual reporting process for all committees and working groups to ESC, presents an important opportunity for reflection on progress made within 2019-20, as well as providing a forum for agreeing priorities areas of activity within the forthcoming academic session. In the current context of responding and adapting to the Covid-19 pandemic, this will include reflection on a new strategic project led by ESC and delivered through the Learning Enhancement Committee to explore how learning and teaching delivery and support has been adapted in light of the current exceptional circumstances. The early phase of this work to collate initial reflections and feedback has been completed, and the next phase, to capture and analyse data and information to inform future developments, strategy and practice is underway.
- 5.4. Within the 2020-21 academic year, the University looks forward to opening the new Learning and Teaching Building and the creation of opportunities that this will present to reinforce our focus on outstanding learning and teaching, integrated within the wider student experience.
- 5.5. The key messages highlighted within the ELIR Outcome and Technical Reports have provided a pivotal framework to our strategic priorities for education over 2019-20; aligning with our self-evaluation and coalescing with our high-level strategic plans for education. The review outcomes have proved a timely external reflection on our progress to date and serve as an important driver for action, as we seek to embed the revised approaches to enhancing our practice developed over the past year.

QAA2551 – Aug 2020

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