

ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

Minute of the meeting held on 2 December 2020 (2.00pm – 4.30pm).

Present: Professor E Hancock (Convener), Mr F Antoniazzi, Dr H Bain, Ms M Buchan, Mr D Christie, Ms I Crawford, Dr N Emmison, Ms J Guest, Mr T Kouider, Mr R Leven, Mr S Matthew, Dr R McDermott, Ms F Roberts, Mr L Smith, Mrs J Strachan, Mrs V Strachan and Ms J Tait.

Apologies: Mrs J Bolger and Mrs B Paver.

In Attendance: Ms L Barry, Ms E Cargill, Dr D Cockburn, Ms L Ginsberg, Ms L Jack and Mrs F McLean Whyte (Secretary).

Welcome: Ms Roberts and Ms Tait were welcomed to their first meeting of the Committee.

1. ANNUAL APPRAISAL PROCESS: SESSION 2019-20

Action

The Committee was required to report annually to Academic Council and the Board of Governors on the *Annual Appraisal Process* and, in doing so, provide a number of assurances regarding the quality and standards for award-bearing courses. The Committee's *Annual Appraisal Process for Session 2019-20: Annual Report* (see [Appendix](#)) would be presented to Academic Council on 16 December 2020 and the Board of Governors on 23 February 2021.

2. MINUTE

The Committee **approved** the *Minute of the meeting of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee held on 18 May 2020*, reference QAEC/20/3.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee noted an extract from *Organisational Regulation O4* concerning the remit and composition of the Committee and its Sub-Committees, and the current *Membership List* for the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee for Session 2020-21.

During the preparation of the University's mappings to the *Quality Code* it had been suggested the Committee's remit lacked explicit reference to considering the outputs of the quality assurance processes, although this was implied. The proposed amendments were designed to address this.

Recommended to Academic Council the following amendments to the Committee's remit [new text underlined]:

- (i) To consider policy matters relating to teaching, learning and assessment, and the student experience, to formulate appropriate procedures relating to these, and determine appropriate actions for implementation to be considered through its Sub-Committees.
- (ii) To develop and appraise the effectiveness of the University's quality assurance processes, including annual monitoring, consider the outputs of these processes, and develop appropriate mechanisms for maintaining the academic standards of the University and for the sharing of best practice.

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- (iii) To maintain a strategic oversight of the development and implementation of the University's enhancement of the student learning experience.
- (iv) To maintain oversight of specific institution-level performance indicators that relate to learning and teaching and the student experience.
- (vi) To consider and recommend revisions to the *Academic Regulations* to Academic Council, as proposed by the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee, and consider recommendations from the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee, Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee.
- (vii) To report and make recommendations to Academic Council as appropriate.
- (viii) To consider equity and diversity in relation to teaching, learning and assessment provision and the student experience.

The Committee **approved** a proposal to add the following to the composition of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee, in order to assist address the enhancement ambitions of the *Learning and Teaching Framework*, in respect of the University's aspirations for professionally-focused provision, lifelong learning, technology-enabled learning, and flexible, inclusive learning:

- Head of IT Strategy, Development and Projects
- Head of Employability and Alumni
- Inclusion Manager

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4. **EXTERNAL QUALITY ISSUES**

4.1 **Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council**

The Committee noted the *Annual Report to the Scottish Funding Council: 2019-20 – Institution-Led Review of Quality*, endorsed by the Board of Governors on 24 September 2020.

4.2 **Enhancement-Led Institutional Review 2021**

The draft *Reflective Analysis* had been the subject of wide consultation within the University, including with representatives from RGU:Union, focus groups, DELTA staff sessions that included some of the Teaching Excellence Fellows, the Principal, and the ELIR Steering Group. The Committee **approved** the *Reflective Analysis* for submission to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) by 14 December 2020.

Mrs V Strachan

The ELIR Panel Planning Meeting would be held on 17 February 2021, with the ELIR event being held throughout the week beginning 26 April 2021. All meetings would be held on MS Teams, and would be managed by the QAA.

4.3 **Quality Code**

The Committee noted the University's mappings to the *Quality Code (2018)*, and wished to thank the authors.

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4.4 Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education

Consideration was given to a paper relating to the *Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education*, published by the QAA on 21 October 2020. The University was a signatory to the *Charter* that demonstrated “an institutional pledge to implement its principles and commitments which include working with staff and students and, in collaboration across the sector, to protect and promote academic integrity, and take action against academic misconduct”.

The *Charter* proposed the identification of academic integrity ‘champions’ and it was believed that School representatives on the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee could be regarded as fulfilling this role. The Sub-Committee would take forward the *Charter’s* requirements on behalf of the University, and report to the Committee as appropriate.

The University had a long history of developing materials to support students, including the Library’s *Academic Honesty* resources on *CampusMoodle*, in addition to guidance provided to students by Schools.

5. INTERNAL QUALITY ISSUES

5.1 Quality Events

The Committee noted:

- *Review, Validation and Professional Body Event Outcomes*, the majority of which had been conducted virtually, for onward reporting to the Board of Governors;
- *Programme of Quality Events: 2020-21 – 2025-26*; and
- *the List of internal conveners and second internal members for quality events.*

The Committee **agreed** there would be benefit in adding a Teaching Excellence Fellow on each event panel, and adding the Academic Strategic Leads into the pool to aid in their ongoing development.

The Student President (Communications and Democracy) **agreed** to forward an updated list of Student School Officers to the Secretary.

5.2 Partnership 2020

The Director of Student Life updated the Committee on the *2020 Partnership Objective*. This was the first full year of operation of the *Partnership Objective* on a calendar year basis which enabled consideration of the annual appraisal evidence-base as well as insights from both outgoing and incoming student leaders. It also enabled an extension of engagement of academics in the process, with Committee members invited to an initial workshop to consider possible objectives, and three academics participating in the *Partnership Working Group*.

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[AQOs &
Mrs R Stuart]

Mr R Leven to
Mrs F McLean
Whyte

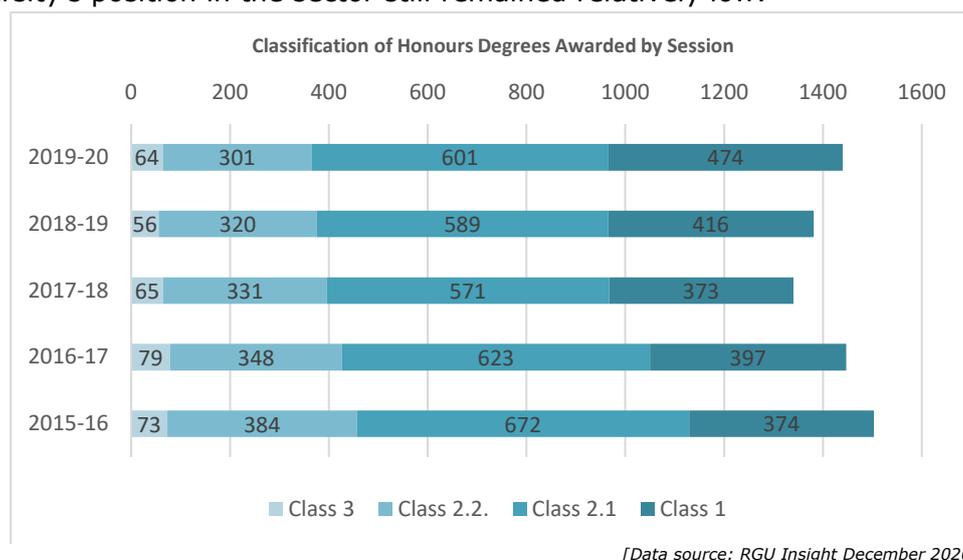
Activities for the *2020 Partnership Objective* were designed to increase understanding of the expectations relating to *equality, tolerance and respect* and to build capacity for culture change within the University. The Committee **commended** the extent and value of the activities, that had proven to be very topical, and the demonstrable level of engagement by the student community as well as staff, particularly given these activities had taken place alongside the Union's effort to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Committee was also advised that the COVID-19 Testing Centre, opened on 30 November 2020, was being manned by students who were supervised by staff, and this was another outstanding example of partnership.

The *2021 Partnership Objective* would be confirmed early in semester 2.

5.3 Profile of Honours Classifications

It had been agreed at the Institutional Annual Appraisal Meeting that the issue of profile of honours classifications awarded by the University should be referred to the Committee for discussion. The University operated a strict algorithm for calculating the classification of honours, with Assessment Boards having a degree of discretion. Although the number of Class 1 honours degrees awarded had risen by 2.8% in 2019-20, with 33% of all honours students achieving a Class 1 honours, the University's position in the sector still remained relatively low:



Whilst there was cognisance of the need to avoid grade inflation it was evident from the *External Examiner Annual Reports* that no concerns had been raised with standards or levels of performance. There had also been no discernible increase in the number of cases of academic misconduct established despite the move to digital assessment in semester 2.

The honours algorithm and profile of classifications had been discussed by the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee in January 2020, and there had been no appetite to amend the existing algorithm.

The Committee **agreed** there was no evidential reason to revise the honours algorithm.

5.4 Grading Scheme

The Committee discussed the prevalence of use of percentages within the University's criterion-referenced Grading Scheme, as contained in *Academic Regulation A4*. Practice varied in those Schools that used percentages at component and/or module level, and it was acknowledged that percentages did make sense for some assessments in the numerical and scientific disciplines, but not for qualitative assessments.

There was an increasing problem of students appealing on the basis that they had missed the award of merit or distinction, or honours classification, by one or two percent, and questioning how that could be justified. There was a view, echoed by small number of external examiners, that postgraduate provision might be marked only on a distinction/merit/pass basis, with no use of percentages or grades.

As the volume of courses delivered collaboratively by more than one School increased, there was an urgent need to avoid confusion for students and ensure consistency.

It was noted the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee had already commenced discussion of the use of the Grading Scheme and percentages (see item 6.3 below). The Committee **agreed** the Sub-Committee would be asked to consider this further, ensuring student engagement in the discussions and also considering views on the potential to mark all postgraduate provision on a distinction/merit/pass basis, whilst taking professional, statutory and recognised bodies' view into account in respect of approved pass marks (e.g. 50% as opposed to the University's standard 40%). Thereafter, any recommendations or additional guidance would be considered by the Committee and actioned, as necessary, by the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee.

TLASC
Mrs J Strachan &
Ms L Barry

6. SUB-COMMITTEES

6.1 Academic Regulations Sub-Committee

The Committee considered a report from the meeting held on 7 October 2020.

6.1.1 *Scheme of Delegation of Authority and Decision-Making*

The Sub-Committee had considered a paper proposing an established scheme for the formal delegation of authority of Academic Council and of the Principal, as exercised in the University's *Academic Regulations*. The Principal had given consideration to each of the relevant *Academic Regulations* that currently involved and/or required a decision by the Principal, or the Principal as Chair of Academic Council, and had made recommendations regarding whether the specific authority should be retained by the Principal or Academic Council, or be formally delegated.

The principles underpinning this scheme were:

- i. Decisions involving the termination of enrolment for any non-academic misconduct could not be delegated, other than to the Deputy Principal in the event of the absence of the Principal.

- ii. Decisions involving the suspension of a student for any non-academic misconduct could not be delegated, other than to the Deputy Principal in the event of the absence of the Principal.
- iii. Decisions relating to undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses (other than procedural or *prima facie* aspects of appeals where Executive oversight was fulfilled by the Assistant Chief Academic Officer (ACAO)), the authority be delegated to the Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience (VPADSE).
- iv. Decisions relating to research degrees (other than appeals where Executive oversight was fulfilled by the Assistant Chief Academic Officer (ACAO)), the authority be delegated to the Vice-Principal for Research (VPR).
- v. Decisions, within appeal processes such as determination of a *prima facie* case, that had been made by the Assistant Chief Academic Officer (ACAO), as they have had Executive oversight, should be delegated to the Assistant Chief Academic Officer (ACAO).

If the *Scheme of Delegation* was approved by Academic Council, amendments would be required to the *Academic Regulations* and the *Organisational Regulations*.

Recommended to Academic Council: that it approve the *Scheme of Delegation of Authority and Decision-Making* for immediate implementation.

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6.1.2 Categories of Academic Misconduct

The Committee was asked to recommend approval of a revision to the wording of the categories of academic misconduct in relation to the unauthorised use of materials in examinations. The purpose of the revision is to accommodate changes in technology and to, in effect, 'future proof' the Regulation.

Recommended to Academic Council the following amendments to *Academic Regulation A3*, for implementation from September 2021 [new text underlined, deleted text struck-through]:

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6.1.1 Academic misconduct is defined by the University as any attempt by a student(s) to effect an unfair advantage in any assessment, and may include (though is not limited to):

- (vii) **Cheating.** The University defines this (in relation to examinations) as the taking of any unauthorised material (hardcopy or electronic) into an examination; the unauthorised use of technology ~~programmable calculators and dictionaries~~, in examinations; communicating or attempting to communicate in any way with another student during an examination; copying or attempting to copy from another student during an examination.

The Sub-Committee had also considered the appropriateness of including reference to those 'seeking' to use contract essay sites and, if this was to be included, how such misconduct might be defined. After lengthy discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed that this should not be categorised as misconduct within the *Academic Regulations*. In reaching this decision, the following was noted:

- there was a clear distinction between thinking about doing something and actually doing it;

- contract cheating websites often legitimised their activities by claiming that they provided a research function;
- a student could legitimately claim that they had accessed a contract cheating website for research purposes;
- moving from preparation to perpetration in relation to contract cheating was the hinge point for any investigation and much of what a student might do would fall under the auspices of 'preparation';
- it would be at the point of submitting a piece of work generated by such a site that misconduct would have occurred;
- alternative forms of misconduct could be pursued depending on the circumstances.

6.2 Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee

6.2.1 Student Communications

The Sub-Committee had, for some time, been aware of concerns raised by students in relation to the volume of emails received, primarily University-wide emails and those from services, that were perceived to be of no relevance to them. The Sub-Committee had agreed this would be reviewed further and had asked all Schools to monitor the amount of emails that their students were receiving and where these were coming from.

Student members of the Sub-Committee had been asked to explore with students the preferred means for Schools and services to communicate with them. It was acknowledged many did not check their RGU email account but it was unclear how many used the MYRGU app.

Feedback would be considered at the Sub-Committee's next meeting, and the Committee **agreed** consideration should also be given to the volume of email traffic that staff were receiving.

LISC
Mr F Antoniazzi
& Mrs A Smart

6.2.2 Student Welcome 2020-21

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from DELTA on the highly successful *Student Welcome 2020-21* initiative. Work was progressing on finalising the *Student Welcome* for January 2021 starts.

It was evident there was a lack of clarity regarding the future resourcing and responsibility for coordinating and delivering the *Student Welcome* in the future. The former Director for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access had led the activities over the summer of 2020, and it was vital that Schools, Support Departments and RGU:Union remained fully engaged. It was **agreed** this would be discussed further outwith the meeting and consideration would be given to the need to:

Prof E Hancock,
Mr F Antoniazzi,
Mrs V Strachan,
Mrs J Strachan &
Mr R Leven

- operationalise the *Student Welcome* as an annual business process, meeting the needs of all intakes;
- continue to embed high quality online content and activities as a core feature of the *Student Welcome*;
- further strengthen the collaboration between academic Schools, support services and RGU:Union to deliver an integrated *Student Welcome* experience;

- further enhance the Course Welcome Areas with greater central support and provision of institutional content;
- involve representation from Student Recruitment and Admissions to enable appropriate integration with the conversion track.

6.2.3 *Items for Noting*

The Committee noted the following additional items:

- *Semester One Student Experience Questionnaire/Student Support:* DELTA was planning the delivery of an information session to showcase the current student support offering to all staff;
- *Timetabled Activity on Wednesday Afternoons:* RGU:Union was once again reporting that teaching activity was being scheduled on Wednesday afternoons more often than they would like. The situation would continue to be monitored with a report on what had been timetabled in semester 1 to be submitted to the Sub-Committee's next meeting in February 2021. The Committee was advised that guidance for the preparation of the semester 2 timetables had been designed to minimise the need to use Wednesday afternoons;
- *Annual Appraisal Process:* the Sub-Committee considered Annual Appraisal Reports completed by the relevant Heads of Service, alongside a report from the Convener on the outcomes of the process;
- *National Student Survey (NSS):* a list of the core and bank questions in the NSS had been circulated and the Sub-Committee was asked to consider whether it would wish to propose any changes. Any changes to the bank questions would mean replacing a current question, which would be subject to consideration and approval. Consideration had been given to the inclusion of Bank Question 9 in relation to Welfare and was to be the subject of further consideration outwith the Sub-Committee.
- *Observations and Feedback on Semester One:* The Sub-Committee made a number of observations on the success, or otherwise, of the operation and delivery of semester 1 to date. The Sub-Committee had highlighted the apparent reluctance of students to use cameras during online classes and tutorials, despite encouragement by staff and the perceived benefit to those feeling isolated.

6.2.4 *Student-Facing Support Services Reviews*

The Committee noted the *Student-Facing Support Services Review Report: Enabling Effective Academic Transitions (September 2020)*. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the review had been conducted as a desk exercise.

The Student-Facing Support Services Review in 2020-21 would be *Ask RGU: Effectively facilitating students raising questions, obtaining advice and help during their RGU journey*, and was being led by the Director of Academic Administration. This would be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the *Academic Quality Handbook*.

6.3 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee

The Committee noted a report from the meeting held on 22 October 2020 and, in particular, the following:

- *Sharing Effective Practice*: during the Sub-Committee meeting, members were asked to highlight areas of effective teaching, learning or assessment practice implemented as a result of the COVID-19 situation, in particular, areas of support that were of valuable assistance. Members commended online learning developers and the training that was put in place for staff and students;
- *Assessment Policy and Guidance*: the Sub-Committee had discussed two questions in relation to the University's Grading Scheme: what marking scheme was used within Schools at module component level?; and what was the rationale for using the particular marking scheme at module component level?
- *Alternative Assessment Arrangement*: the Sub-Committee had considered a report that provided an evaluation of the implementation and support for online alternative assessment during semester 2 and 3 of Session 2019-20, delivered in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- *Timetabling*: the Sub-Committee reviewed a paper that outlined the proposed timetabling principles to be adopted regarding *auto-scheduling* of on-campus and online examinations. The new proposal aimed at ensuring better use of the estate, IT, staff and room resources. Sub-Committee members were asked to share the paper with their respective Schools, and with RGU:Union, and the feedback would be considered at the Sub-Committee's next meeting.

7. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS – SESSION 2020-21

Wednesday 3 March 2021 at 2.00pm
Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 2.00pm

8. QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (QAA)

8.1 COVID-19 Supporting Resources from QAA

The QAA's resources were available at www.qaa.ac.uk/news-events/support-and-guidance-covid-19.

8.2 International Enhancement Conference

Building Resilient Learning Communities: Using Evidence to Support Student Success had run online from 3-5 November 2020, and shared innovative learning, tools and practice from the [Enhancement Themes](#) and internationally, and covered: Evidence-based decision-making; Equality, diversity and inclusion in our learning communities; and Employability for a changed world.

8.3 Focus On: Technology Enhanced Learning (2019-20)

The *Resources Hub* and a *Summary Report* were accessible at www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/focus-on/technology-enhanced-learning

9. **QUALITY ENHANCEMENT THEMES**

9.1 **Evidence For Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience (2017-20)**

The Theme was completed on 30 October 2020, and an evaluation of the Theme would be published in early 2021.

9.2 **Enhancement Theme: Resilient Learning Communities (2020-2023)**

Further information was available www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/resilient-learning-communities.

10. **TEACHING EXCELLENCE AND STUDENT OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK (TEF)**

The Office for Students (OfS) was currently developing a new framework for the *Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)*. The new framework would take account of the forthcoming recommendations in Dame Shirley Pearce's *independent review of the TEF*, the UK Government's response to it, and the findings of the latest subject-level TEF pilot. Following these publications, the OfS would consult on the new framework. There was no TEF Year 5 exercise in 2020.

Professor E Hancock, C

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ACADEMIC COUNCIL

16 December 2020

**Annual Report of the Annual Appraisal Process for
Session 2019-20**

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1. Executive Summary

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee oversees the annual monitoring of all courses, programmes and output standards, and the identification and dissemination of enhancement activities, through the *Annual Appraisal Process*.

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee is of the opinion the *Annual Appraisal Process for Session 2019-20* provides a sound evidence base for Academic Council and the Board of Governors to have confidence in, and be satisfied with, the quality and standards of award-bearing courses.

The Committee wishes to highlight to Academic Council and the Board of Governors the following in respect of the completeness of the quality assurance processes of the Schools:

- all required *School Academic Board Appraisal Reports* have been submitted to the satisfaction of the Committee, with the exception of the two highlighted in section 4 below;
- all *External Examiner Annual Reports* have been received and responded to, with the exception of four, and the Committee was satisfied appropriate action was being taken to obtain these outstanding reports.

Professor Elizabeth Hancock
Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience
Convener, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

2. The Process

This report provides a summary of the University's consideration of the *Annual Appraisal Process* of credit-rated taught provision for Session 2019-20.

The *Annual Appraisal* of teaching and the broader learning experience is central to the University's quality assurance processes. It is the process whereby the delivery of all courses, programmes and output standards are monitored. It is also designed to encourage the identification and dissemination of enhancement activities. It is informed by a number of key sources including feedback from students and performance indicator data produced by the University, and analysed using the *RGU:Insight Appraisal Dashboards*.

Reflecting on the aforementioned sources, Course/Programme Management Teams complete the appraisal of all courses. Once complete, the School Academic Board is required to produce a *School Academic Board Appraisal Report*, including an integral *School Learning and Teaching Plan* and *Action and Enhancement Plan*. School Academic Boards have responsibility to ensure delivery of actions identified in the *Action and Enhancement Plans* and report on progress to each meeting of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC).

The process is overseen by QAEC in three stages:

- An *Institutional Annual Appraisal meeting* is held with some of the *ex officio* members of the Committee, the Academic Quality Officers and representation from Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access (DELTA). This early meeting enables early consideration of annual appraisal intelligence to determine any remedial action required, and strategic actions and enhancements in relation to the student experience.
- The Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience and the Assistant Chief Academic Officer, convener and vice-convener of QAEC respectively, and the relevant Academic Quality Officer, meet with each of Head of School. The focus at this stage is the *executive consideration* of the respective *School Academic Board Appraisal Report*, including the *School Learning and Teaching Plan* and *Action and Enhancement Plan*, to establish how effective the *Annual Appraisal Process* has been in positively impacting on the student experience.
- At the *Committee's first meeting* of the session, it considers the summary outcomes of the executive consideration of the *School Academic Board Appraisal Reports*, the *School Learning and Teaching Plans* and *Action and Enhancement Plans*, as discussed with the respective Heads of School. The Committee also considers a report from the Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee on the appraisal of student-facing support services.

Since the last appraisal cycle, the *RGU:Insight Appraisal Dashboards* had received a number of enhancements, with additional data and the inclusion of employability data in the form of *Graduate Outcomes* dashboards. Academic appeals and misconduct data was now only analysed at the School Academic Board level, and a number of other enhancements had been made to the workbooks in response to user feedback.

3. Institutional Annual Appraisal Meeting: 15 October 2020

3.1 Student Experience

The group considered *Evidence for Enhancement: Driving improvements to the student learning experience*, a report prepared by the Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access (DELTA). The report highlighted the following key messages arising from the analysis of student feedback, and provided a number of recommendations to protect, sustain and enhance the student experience in 2020-21:

- *RGU had achieved its highest NSS satisfaction to date: NSS Overall Satisfaction* had continued to increase, to **89.96%**. This performance placed the University:
 - second highest of Scottish institutions;
 - second highest in the UK [excluding small specialist and private providers]; and
 - 8.21% above its external benchmark of 81.75%, the highest performance against benchmark of the Scottish sector.
- *Overall Satisfaction*, as evidenced via the internal *Student Experience Questionnaire*, had also reached a high:
 - the Semester 1 Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ) increased by nearly 2% to 87.69%;
 - 'standard' releases of the SEQ issued to online learning cohorts increased by 1.5% to 89.6%; however
 - the satisfaction of Graduate Apprenticeship cohorts declined from 91% to 87%, and DELTA would explore this further with course teams.
- Notwithstanding this excellent institutional performance, there remained distinct areas of focus that required to be targeted by School leadership teams in order to achieve the University's objectives.
- The need for all Schools to protect the student learning experience and secure high levels of student satisfaction would be challenging, particularly in the light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Analysis indicated that courses with consistently high levels of student satisfaction had:
 - well-designed assessment and feedback;
 - open, clear and regular communication;
 - effective course organisation;
 - affinity with professional values.

To sustain external benchmarking performance, it would be imperative for the University to ensure positive experiences of these core aspects of teaching and learning. It was recommended that focus on these areas be underpinned by concerted efforts to understand experiences of the University's students, as well as agile support and professional development for staff by the Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access (DELTA).

- In addition to the focus on targeted School enhancement activities, there remained opportunities for targeted collaborative enhancement at an institutional level,

although achievement in the current pandemic climate might prove challenging. The following areas were proposed:

- *Students' Union:* the University's lowest result was for Q26 'The Students Union effectively represents students' academic interests', although 66.02% was significantly above benchmark and ranked RGU:Union fourth of Scottish institutions;
- *Student Voice:* across Schools, results spanned from 63.99% to 91.86%, indicating considerable variability in perceptions;
- *Learning Community:* there was a notable range of performance across provision, from 64.81% to 94.27%. Only one School exceeded 90% for Q21 'I feel part of a community of staff and students', with the lowest result being 54.32%.

It was agreed it was imperative that all Schools engaged with focused targeted actions to improve their respective performance, rather than pursuing their own agendas. Partnership working with students would be key to effectiveness. Evidence from previous sessions, for example in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice, demonstrated that a team approach to special measures could be successful. Involvement of a Teaching Excellence Fellow with a School had also been a productive model. The School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences and the Law School would require particular focus.

In common with the rest of the sector, it was evident students had found the move to a blended digital learning environment tiring and isolating despite the considerable support mechanisms in place. The Student Union was currently working to increase the visibility of School Representatives, particularly in those lower performing Schools, and was working closely with Heads of School and Student School Officers. It was agreed further consideration would be given to encouraging the Student School Officers to extend their reach beyond working solely with Heads of School by engaging with the Academic Strategic Leads. It was also agreed consideration would be given to implementing dedicated development for Academic Strategic Leads to ensure their active engagement and clarify their responsibilities within the University's quality procedures.

3.3 *Annual Appraisal of Student-Facing Support Services*

- Consideration was given to an early report from the Director of Student Life regarding key institutional messages arising from the Annual Appraisal of Student-Facing Support Services 2019-20. Appraisal proformas were distributed in early summer and completed in September 2020. A workshop for all Heads of Service had taken place on the 16 September 2020 to discuss common emerging themes, potential collective actions, any further support required so that enhancements can be made for students, as well as the consideration of assurance of quality of service.
- All services reported that the process had helped them focus on enhancement activity and that they believed a quality service was being delivered to students. Clear evidence of enhancements to services were described, particularly those based around the need to move services from campus-based to online availability, and the changes were believed to have helped increase the accessibility of services to a wider range of types of students.

3.4 *Equality Monitoring Report 2019-20*

The group considered a report from the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee that had reviewed the *Equalities Monitoring Data for 2019-20* at its meeting on Tuesday 22 September 2020. The report highlighted:

- *The performance of male students:* this was below females in all categories for protected characteristics, except professional employability and graduate level study where it was 5% higher.
- *Enrolments/applications and acceptances:* those for black students and those with a declared disability were lower than in 2019-20 indicating the proportions of these groups would reduce in 2020-21.
- *Withdrawals:* this rate continued to be higher for those with a declared disability than for any other group.
- *Retention:* this had dropped for all protected characteristics except those with a declared disability.
- *Student satisfaction:* overall satisfaction remained below the University average for all ethnic groups other than those who declared as white. Those with a disability had a significantly lower rate of satisfaction in certain areas.
- *Good honours:* the rate of good honours awarded to Asian students had dropped to 51% which was 28% below the University average of 79%, although this involved relatively small numbers across several nationalities.
- *Employability:* performance in Graduate Outcomes was lower than in the internal Leavers' Survey for all protected characteristics for both employment measures

3.5 *Annual Report on Quality Events in 2019-20*

- No significant issues had been identified.
- It was testament to the University's agility in the move to digital/online delivery, and staff commitment, that all scheduled quality events from March 2020 onwards had run as scheduled but through online systems such as MS Teams.

3.6 *Academic Quality Officers' Report*

- This summarised any areas of concern arising from *External Examiner Annual Reports* or *Link Coordinator Annual Reports* across all Schools. No issues had been raised for consideration by the University's senior management.

3.7 *Initial Conclusions*

The meeting provided assurances that no significant concerns had arisen that required immediate intervention at University level, and that all actions were predominantly focused at School and course level.

4. Executive Consideration of School Academic Board Appraisal Reports

The Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience and the Assistant Chief Academic Officer, accompanied by the Academic Quality Officers, had met with all Heads of School to review the *School Academic Board Appraisal Reports*, that included the integral *School Learning and Teaching Plans* and *Action and Enhancement Plans*.

From these meetings, they were able to assure the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee on 2 December 2020 they were satisfied, in general, with the quality and engagement of courses and Schools with the *Annual Appraisal Process*. The meetings had been robust, informative and constructive, and proven reassuring that Heads, in general, had ownership of issues and shown a readiness to respond to issues in real time. A caveat to this assurance to the Committee involved the following exceptions:

- The Law School: the *School Academic Board Appraisal Report* had been referred back to the School Academic Board as the meeting had identified opportunities for further enhancement and analysis. It was agreed that the Assistant Chief Academic Officer would meet with the Head of School to further interrogate the *Insight* data to help inform the development of the *School Academic Board Appraisal Report*;
- School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences: the *School Academic Board Appraisal Report* had been referred back to the School Academic Board as the meeting had identified opportunities for further enhancement and analysis. It was agreed that the Convener of QAEC (Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience) and the Academic Quality Officer would meet with the Head of School to further interrogate the *Insight* data to help inform the development of the *School Academic Board Appraisal Report*.

5. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee: 2 December 2020

5.1 Key themes

It was no surprise to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee that the University's swift and agile response to adapting teaching, learning and assessment to a digital environment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic was a significant message arising from the *Annual Appraisal Process*. This was evident in reports from the School Academic Boards and the student-facing Support Services.

Another central theme was the need for the University to ensure that the 'Team RGU' spirit of collaborative working across and between Schools, Support Departments and the RGU:Union, and the 'can do' attitude that arose in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, is retained and fostered to enhance future provision and meet the University's aspirations and strategic priorities. The period had been one of rapid learning for staff across the University with a considerable number of achievements across the community, and it was vital the opportunity was taken to build on this learning and the significant achievements.

5.2 Positive areas arising from the Annual Appraisal Process

The Committee welcomed the significant number of achievements and examples of good and innovative practice identified by the School Academic Boards in their *Appraisal Reports*. Those considered worthy of wider dissemination across the University

community are contained in **Annex A**, and the Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access will assist with their effective dissemination.

In addition to these, the Committee also observed the following positive aspects:

- the examples of effective digital teaching and assessment that would be shared by DELTA through its continuing professional development provision and TeachMeet sessions;
- the evidence of effective partnership between Schools and the Student School Officers, and in the delivery of targeted collaborative enhancements;
- the evidence of good practice in several models of personal tutoring in Schools;
- the expansion of the Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE) Scottish Innovative Student Awards (SISA) programme across the University arising from the early work in the School of Creative and Cultural Business;
- the sector-leading Virtual Degree Show delivered by the staff and students of Gray's School of Art, as well as the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment Degree Show;
- the growth in confidence amongst staff in the University's IT resources and capability.

5.3 *Areas for development and/or improvement*

The Committee had observed the following areas that required development or improvement at a University level:

- in recognition of how the digitising of the curriculum had been well received by students and external examiners, the extension of staff development provision by DELTA to support the ongoing expansion of digital delivery;
- development of an *Assessment Charter*, whether at a University level or in each of the Schools and that this would usefully be assigned as a project for the Teaching Excellence Fellows;
- the requirement to embed impact assessment in the course design and validation process and, whilst this had already been referred, in the first instance, to the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee, it would be vital to ensure this covered all of the University's academic provision;
- as part of the 2020-21 quality enhancement theme, DELTA would lead on further analysis of the performance of males compared to females;
- that the Teaching Excellence Fellows would be instrumental in sharing and implementing good practice in respect of the personal tutor systems in Schools.

5.4 *Risks*

A significant number of risks had been raised by the School Academic Boards in their *Appraisal Reports' Action and Enhancement Plans*. By the nature of the *Annual Appraisal Process*, many of the issues being reported predominantly related to Session 2019-20 and consequently, many would have already been addressed or action would be in progress.

There were, however, a number of common themes that would be pertinent on an ongoing basis and might be reflected in the University's *Risk Register*:

- ongoing investment in IT and specialist resources to meet the digital demand;
- the impact of local and global economies on employability opportunities and the potential disadvantage for the University's position in league tables;
- in common with the rest of the UK sector, the employability and placement availability for the University's students;
- the potential implications of Brexit and the future Scottish and UK relationship with Europe;
- the increasing reliance on, and need to extend, the University's English language support provision for international students whose first language was not English;
- the contraction in some sectors of the pool of applications in light of increasing local, national and international competition;
- the potential for student:staff ratios to adversely increase following the current and anticipated growth in student numbers, although this is being monitored closely by the Strategy, Planning and Policy Department.

The Committee was reminded that, notwithstanding the potential implications for the quality and standards of the University's academic provision, some of the risks identified by the School Academic Boards relating to staffing were outwith the remit and authority of the Committee to address, and should be raised by the Schools directly with the Executive.

6. Conclusions

The Committee is of the opinion the *Annual Appraisal Process* provides a sound evidence base for Academic Council and the Board of Governors to have confidence in, and be satisfied with the quality and standards of award-bearing courses.

The Committee wishes to highlight to Academic Council and the Board of Governors the following in respect of the completeness of the quality assurance processes of the Schools:

- all required *School Academic Board Appraisal Reports* have been submitted to the satisfaction of the Committee, with the exception of the two highlighted in section 4 above;
- all *External Examiner Annual Reports* have been received and responded to, with the exception of four, and the Committee was satisfied appropriate action was being taken to obtain these outstanding reports.

The Committee welcomes and commends the considerable evidence both of resilience, innovation and adaptability demonstrated by all of the Schools and Departments, as well as RGU:Union, particularly in the current challenging environment.

This included evidence of, for example, the extensive partnership between students, Schools and Support Departments, and the continued significance of the Student School Officers (SSOs).

The Committee acknowledges the effectiveness of the engagement of Schools and Departments undertaking the *Annual Appraisal Process* that has led to demonstrable evidence of extensive improvement actions that are either already complete or well advanced. Furthermore, the Committee was satisfied the *Annual Appraisal Process* had confirmed these actions were adequate and appropriate.

Professor Elizabeth Hancock, Vice-Principal for Academic Development and Student Experience
Convener, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

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Annex A: Good Practice and Innovations

Employability/Professional Skills Development

- Connect to Business/6 month placements: Resurrection of connect to business and introduction of 6 month placement as alternatives to the 12 month placement which gives students the opportunity for work-related and work-based learning. *Aberdeen Business School*
- Postgraduate extended Masters: Incorporating an optional 12 month placement into their PG provision which has significantly increased the PG numbers within the School. There is scope to roll this out across the University. *Aberdeen Business School*
- The most significant innovation of the revised course involves the alignment of the course to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework and the associated RDF Planner <https://rdfplanner.vitae.ac.uk/>. The RDF is the nationally recognised framework that describes the knowledge, behaviour and attributes of successful researchers. The RDF Planner is the sector wide tool used for professional development by researchers. *Graduate School*
- The practice-based Research Project option at both undergraduate and postgraduate level has allowed some students to showcase their considerable skills in print, film, web design, marketing and media, with the practical outputs providing useful additions to the students' portfolios of work, enhancing employability. Qualitative comments in the NSS feedback evidence students' appreciation of the practical elements across courses in this subject area, with students valuing being able to gain knowledge, skills and experience of specialist equipment and software. *School of Creative and Cultural Business*
- Students from the School of Creative and Cultural Business have continued to follow the Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE) Scottish Innovative Student Awards (SISA) programme. This continued inclusion of SISA accreditation across several modules in CCB evidences the commitment of staff to enhancing the students' learning experiences and employability skillsets, and emphasises the School's ethos of innovation for staff and students. The SIE initiative has now been recognised more widely across the University, with involvement now from the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Group, demonstrating how CCB's commitment to collaborative approaches can impact across the University. *School of Creative and Cultural Business*
- Running International Well Control Forum (IWCF) training for full-time students as an extra professional opportunity to enhance students' professionalism and employability chances. *School of Engineering: Postgraduate*
- Implementing Dynamic Advanced Response Training (DART) drilling simulators (6000Cyber system and old 5000 model) learning facilities into several modules. *School of Engineering: Postgraduate*
- Inclusion of placement and project within the 12 months duration of MSc Biomedical Technology. *School of Engineering: Postgraduate*
- Continued Graduate Apprenticeship course development and delivery of work-based learning. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- High student success at Stage 2 of the Graduate Apprenticeship course with 100% progression to Stage 3. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*

- The MEng fast-track course continued to be unique in Scotland and provided excellent opportunities for students to gain relevant professional experience on placements in industry as part of their course. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- The School continued to use alumni and graduate employers to support the residential course for final year students to improve their employment prospects. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- Product Development and Professional Skills modules received positive feedback from students for improving critical thinking, authentic learning, team work, individual working ability and manufacturing skills. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- Volunteer patients continue to play a vital role in the first two years of the course, both in helping students to prepare for their first ever clinical placement, and in enhancing their understanding of particular patient groups they will encounter. *School of Health Sciences: Diagnostic Radiography*
- Recruitment process: - Increase authenticity in relation to recruitment processes by involving volunteer patients within aspects of this, including case scenarios. *School of Health Sciences: Occupational Therapy*
- Occupational therapy collaborative teaching with 6th year architecture students regarding the VRS project and salutogenic design for population, occupation and health. *School of Health Sciences: Occupational Therapy*
- Development of placement opportunities across the country continue to be delivered offering students a wider array of placement experiences that is relevant to practice. In particular, the growing use of Peer Assisted Learning placements being used in Outpatients, Acute and Paediatric settings. *School of Health Sciences: Physiotherapy*
- The Orthopaedic exercise group, here students assess and design bespoke exercise plan for those following orthopaedic surgery in RGU sport, has been embedded into the course and is recognised alongside the Over 60's exercise class and TBI exercise group. *School of Health Sciences: Physiotherapy*
- Ongoing collaborative work with local NHS Grampian Physiotherapy colleagues in recruitment (Day in the Life of a Physiotherapist), teaching (contributions to session) and placements (PPEG, PAL and split placements). *School of Health Sciences: Physiotherapy*
- The expansion of the internship scheme for Physiotherapy students working as HealthCare Support Workers (HCSWs) in NHS Grampian from two students to seven. This provided valuable staffing cover in the summer period to support the workforce as well as provide valuable work experience for the Physiotherapy students and links between the university and NHS. *School of Health Sciences: Physiotherapy*
- The implementation of a clinical simulation (On-call, Outpatient service and Exercise Group) developed and run by Stage 4 students, with statistically significant results identified across 3 outcome measures. *School of Health Sciences: Physiotherapy*
- The health visiting route of the MSc Advancing Nursing Practice has achieved the baby friendly award and the School is now working towards achieving the gold award. The objective is for the University to be the first in Scotland to achieve this accolade. *School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice*
- Collaborative work was undertaken with practice colleagues to enable extended paid placement for undergraduate nursing and midwifery students to be managed within the structures of the approved courses. Students were able to progress as planned. *School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice*

- Undergraduate nursing and midwifery students who were unable to continue with practice placements had alternative practice-based activities to achieve the learning outcomes of the practice modules; these students were able to progress as planned. *School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice*
- The School has continued to be successful in achieving tenders from NHS Education Scotland. This year it has included the School Nursing course and Return to Practice module. These tenders have resulted in new partnerships with further Health Boards in Scotland. *School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice*
- The continued implementation of project-based learning in built environment courses was showing positive results. Student engagement was high, industrial placements continued to be very successful and graduate employability was very high. *Scott Sutherland School*
- Engagement with professional practice and local or regional organisations to support teaching and research added to the student experience and collaborative working. *Scott Sutherland School*
- Community engagement activities, including working with local groups through live student projects, mounting public exhibitions, Drawn North (Aberdeen, Orkney). *Scott Sutherland School*
- Expert knowledge in specialist subject areas. *The Law School*

Enhancing Student Engagement

- Mid-Semester 4th year module questionnaires: These questionnaires are distributed mid-1st Semester with the results and corresponding action fed back to students. This has enabled the School to take remedial action and the students are able to see how the School has reacted to their comments which will help improve the NSS score for student voice. DELTA have sent their evaluation questionnaires early so the School won't be sending these out this year. The School believe that this is a very positive move from DELTA as they got some very valuable data from their mid-1st semester evaluations last session. *Aberdeen Business School*
- In 2019-20 the School introduced a community seminar series that was initially on campus and has moved online during the pandemic. The events are designed to better engage with range of local and wider community interests and to date have included referendums, Black Lives Matter, war veterans, Mumsnet and Iranian Jews. Growing popularity is shown by over 100 people from various locations virtually attending the last panel session on Covid and the city. *School of Applied Social Studies*
- Following student disquiet about the University's initial reaction to the Black Lives Matter movement, an anti-Racist group incorporating staff and students was created. The group's remit includes researching racialized experiences of Social Work teaching and placements with findings to inform course curricula. *School of Applied Social Studies*
- Provided clear teaching blocks to allow students to manage their time and build structure into their online learning. All undergraduate online teaching was 14:00-17:00 and all postgraduate teaching was 10:00-13:00. *School of Computing: COVID-19 Related Activities*
- The School of Computing Systems Team had set up a range of remote access technologies allowing students to remotely connect to the School machines as if they were sitting in front of them. These remote systems allowed direct access to much of the sophisticated hardware and specialist software. *School of Computing: COVID-19 Related Activities*

- Engagement with the Scottish Informatics and Computer Science Alliance (SICSA) through sharing of education webinars discussing best practice when teaching online. *School of Computing: General Enhancement Activities*
- Creation of new School community pages to make sure students could access information about their course and School quickly and easily. The community pages were part of a School Officer led project to create a Community Hub for the School. *School of Computing: General Enhancement Activities*
- A fortnightly School Student and Staff bulletin. *School of Computing: General Enhancement Activities*
- A School social events (SocSocial) to foster a sense of community and give students a safe (currently online) space to socialise. *School of Computing: General Enhancement Activities*
- The partnership group ran once a month and alternated between staff and student conveners to discuss the issues that matter to students outside of the formal Staff-Student Liaison Committee environment. *School of Computing: General Enhancement Activities*
- Weekly Research seminars and fortnightly teaching seminars were sharing good practice and innovation within the School. *School of Computing: General Enhancement Activities*
- The School has continued the work of focusing on staff/student engagement through several channels, including Student Voice sessions, the Personal Tutor role, the Class Representatives and use of social media. Professional Skills Enhancement (PSE) sessions continue to be delivered (and moved online in March 2020), with sessions by a mix of University-wide support staff and the Heads of Year, all targeting the skills students need for their specific year of study. E-Certificates for good attendance were distributed, to encourage and reward attendance at these sessions. Course Leaders and Heads of Year placed emphasis on 'Student Voice', working with students to ensure understanding of the concept, and reporting back to students to close the feedback loop. A series of posters was designed to communicate how past feedback had been used to drive student-led change within the School. *School of Creative and Cultural Business*
- Significant targeted marketing for international students with the support of Marketing and Student Recruitment. *School of Engineering: Postgraduate*
- High student satisfaction with the delivery model for Graduate Apprenticeships including video/audio supported presentations, Blackboard video sessions, workplace visits and logbook/portfolio assessments. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- Introduction of the Direct Entry Transition Day to bridge knowledge gaps and enhanced induction. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- HS4120 collaborative learning with University of Southern Maine (USM) with 3rd years, achieved a successful international exchange of knowledge regarding occupational therapy. *School of Health Sciences: Occupational Therapy*
- Staff work closely with the Student Physiotherapy Society who have been recognised by the University and awarded Academic Society of the Year for 2019/20. Working in partnership with students, external courses and seminal speakers have been organised and delivered, benefitting students across the School of Health Sciences. This society has been supported by staff to arrange accredited courses such as mental health first aid. *School of Health Sciences: Physiotherapy*
- Stage 2 students, who benefitted from Peer Mentorship last year, have been recognised for the Peer Mentorship they offered Stage 1 students this year and were awarded Student

Partnership awards. Peer mentorship continues to be developed across the course. *School of Health Sciences: Physiotherapy*

- Time limited pre-record sessions during online delivery: In moving to off campus delivery at the end of semester 2, pre-recorded sessions kept to 10-15 minute sessions to maintain student engagement. *School of Health Sciences: Sport Science*
- Minimum number of pre-record and live sessions: in order to address the student feedback and concerns around feeling like part of a community, the team have adopted a minimum approach to online Live and pre-recorded sessions as well as student led question and answers sessions. *School of Health Sciences: Sport Science*
- A student reference group and a service user sub-group were developed to support the development and approval process of the undergraduate nursing course. The student voice and input of service users was influential in demonstrating a co-productive approach to the development of curriculum at the approval events. *School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice*
- The development of an integrated Personal Professional Development (PPD) Programme at Stage 5 and 6 of Architecture as part of the course's teaching and learning action plan related to authentic and lifelong learning. *Scott Sutherland School*
- The use of online platforms to help develop skills as well as knowledge transfer, especially in mooting, mediation, client interviews and presentations. *The Law School*

Learning and Teaching Delivery

- UG Thesis Conference: Front loaded at the beginning of 4th year the students receive all the teaching for their research methods course and get an opportunity to network with staff about their thesis ideas. Staff are allocated to students early in the Semester and this allows students the maximum time to develop their proposals. The feedback from the students was very positive and there was an increase in thesis performance by the students. *Aberdeen Business School*
- PG Programme Development: Bringing together courses under the umbrella of a programme with various routes which has enabled the School to extend its provision by combining modules in different iterations to offer a variety of routes. *Aberdeen Business School*
- Use of Learning Sets to support social integration and peer learning. *DELTA*
- Use of Panopto to create high quality learning resources. *DELTA*
- Adaptive response to the loss of hitherto essential inter-personal interaction for the PgCert Mental Health Officer Award 'Practice to Analysis module' through the creation of role plays played out by actors which were analysed and assessed virtually. *School of Applied Social Studies*
- Module teams provided a range of pre-recorded lectures and live interactive lab sessions to ensure engagement in a rich, guided, online environment. *School of Computing: COVID-19 Related Activities*
- Using a range of novel technologies to allow students to share live code with staff, form collaborative development groups for group modules, form discussion groups and still work together even off-campus. *School of Computing: COVID-19 Related Activities*
- Due to the specific challenges of moving to an online delivery for practice based subject disciplines and 'live' modules, the Events Management course has had to adapt significantly, resulting in some excellent examples of innovation and good practice. These included the

role of the Live Festival Management module, with its transition to delivering an online live student project (festival) providing a useful learning experience. From this staff learnt a significant amount in terms of best practice delivery in this format (which is being implemented for Semester 2 in 2020-21). In addition, the staff team conducted focus groups with students after the module to gain further insight and will collate these findings for dissemination. By transitioning to digital events the course was also able to maintain its wider community impact. The Live Festival Management module raised just under £1500 for the two charities being supported by the project, and the two Main Events which transitioned online also managed to raise significant funds (approx. £2k) despite the new format. The format of the festival was also noticed by wider charities who sought guidance on delivering their own online fundraising events during lockdown. The course team were able to provide this guidance and support as a course team to wider stakeholders. *School of Creative and Cultural Business*

- Offering three start dates per year and double module enrolment for online courses had now stabilised new enrolment numbers on online courses. *School of Engineering: Postgraduate*
- A very high proportion of academic staff were Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) and 6 have achieved Senior Fellowship (SFHEA). Scholarship and CPD relating to engineering education was supported where possible and discussed in the EPR process. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- With the move to online lectures, the new Video-Enhanced-Teaching (VET) approach for the delivery of evening class modules had been extremely useful in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- Simulation remains an integral part of all four stages of the course. *School of Health Sciences: Diagnostic Radiography*
- Structure and Function Teaching: The use of three cornered contracting (role and responsibility of student, tutor and university) has been implemented in HS1042 Structure and Function of the Human body in order better support the students understanding of roles within the learning process. *School of Health Sciences: Occupational Therapy*
- Victoria Road School Project (VRS) in Torry - occupational therapy has been instrumental in the development and design of the VRS project which has been endorsed as an IPL project by RGU, involving a number of schools and professional disciplines as the project develops. *School of Health Sciences: Occupational Therapy*
- Occupational therapy is on the steering group of the Schwartz Rounds - Point of Care for RGU, an initiative which will be positioned under the umbrella of IPL and the Centre for Collaborative and Interprofessional Practice *School of Health Sciences: Occupational Therapy*
- Reading week additional support: The course team provided additional support in the form of specific sessions aligned to key academic skills of the discipline and preparation for assessment. *School of Health Sciences: Sport Science*
- Contemporary Debates module: Requires students to learn about contemporary areas within their discipline in depth, with the nature of the module and the assessment fully supporting depth of learning and understanding. Students are assessed on their debate contributions. *School of Health Sciences: Sport Science*
- The School had many courses re-approved in this academic year following Institution-Led Subject Review (ILSR) and the publication of new professional standards by the Nursing and Midwifery Council. A project officer was seconded to manage this work which allowed effective use of resources and contributed to the success of the events. *School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice*

- The Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) team has worked with all staff across the School to integrate technology enhanced classroom into the curricula. This integration has been particularly key as the School has moved to online delivery in response to the pandemic. *School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice*
- Staff in the school have achieved a very high standard of online course delivery. Two MSc courses are delivered entirely by ODL, but the remaining courses have adapted their delivery to produce high quality, digital learning in a short period of time. In achieving this, they have been ably supported by the e-learning technologists in the school who have worked long hours to meet short deadlines. This high quality ODL will now be available for use in subsequent years to enable flipped classrooms, Panopto recordings, online captioning and other innovative teaching techniques to be adopted. *School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences*
- The digitisation of curricula including assessment and feedback over the last three years have helped both student and staff to cope better with the lockdown. *Scott Sutherland School*
- The school scores very well on a number of metrics, in particular in teaching and in employability for its undergraduate cohorts, and in student satisfaction across its postgraduate and online cohorts. It teaches more than 3 times as many law students online as the other Scottish universities combined, on pre-pandemic statistics, at least. *The Law School*
- The support given by the online content developer in particular to assist with the move online – as well as the generally high levels of engagement and commitment and flexibility to moving teaching online at the start of the pandemic lockdown. *The Law School*

Assessment Methodology and Feedback

- For every module, all Dropboxes were created early in the Semester so students can see where and when to submit all their work. Each Dropbox had a clear indication of when feedback/grading was available to students. *School of Computing: General Enhancement Activities*
- Creation of a standard coursework cover sheet to ensure students had the required information quickly and easily. *School of Computing: General Enhancement Activities*
- Having detailed Marking Guidelines for Tutors for exam marking, annotation and double marking had consistently been commended by External Examiners. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- With the need for appropriate online assessment, the use of personalised parameters for coursework and the use of CampusMoodle to make these available to students had been commended. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- Coursework deadlines planned on different dates allowed students to plan and prioritise better. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- As in previous years, positive feedback has been received from the students and External Examiners in relation to the innovative assessment methods, in particular the modules where students have the option to choose their preferred assessment method, *School of Health Sciences: Diagnostic Radiography*
- Near-peer teaching: Stage 1 and 2 students are taught practical radiographic technique in small groups in the x-ray suite by Stage 3 and 4 students. This has been extended to independent practice sessions. *School of Health Sciences: Diagnostic Radiography*
- Alternative assessment – students filming their practice: In order to accommodate growing numbers for this course, the assessments requiring observation of the students in practice

were modified to allow students to video their performance and submit footage to evidence their practice. This was much more cost and time efficient for the team. *School of Health Sciences: Sport Science*

- COVID 19 resulted in a change to many assessments across all courses. The online Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCES) have worked particularly well and allowed modules to be continued to be delivered as approved. Volunteer patients have been used within the clinical examination CPD module to good effect. This has allowed a module which has traditionally had essential face-to-face contact with associated assessment to continue to be delivered in the present circumstances. *School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice*

Pastoral Support

- Course leaders are all mental health and first aid trained. The University made that available and staff within the School really welcomed the training and it was found to be genuinely helpful to have that reference point when dealing with certain issues, especially in the current circumstances. Personal issues such as isolation has seen an increased demand for support in counselling. It is intended that this will be rolled out across all Schools. *School of Creative and Cultural Business*
- The External Examiners, in speaking with students, report that there was excellent staff-student communication channels and issues which concerned students were known to staff. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- Introduction of Engineering Applications Supervisors to the Personal Tutor rota recognising their relationship with the students. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- Ensuring trained Mental Health First Aiders within the School. *School of Engineering: Undergraduate*
- All students were supported by their Course Leader, Year Tutors and Personal Tutors during the COVID-19 pandemic and transition to online teaching. There was regular communication to keep students updated and signposted to Inclusion services and Counselling services. *School of Health Sciences*
- Positive engagement with School Officers enhanced collaboration with students and course teams. The School evidenced improvement in student representative engagement, particularly through the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of note is the continuous engagement that Student Officers applied with student representatives via email and online forums. This ensured that the School was able to remain sighted to the student voice and helped inform clarity and relevance of information provided to students about their placements and other course changes. The collaborative work meant that Student Officers regularly fed back to the School senior team and this in turn helped to inform the updating of a School level FAQ resource as well as enabling the School to respond directly to student voice/feedback via the student officers. This was critical in helping assure the School that students were supported and informed at all stages. *School of Nursing, Midwifery and Paramedic Practice*
- One of the Academic Strategic Leads was responsible for academic quality, which involved managing and conducting inductions in relation to the Personal Tutor System. *Scott Sutherland School*

COVID-19

- Due to the enforced shutdown of the campus in March 2020, one of the modules of the course was successfully delivered entirely online which evidences the adoption of best practice in respect to online and blended learning approaches. *Graduate School*
- Doubtless like all Schools, the manner in which staff adapted teaching and assessment processes at short notice in March/April 2020 with resultant high levels of achievement and student satisfaction was testimony to their creativity and commitment. *School of Applied Social Studies*
- Creation of a custom booking system to enable students to safely come on and work on campus in the specialist labs. *School of Computing: COVID-19 Related Activities*
- A weekly all-staff meeting via Microsoft Teams bulletin and live chat to ensure that all School messages were effectively communicated and the whole School had the opportunity to discuss these. *School of Computing: COVID-19 Related Activities*
- The School created an online virtual office where students can drop in to discuss any issues with our admin staff through Whereby. Each member of the teaching staff had a unique link to a virtual room and had two hours allocated a week where students can drop-in. These drop-in hours enabled cover for the entire week so students can always access a member of staff if they need help. *School of Computing: COVID-19 Related Activities*
- Creation of a code of conduct for students to understand the course expectations and communicate professionally online. *School of Computing: COVID-19 Related Activities*
- Response and transition to moving online for teaching and learning. *School of Health Sciences*
- Scottish University OT Practice Placement Coordinator Collaboration: During the COVID-19 situation there has been significantly increased collaboration between the Universities in relation to placement capacity. *School of Health Sciences: Occupational Therapy*
- The number of students who responded to the Covid-19 situation by working as HCSWs in their local Health Boards across the country. *School of Health Sciences: Physiotherapy*
- Expert external online lectures – in response to COVID-19: As a result of the COVID-19 situation, the team invited experts, national and international, within the discipline to deliver online lectures for students within some modules. This has proven to be extremely well received from the students, *School of Health Sciences: Sport Science*
- Course Teams' adjustment and quick response to COVID-19 in courses heavily reliant on studio applied pedagogies and one-to-one tuition with no detrimental impact on student performance or academic quality. This included the move to online delivery and getting licences organised efficiently with support from IT Services for important software in comparison to other institutions. *Scott Sutherland School*

Annex B: Data Sources

The *RGU:Insight Appraisal Dashboards* provide analysis of the following data sources:

- Student Experience:
 - *Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ)*; and
 - *National Student Survey (NSS)*;
- Student Performance and Course Data:
 - student numbers, demographic information and retention;
 - student achievement rates (first assessment diet only) and module achievement;
 - 'good honours' (achievement of class 1/2.1 honours degrees);
 - employability: graduates progressing to employment or further study, and professional-level employment, as reported in the *Graduate Outcomes* survey;
 - withdrawals;
 - academic appeals and cases of misconduct.

The *Annual Appraisal Process* is also informed by:

- summary outcomes of the executive consideration of all *School Academic Board Appraisal Reports*;
- a report on the *Annual Appraisal of Student-Facing Support Services*;
- analysis of all *External Examiner Annual Reports* and *Link Coordinator Annual Reports*;
- the *Equality Monitoring Report*, provided by the Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee;
- the *Annual Report on Quality Events*; and
- outcomes from recent internal audits of Schools.

The *Equality Monitoring Report* scrutinised the following measures by age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, religious belief, sex and sexual orientation:

- enrolments;
- withdrawal;
- retention;
- student satisfaction;
- good honours;
- employability;
- applications and acceptances for 2020-21 entry;
- TEF Year 4 data.

Student Achievement Rates by Protected Characteristics was also considered for the first time at the Institutional Annual Appraisal Meeting due to the timing of completion of student achievement rates data.