University of St Andrews
QAA Enhancement-led Institutional Review
Briefing Paper for Staff

1. **What is Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)?**
   ELIR is an institution-wide external review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Funding Council. All Scottish Universities are reviewed on a 4 or 5 year cycle: our last review was undertaken in 2015.

   The University undergoes its ELIR this Spring, with visits to the University by a team of reviewers on 6 February 2020 and w/c 30 March 2020.

2. **The purpose of ELIR**
   ELIR provides public assurance that the University is maintaining appropriate arrangements for quality assurance and academic standards and is taking appropriate planned steps to enhance the student learning experience.   It is also an opportunity for the University to receive feedback on areas in which we excel but also areas where we can make some improvements.

3. **The scope of ELIR**
   The review will consider the quality of the learning experience of all categories of students and all credit-bearing academic awards granted by the University including research as well as taught degrees. The review team will focus on the effectiveness of our strategic approach to enhancement and local implementation; our approaches to self-evaluation and use of evidence; and will analyse our current strengths and weaknesses.

4. **Reflective Analysis**
   The main input to the ELIR is the Reflective Analysis (RA) which has been prepared by the University in accordance with the structure and contents set out by the QAA. The RA is our own evaluation of our performance in maintaining standards and enhancing academic quality. The RA has now been submitted for the review and is available https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/media/proctor/documents/elir_reflective_analysis.pdf

   For this cycle of ELIR, universities were asked to contextualise the RA to ensure that the scope and focus of the review is tailored to each different university. The contextual areas, or chosen focal points, for us are Entrepreneurship and Diversity.

5. **Advance Information Set**
   The University has also submitted an Advance Information Set to accompany the RA. It comprises a mapping of our policies and practices to the UK Quality Code; a sample of reports from recent University-Led Reviews of Learning and Teaching; SFC annual returns since the last ELIR; a sample of annual academic monitoring reports; analysis of external examiners' comments; and analysis of student feedback.

6. **How the ELIR is carried out**
   The review team will visit the University twice.

   Planning Visit: 6 February 2020
   Review Visit: w/c 30 March 2020 (likely to be 5 days: tbc at end of Planning Visit)

   The Planning Visit will be held in the Gateway Board Room, School of Management. The Main Visit will be based in the Scottish Oceans Institute at the East Sands and this is where the majority of meetings with staff and students will take place.

<u>Purpose of Planning Visit</u>

The purpose of the Planning Visit is to ensure that the team has a sound understanding of the University and its approach to the matters within the scope of the review as described in the RA; to identify the themes to explore during the Review Visit; to identify a programme of meetings for the Review Visit; and to identify further documentation to be provided by the University. Staff and students' views on the decisions taken around contextualisation will be explored by the review team.

<u>Format of Planning Visit: Thursday 6 February 2020</u>

Morning	Working meeting with institutional contacts (Clare Peddie, Nicola Milton)
Morning	Meeting with student representatives (incl. PGR)
Afternoon	Meeting with School/academic staff (with a focus on quality assurance/ enhancement; our contextualised topics)
Afternoon	Meeting with institutional contacts (Clare Peddie, Nicola Milton) to agree arrangements for sharing the key themes and programme for the Review Visit, plus any additional documentation.

<u>Format of Review Visit: w/c 30 March 2020</u>

In advance of the Review Visit, the review team will specify categories of staff and students from which the University is invited to identify groups to meet with the review team. Those involved will be contacted by the Proctor's Office as soon as possible. The subjects of discussion will be influenced by the themes the review team has indicated it wishes to pursue with the University, and will also be dictated in part by the specific category of staff/students interviewed but it is important to note that the reviewers may ask questions concerning any aspect of the University's activities that is covered by the review. There will be a particular focus on the contextualised themes: Diversity and Entrepreneurship, and also the 12 areas for development which we have identified within the RA (see appendix 1).

Typically there will be meetings with:
- UG students (not reps)
- PGT and PGR students (including tutors)
- Academic staff (possibly early career and/or new staff)
- Professional services staff
- Senior academic and administrative staff

There is not normally any in-depth scrutiny into a particular School or discipline unless the reviewers identify a matter of major concern affecting the management of standards or quality.

<u>Review Team</u>

The review team appointed by the QAA includes four senior academics (including a reviewer from outwith the UK), a coordinating reviewer, and a student reviewer. Biographies of the review team outlining their areas of interest in education is attached as appendix 2.

- Professor David Lamburn, Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), University of Warwick
- Professor Susan Rhind, Chair of Veterinary Medical Education and Director of Veterinary Medical Teaching, University of Edinburgh
- Professor Jon Scott, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience), University of Leicester
- Associate Professor Asa Kettis, Head of Division for Quality Enhancement, Uppsala University
- Katrina Swanton, Head of Quality and Enhancement, Department for Learning and Teaching Enhancement, Edinburgh Napier University
- Emma Hardy, VP Education, Students Representative Council, University of Glasgow

7. **Briefings for those involved**
    Separate briefings will be provided for the groups of staff and students the review team indicates it wishes to meet at either the Planning Visit and/or Review visit. This will include any advice that might be given on likely subjects the team may raise.

    Groups meeting the reviewers will be asked to assemble 15 minutes before the meeting is due to begin. It will also be appreciated if these groups could remain behind after their meeting with the review team to report their experiences to the Proctor's Office staff – this provides valuable insight into the progress of the review and aids the briefing of staff in later meetings.

8. **Review Outcomes**

    Key Themes letter and Confidence Judgement
    One week after the end of the Review Visit, the QAA will send the University a 'key themes' letter summarising the conclusions of the ELIR. This will include a statement of the review team's overall judgement. This is expressed in the form of a 'confidence' statement of the effectiveness of the University's management of academic standards, and of the assurance and enhancement of the student learning experience, both currently and in the future. The level of confidence is expressed in one of three standard forms: 'confidence', 'limited confidence', or 'no confidence'

    Outcome Reports
    At the end of the Review Visit the ELIR team produces an Outcome Report which sets out the threshold judgement, and the differentiated commendations and recommendations. They also produce a more detailed Technical Report which contains the detailed findings from the review and is written primarily for the university being reviewed – the structure of this report parallels that of the RA.   Both of these reports will be published in June 2020.

    Follow up
    Outcomes from the ELIR visit will be discussed at the University's annual meeting with QAA Scotland in September/October 2020. The University is also required to submit a report to the QAA one year after the review (June 2021) outlining what actions have been taken as a response to the recommendations made by the review team.

9. **More information**

    Nicola Milton, Head of Education Policy & Quality
    Email: elir@st-andrews.ac.uk
    22 January 2020

Reflective Analysis - 12 key areas for development

Diversity

We celebrate and promote the benefits that diversity of ethnicity, religion and belief, gender and sexual orientation brings to our community. However, we also recognise that our situation in a relatively geographically isolated small town means that more attention may be needed to support the development of the cultural and community infrastructure that helps diverse communities feel 'at home.'

Postgraduate student engagement

The University's postgraduate student community should feel able to identify opportunities for enhancement and respond to consultative processes. However, it has become apparent that our postgraduate students do not necessarily engage in this dialogue and it is an area we have identified as requiring further development.

Graduate training scheme for mental health development workers

The introduction of a graduate scheme to train mental health development workers is a promising new initiative in growing our internal capability to support student wellbeing. Further developing and monitoring this scheme is an important element in resourcing our mental health strategy and supporting students with mental health concerns.

Widening participation to undergraduate study abroad

The University is committed to widening participation in study abroad activities, particularly at undergraduate level, and a number of initiatives have been introduced to raise awareness, provide financial support and enable a study abroad 'taster' experience. Nevertheless, it can be challenging to reach the students who may never have considered study abroad. We will work on more ways of engaging students with study abroad.

Engaging postgraduate students in quality enhancement processes

Despite some excellent examples to the contrary, the generally low engagement of both taught and research postgraduate student representatives in many Schools is an area of ongoing concern. Creating mechanisms to ensure that their feedback is taken seriously and acted upon to improve the postgraduate experience will help foster student involvement in quality enhancement. The addition of a research postgraduate section to each School's Annual Academic Monitoring report will help Schools reflect on areas for improvement in their support of students and supervisors and provide examples of good practice for dissemination.

Embedding employability

The University increasingly encourages the decentralisation of careers events and activities to Schools, often with the help of alumni, to foster employability. The introduction of a networked Careers Link role for an academic member of staff in each School is central to this initiative. However, comparison with other institutions suggests there is still more scope to embed employability more deeply in University provision and the student experience.

In relation to the Careers Link role, it is anticipated that Careers Links will lead on a range of activities to promote employability such as careers days, varied assessment methods that mirror common workplace outputs, increased connections with alumni who can share their career experiences, and a greater encouragement for students to developing employability skills.

There are also ambitions to develop more instances of delivering professional skills workshops through the curriculum and to introduce more connected curricula projects such as the successful one introduced into the Graduate School for Interdisciplinary Studies. Employability will also be embedded more deeply in the curriculum via an increased focus in the approval process for new programmes and modules.

Finally, the Careers Centre is also reviewing its approach to School planning by using data and evidence, along with developing working documents that organise and plan the partnership with Schools more cohesively. It is hoped that this will introduce a more strategic and collaborative approach to better understand Schools' different priorities. Through capacity building and partnership working, the Careers Centre will have a more active role in supporting Schools to understand, engage with and embed employability throughout their provision.

Academic Staff Development Programme
The outcomes from the ASDP review will be used to enhance the current offering, particularly with a view to attracting mid- and senior-level academics to engage with and continue their professional development.

Ensuring the implementation and adoption of best practice
Ensuring the implementation and adoption of best practice is an area for development. When some responsibilities sit between two roles, experience has shown that uptake can be variable, and clearly demarcated lines of responsibility need to be established. Recent use of AAM reports to capture School-level adoption of policy and best practice has started this process of follow-up and checking of compliance.

Feedback data on teaching
While we are keen to base our standard setting, quality control and decision-making processes on feedback data garnered from our students, we are aware of the shortcomings and limitations of such data. We are grappling with issues such as uneven participation rates and survey fatigue, known problems of bias in surveys and with the tension between making questions high level and widely comparable on the one hand and specific to particular teaching formats on the other. Steps have been taken to address some of these issues. For example, Schools with high MEQ participation rates shared their practices at a DoT lunch, and the wording of the questions in our MEQs have been scrutinised and changed to minimise unconscious bias of respondents. However as mentioned above, this is a complex and challenging area, and we are therefore keen to enhance the quality (as well as the quantity) and variety of feedback data.

Module grade distributions and use of marking scales
We take great care in assigning marks to students' work (marking descriptors, indicative grids, double-marking, moderation, involvement of external examiners) and are confident that our processes are robust, consistent and fair. There remain, however, persisting differences in module grade distribution curves that can be observed across different academic Schools. The Associate Deans (Education) monitor grade distributions very carefully and follow up with Schools on individual modules with unusual distribution patterns. We also plan a detailed long-term analysis of grade distributions across different Schools to establish whether we have disciplinary differences in marking behaviours.

Further opportunities for research postgraduate growth and mobility
As outlined earlier in this Reflective Analysis, several new opportunities for research postgraduate student exchanges have recently been established. We wish to ensure research postgraduate students are aware of these opportunities and are supported to take advantage of them. In addition, we are focused on expanding and developing new joint PhD programmes with our strategic partners, as a way to strengthen institutional partnerships and research connections, as well as grow our research postgraduate cohort.

Further enhancing structures to support the operation and monitoring of collaborative programmes
Earlier in this section we discussed the robust policies and processes in place to ensure academic standards across all collaborative provision. In order to enhance support for these processes, we are currently reviewing the remit and structure of the Joint Committees to ensure consistency of practice and to define how they feed into AMG collaborative reviews with Global Office support. We intend to provide more guidance in this area, building on examples of best practice in individual programme contexts.

Review Team Biographies

Professor David Lamburn, University of Warwick

https://warwick.ac.uk/services/vco/exec/

As the Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education), David has served in a variety of capacities at the University of Warwick since 2005, including Director of the Centre for Lifelong Learning, Chair of the Quality Enhancement Working Group, Chair of the Collaborative Committee and Chair of the Quality Assurance Working Group.

He has been closely associated with teaching quality assurance and enhancement work for many years. He has led significant reviews of academic departments leading to changes to institutional policy along with a highly successful QAA Institutional Review in 2013. He has been a member of a variety of University committees, including the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and Academic Resourcing Committee. In addition, David has been a QAA Institutional Auditor and Reviewer since 2009 and served on QAA Appeals Panels and Advisory Groups. He most recently served as a member of the ELIR review team for the University of Strathclyde in Spring 2019.
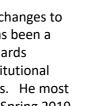
Professor Jon Scott, University of Leicester

https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/person/professor-jon-scott

Jon read biological sciences at Durham University and stayed on to study for his PhD. He then moved to Paris as a research fellow at the College de France before returning to Durham as a Lecturer in Zoology. Jon became increasingly involved in developments in learning and teaching and was appointed Academic Director of the College of Medicine, Biological Sciences & Psychology at the University of Leicester in 2009. In 2012 he was elected as Professor of Bioscience Education, taking up the roles of Academic Registrar in 2014 and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) in 2015. He has engaged actively with the QAA, the HEA and the Royal Society of Biology and is a member of the Executive Committee of the Heads of University Biological Sciences. Jon was recognised as the UK Bioscience Teacher of the Year in 2011.

Jon has led several projects in the area of student retention and has co-authored a book on skills for students in the Biosciences with a focus on the transition from school to university and then on to employment after leaving university. In one such practical study, Jon focused on the period before entry to University through sponsored classes in regional schools. Students were further supported in the transition process by a mentoring scheme on entry to the University of Leicester. In referring to an MCQ test of students on biological sciences, by discovering what students remember from their pre-university learning, Jon reported that undergraduate courses can be designed to be more student-focused and so develop a deeper-learning teaching strategy. The results also suggested that, if A-levels are to be redesigned to enhance their impact for students entering higher education, creating programmes which encourage retention of key concepts should be a key factor to consider.

Jon has also published widely on the role of learning outcomes from both the staff and student perspective and the results suggest that students find learning outcomes useful and support their studies in various ways. However, the data has also indicated that some students struggle to understand the level of learning required to cover their topic area or to pass assessments. Additionally, certain respondents reported that learning outcomes can restrict their knowledge. Whilst many students want learning outcomes to remain a central part of their learning experience, the findings suggest that further work is required to establish a more effective use of learning outcomes as a learning resource. Jon also concluded that Academic staff should be empowered to understand and engage with learning outcomes from the perspective of student-centred learning.

Jon has also published widely on academic integrity and how it has become an increasing preoccupation for UK higher education in recent years. Jon noted in an article for The Guardian in 2018 that essay mills have started rolling out on an industrial scale and it's clear that such services are here to stay. Aside from monitoring assessments and exams, Jon highlighted the role of "authentic assessments" to combat such trends. Authentic assessments evaluate students' learning through assessments designed to replicate the skills that they are needed in graduate employment. When well-designed, such assessments can also reduce the marking time for academics.

Within the sector, Jon has also noted the clear move from the detection of inappropriate practice and punitive responses to more proactive and preventative approaches focused on the promotion of academic integrity. This has involved the development of more holistic approaches to academic integrity which engage with students and staff. As such, the emphasis has moved from deterrence to education and curriculum design. This change amongst academics, students, and higher education providers has not only benefited academic practice but also contributed to the literature underpinning academic integrity. The accommodation of different learning needs, diverse academic contexts, and educational cultures has driven the development of teaching approaches, learning support, and assessment design.

Selected Work
- Nadya Yakovchuk, Joe Badge, Jon Scott, 'Staff and student perspectives on the potential of honour codes in the UK', *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 7:2 (2011), pp. 37-52.
- Kerry Dobbins, Sara Brooks, Jon Scott, Mark Rawlinson and Robert Norman, 'Learning about learning outcomes: the student perspective', *Teaching in Higher Education*, 19:6 (2014), pp. 721-733.
- Kerry Dobbins, Sara Brooks, Jon Scott, Mark Rawlinson and Robert Norman, 'Understanding and enacting learning outcomes: the academic's perspective', *Studies in Higher Education*, 41:7 (2014), pp. 1217-1235.
- Harriet Jones, Beth Black, Jon Green, Phil Langton, Stephen Rutherford, Jon Scott and Sally Brown, 'Indications of Knowledge Retention in the Transition to Higher Education', *Journal of Biological Education*, 49:3 (2015), pp. 261-273.
- Jane Thomas and Jon Scott, 'UK Perspective of Academic Integrity', in *Handbook of Academic Integrity* (Springer, Singapore, 2016).
- Jon Scott, 'To tackle student cheating, we need to reimagine university assessment', *The Guardian,* London, 13 June 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2018/jun/13/to-tackle-student-cheating-we-need-to-reimagine-university-assessment.
- Tina Overton, Stuart Johnson, and Jon Scott, *Study and Communication Skills for the Biosciences* (3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2019).

Professor Susan Rhind, University of Edinburgh

https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/prof-susan-rhind

Susan Rhind is the Chair of Veterinary Medical Education and Director of Veterinary Teaching at the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies. She has a major interest in all aspects of veterinary education including assessment and feedback, e-learning, curriculum mapping and student well-being. She has published widely in veterinary education and is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

Using the National Student Survey (NSS) Qualitative Data and social identity theory, Susan recently published a paper in 2019 that explores students' experiences of assessment and feedback. Assessment and feedback are interrelated challenges for higher education, being perceived as key facets of the quality assurance of degrees, and yet commonly found to be sources of dissatisfaction for students. In conducting a thematic analysis on the free-text comments of the National Student Survey for a Russell Group University in Scotland, recurring themes of alienation versus belonging were identified and concluded that assessment can act as a barrier between staff and students, especially where students

are not given effective feedback. This study adds to the growing body of work encouraging a dialogic approach to ensure students make the best use of feedback with the added bonus of improving student satisfaction.

With a keen focus on student wellbeing, Susan has also set out to improve our understanding of potential pedagogical factors which may influence the mental health of students (in this case students on veterinary courses). Previous research has demonstrated that the type of feedback given to children by parents and teachers can strongly influence a student's mindset. There is also evidence that we can change the mindset of students relating to their intelligence by changing the methods by which we teach and assess. In her work, Susan highlighted an association between students' mindset relating to their intelligence and their psychological wellbeing. Students believing that their level of intelligence was fixed had significantly lower scores on five out of six areas of psychological well-being compared to students who believed that their intelligence was malleable. Giving process rather than person feedback and reducing assessment methods that encourage comparison with other students could increase the proportion of our students with a growth mindset and, if the association is causal, improve their psychological wellbeing.

Susan has also reviewed the admissions process across the higher education sector and how the major challenge in veterinary undergraduate admissions is the selection of suitable candidates for veterinary careers. One such study suggested that the interview process for selecting veterinary students is critical to the decision-making process and further agreement was reached based on interview assessment as opposed to the pre-interview assessment of written applications.

Selected Work

- N. P. H. Hudson, S. Rhind, L. J. Moore, S. Dawson, M. Kilyon, K. Braithwaite, J. Wason and R. J. Mellanby, 'Admissions processes at the seven United Kingdom veterinary schools: a review', Veterinary Record 164:19 (2009), pp. 583-587.
- C.E. Bell, R.H. Ellaway, S. Rhind, 'Getting Started with Curriculum Mapping in a Veterinary Degree Program', Journal of Veterinary Medical Education 36:1 (2009), pp. 100-106.
- N Hudson, S. Rhind, D. Shaw, G. Giannopoulos, C. Phillips and RJ. Mellanby, 'The influence of interview on decision making and selection of prospective veterinary undergraduate students' Veterinary Record 173 (2013).
- K. J. Pickles, S. Rhind, J. Townsend, J. Anderson, G. Pearson and R. J. Mellanby, 'Similar challenges, different approaches: a review of student support systems in UK veterinary schools', Veterinary Record 173:4 (2013).
- J. Paterson and S. Rhind, 'Assessment Literacy: Definition, Implementation, and Implications', Journal of Veterinary Medical Education 42:1 (2015), pp. 28-35.
- S. Baillie, S. Warman and S. Rhind, A Guide to Assessment in Veterinary Medical Education (2ND ed., University of Bristol, 2014).
- Neil Hudson, Nigel Stansbie, Susan Rhind, Gillian Brown, Ian Handel, Richard Mellanby and Catriona Bell, 'Recognising and developing students as teachers: Introduction of a novel Undergraduate Certificate in Veterinary Medical Education', Medical Teacher 38:2 (2016), pp. 208-210.
- R. Whittington, S. Rhind, D. Loads and I. Handel I, 'Exploring the Link between Mindset and Psychological Well-Being among Veterinary Students', Journal of Veterinary Medical Education 44:1 (2017), pp. 134-140.
- Jill R. D. MacKay, Kirsty Hughes, Hazel Marzetti, Neil Lent and Susan M. Rhind, 'Using National Student Survey (NSS) Qualitative Data and social identity theory to explore students' experiences of assessment and feedback', Higher Education Pedagogies 4:1 (2019), pp. 315-330.

Associate Professor Asa Kettis, Uppsala University

https://katalog.uu.se/profile/?id=XX3925

Asa Kettis is the current Head of Division for Quality Enhancement at Uppsala University and has worked for the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland since January

2014. Asa has a keen interest in the role of placements and internships as well as the development of workplace cultures that are conducive to learning. Placements have the potential to contribute to the quality of higher education and students' overall view of their learning experience. A student's identification with their intended profession is strengthened and academic performance improves along with graduate employment rates. Learning is likely to be greater if the experience is 'intentional and recognised' and knitted effectively into the curriculum.

Using evidence from research on workplace learning is one way to improve the quality of placements, as exemplified by a scholarly approach to the development of placements for pharmacy students at Uppsala University. An increased engagement in students' work experience opportunities may improve the student experience and contribute to bridging the academy-practice divide in a way that is as much about influencing the rest of society as being influenced by it.

Asa was a member of the St Andrews ELIR review team in 2015 and in Spring 2019 served as a member of the ELIR review team for the University of Glasgow.

Selected Work
- Andy Wallman, Asa Kettis, Maria Gustavsson and Lena Ring, 'Factors associated with reflection among students after an advanced pharmacy practice experience (APPE) in Sweden', American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education 73:6 (2009).
- Andy Wallman, Asa Kettis, Lena Ring, Markus Johansson, Sofia Sporrong, Maria Gustavsson, 'Swedish Students' and Preceptors' Perceptions of What Students Learn in a Six-Month Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience', American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education 75:10 (2011), p. 197.
- A. Wallman, M. Gustavsson, A. Kettis and L. Ring, 'An Exploration of How Students Learn in a Pharmacy Internship', Pharmacy Education 11:1 (2011), pp. 177-182.
- Åsa Kettis, Lena Ring, Maria Gustavsson and Andy Wallman, 'Placements: an underused vehicle for quality enhancement in higher education?', *Quality in Higher Education* 19:1 (2013), pp. 28-40.

Katrina Swanton, Edinburgh Napier University

https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/dlte/meettheteam/Pages/KatrinaSwanton.aspx

Katrina manages the Quality & Standards Team in the Department for Learning & Teaching Enhancement at Edinburgh Napier University and leads on matters relating to quality assurance and enhancement of taught and credit-bearing provision. Before joining Napier, Katrina worked for the School of Education at Durham University providing professional support to the school's postgraduate provision and research office. Katrina is a senior fellow of the HEA and Fellow of the Association of University Administrators (AUA). Katrina represents Edinburgh Napier University on Scotland's Teaching Quality Forum (TQF) and is a member of the editorial advisory board for Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education.
http://www.humane.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Managing_Quality_through_Enhancement_the_Scottish_Approach.pdf
Katrina is also interested in lecture capture and using sketch notes to capture and record key messages. Katrina has organised workshops on this topic and draws upon her own practice and that of other visual note-takers to discuss the benefits of a sketch-note approach.

Emma Hardy, University of Glasgow

https://www.glasgowstudent.net/about/src-authors/emma-hardy/

Emma is the VP Education in the Students' Representative Council. Emma is in the final year of an Archaeology degree at the University of Glasgow.