Quality Enhancement Strategy

Approved by Academic Council: 4 June 2014

Objectives

The University’s objectives with regard to Quality Enhancement are:

- The improvement of teaching and learning quality wherever necessary and possible:
  - in line with the University’s own high standards as established by all academic staff;
  - in support of the University’s Academic (Learning & Teaching) Strategy; and
  - in response, as appropriate, to national benchmarks and other developments in educational policy and practice, and in the student body.

- Continual emphasis on bettering our techniques to develop students as independent learners, to stretch their ambitions and competences and to stimulate their enthusiasm for learning.

- The development and enactment of key strategic focal points in learning and teaching, as determined from time to time by members of the University, in particular the Principal’s Office, Deans, Pro Deans, Academic Council and Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC). Key themes for academic years 2014-2016 include those indicated in the statement of collaboration between staff and students, and are:
  - the improvement of feedback to students;
  - enhanced, early provision of information about module choices available in the next academic year;
  - fostering confidence and ambition;
  - enhanced employability as a result of studying in a research-intensive University.

- An appreciation among students and staff of the high quality of learning and teaching in the University and a shared ambition to contribute to their further refinement.

Responsibilities

As a community of educators and researchers, our process of strategy formation should incorporate dialogue and learning from experience across the University. In order to foster such dialogue, the following will take responsibility as identified below:

- The Vice-Principal (Proctor), Deans, Pro Deans, Director of CAPOD & Quality Monitoring and LTC will collectively and individually maintain a focus on quality enhancement through dialogue with all those whose activities impinge in any way on learning and teaching.
• The above will seek input from colleagues and student representatives, and will communicate developments on, for example:
  o Promising practices developed in the University in relation to learning and teaching;
  o Examples of research-led learning and teaching;
  o Evolution of University strategy and particular points of emphasis in learning and teaching that may be determined by the University from time to time;
  o New research into higher education, developed both internally and externally;
  o Benchmarking statements and exercises for the sector and for individual disciplines;
  o External initiatives such as QAA Enhancement Themes and SHEEC\(^1\) publications and activities, the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education and the Higher Education Academy’s self-assessment tool for Quality Enhancement Strategies in Scottish Higher Education.

• Together with Directors of Teaching, the above will create opportunities, in individual Schools and across the University, to share information about promising practice and quality enhancement in learning and teaching.

• The Students Association Director of Representation will collaborate with the Vice-Principal (Proctor) and others to foster student involvement in quality enhancement, for example through the Collaboration Statement, engagement with feedback, and participation in the class representative and School Presidents systems.

• Examples of promising practice in learning and teaching will be collected during, for example, annual academic monitoring and University Reviews of Learning & Teaching.

• The University’s Centre for Academic, Professional and Organisational Development (CAPOD) will offer support, including financial grants, for teaching enhancement and career development in relation to learning and teaching.

• The University’s promotions process will take account of candidates’ performance in relation to learning and teaching, and the enhancement of both.

• The University will engage with the QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes through institutional teams, student-facing units of the University, Schools and members of LTC, particularly the Vice-Principal (Proctor), Deans, Pro Deans and Directors of Teaching.

• The Vice-Principal (Proctor) will promote connections wherever possible between academic and non-academic aspects of quality enhancement, e.g. in the improvement of effective learning advice, the provision of well-adapted Student Services and support for students seeking to apply ‘academic’ skills to extra-curricular activities such as clubs and societies.

• The academic monitoring process will identify areas of promising practice and areas for development in learning and teaching across the University, and will ensure that these are shared and acted upon by referral to the appropriate groups (e.g. LTC, Academic Council, CAPOD) and individuals (e.g. Directors of Teaching, Heads of School, School Presidents, Director of Representation).

\(^1\) Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee
Progress Monitoring and Dialogue

Progress on quality enhancement activity will be monitored in the following ways:

- Academic monitoring process, including University Reviews of Learning & Teaching, annual reports and interviews, External Examiners’ reports, ELIR and dialogue with QAA.
- Module Evaluation Questionnaires.
- National Student Survey, iGrad and PTES
- Dialogue with School Presidents and Director of Representation.
- Discussions at LTC.

Support for Schools

The following will be used to help Schools develop learning and teaching:

- Reports and feedback from ELIR and University Reviews of Teaching and Learning.
- Qualitative dialogue with Schools, especially during academic monitoring.
- Degree of engagement with quality enhancement opportunities, e.g. number and quality of bids for Enhancement Theme funding and Teaching Development Awards; number and quality of accounts of good practice at LTC events.

Related Strategies

- Academic Strategy (Learning & Teaching).
- Postgraduate Strategy.
- Employability Strategy.

Professor Lorna Milne
Vice-Principal (Proctor)

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