University of
St Andrews

Handbook: University-led reviews of learning and teaching (Schools/Departments)

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Handbook: University-led reviews of learning and teaching (Schools/Departments)

July 2025

1.   Introduction

This handbook provides guidance to Schools and Departments preparing for a University-led review of learning and teaching (URLT). The URLT process meets the requirements set out by the following external reference points:

- SFC Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities AY2024-25 to AY 2030-31
- The UK Quality Code
- Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European HE area

2.   Purpose and scope of URLTs

As outlined in the SFC guidance, URLTs are designed to:

a) Provide assurance of the quality and standard of the learning and teaching provision.
b) Encourage and support critical reflection on policy and practice.
c) Promote dialogue on areas where quality could be improved and ensure these are addressed.
d) Identify good practice for dissemination within the institution and beyond.

URLTs in Schools/Departments cover all undergraduate (UG) and taught postgraduate (PGT) awards, contributions to programmes offered outwith the School/Department (e.g. the MA in Combined Studies), supervision, review and skills training for research postgraduate (PGR) students, provision delivered in collaboration with others, transnational education (e.g. joint degrees, joint PhDs), work-based provision and placements, online and distance learning programmes, and provision which provides only small volumes of credit.

3.   Frequency and timing of URLTs

All Schools/Departments are reviewed systematically and rigorously on a six-year cycle approved by Academic Monitoring Group (AMG). The schedule, available via the URLT webpage, includes reviews of professional service units, collaborative programmes under the University's five-stage review process for collaborative provision and review process for new PGT programmes

Schools/Departments with programmes accredited by professional, statutory, and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) are encouraged to explore appropriate ways of aligning PSRB activity with URLTs. This might include the use of common documentation or joint processes which meet the needs of both the URLT and external accreditation.

The Quality team will contact the Head of School and Director of Teaching (DoT) in the academic year prior to the review. They will be invited to attend an initial meeting with the Chair of the review team, the Academic Policy Officer (Quality) and the Quality team Administrator to discuss the review process. Thereafter, the Administrator will act as the first point of contact for the DoT. At this stage, a mutually suitable date for the review will be agreed. Reviews are not normally held at the beginning of semester one or during Independent Learning Week, spring vacation, revision periods and examination periods. For this reason, reviews are typically held in October, November, February, March, and April when students are available to meet with the review team. Preparations for the review are led by the DoT in consultation with colleagues in the School/Department and

with input from the Teaching Committee. Please refer to the DoT checklist (*Appendix 1*) for further information.

4.   Review team

The review team will act as 'critical friends' to the School/Department and bring a range of experience and perspectives. The team typically comprises:

- **Senior member of the Principal's Office:** The Chair of the review team sets the tone for the review meetings, facilitates the introductions, leads the dialogue, and ensures discussion is kept on track. They have final sign-off on the evaluative report.
- **External subject experts:** Two external subject experts – one from the Scottish sector and one from elsewhere in the UK will focus on the curriculum and learning and teaching provision/support and the management of academic standards. Externals will collaborate to provide a summary of their views on these areas for the evaluative report.
- **Internal staff member:** A senior role holder from a cognate area in the University will share their experience and learn from the School/Department. They will contribute their view in the evaluative report.
- **President of Education or delegate:** The President of Education or delegate will focus on the student experience. They will have an awareness of current issues and good practice and will incorporate discussion of these during the review. They will contribute their view in the evaluative report.
- **PGR representative:** A PGR student from a cognate area will represent research students. They will have an awareness of current student issues and incorporate discussion of these during the review. They will contribute their view in the evaluative report.
- **Academic Policy Officer (Quality):** As Coordinator for the review, they will attend the review, take notes, and draft the evaluative report drawing on the review team's views.

The School/Department will nominate external subject specialists for selection by the Chair via their channel in Microsoft (MS) Teams in the following format:

- The names of three externals (in order of preference) from the Scottish sector, links to their biographies and the rationale for each nomination.
- The names of three externals (in order of preference) who work elsewhere in the UK, links to their biographies and the rationale for each nomination.

External reviewers may come from industry, professional practice or may have wider international experience. Externals should be well-respected colleagues in their discipline, be active in teaching and have some knowledge of national and international good practice.

A statement should also be included indicating whether the person has had any previous involvement with the School/Department. Previous involvement will not normally exclude a person from acting as an external. Former staff, students, and External Examiners of the University in the three years prior to the review will not be appointed as externals. Nor will those who are research partners or close friends of colleagues in the School/Department.

Schools/Departments typically nominate externals from Higher Education institutions. However, it may be appropriate in some reviews for the second external member to be

from a PSRB or industry. The SFC does not expect review teams to routinely include members from outside the UK, although institutions are encouraged to actively consider this option.

Once the Chair has selected their preferred externals, the Quality team will issue a formal invitation and notify the School/Department.

The externals' fees, accommodation, travel costs and expenses will be met by the Quality team's budget. Overnight accommodation arrangements for the external members of the review team will be made by the Quality team. This will normally be for the night before the review and the night of the first day of the review.

The School/Department will also be asked to nominate internal staff members from a cognate area. These should be academics who have a key role in overseeing learning and teaching provision in their own Schools/Departments and have a strong understanding of the institution's learning and teaching priorities and agenda. The names of three internals (in order of preference) and a rationale for each nomination should be provided. The Chair will select from this list or appoint an alternative staff member.

The Quality team will appoint a PGR student from a cognate area who is currently undertaking (or has recently completed) the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice offered by the International Education and Lifelong Learning Institute. The inclusion of a PGR student member on the team will encourage a greater focus on the PGR student experience.

The President of Education will decide whether they wish to sit on the review team for any of the URLTs or to delegate the role to another Sabbatical Officer or School President from a cognate area.

5.   Summary of the review process

A summary of key stages, and indicative timeframes, involved in the review process is available in *Appendix 2*.

6.   Documentation submitted in advance of the review

Reflective Analysis

The key document produced by the School/Department is the Reflective Analysis (RA). This is accompanied by an Advance Information Set (AIS). The RA and AIS are submitted via MS Teams six weeks in advance of the review day. The Quality team will arrange access to a private channel in MS Teams in the months preceding the review.

The RA is normally prepared by the DoT with input from colleagues. Where possible, students should also be consulted, and the School President should be given an opportunity to comment on the RA prior to submission.

DoTs are strongly encouraged to begin drafting the RA at least three months prior to the submission date. A template RA in word format will be provided in the MS Teams channel.

An effective Reflective Analysis:

- follows the headings in *Appendix 3.*

- considers all credit bearing provision, as well as other aspects of the student experience delivered by the School/Department.
- is open and honest and offers analysis and critical reflection with supporting evidence.
- includes reflection on student feedback obtained via routine quality mechanisms such as Student Staff Consultative Committees (SSCCs), module feedback questionnaires (MFQs) and external national surveys.
- identifies good practice, areas prioritised for development and/or enhancement, and areas that continue to present a challenge.
- is a collective and inclusive endeavour with content based on student and staff consultation, and evidence of shared ownership and contribution.
- is easy to read and navigate, focused, succinct and of appropriate length (15-20 pages). Bullet points are encouraged when highlighting a number of areas within sections of the RA.
- is submitted as a PDF using Arial 12-point font.

Advance information set

The AIS comprises pre-existing documentation and will help the review team to identify specific areas for exploration during the review. The RA and AIS should function as an integrated suite of information. AIS guidance can be found in *Appendix 4*.

Programme

Reviews follow a standard format. A template programme can be found in *Appendix 5* and a template in word format will be provided in the MS Teams channel. Where appropriate, the format of the review may be modified in consultation with the Quality team. Four weeks in advance of the review, the School/Department should provide the Quality team with a populated programme of those to be invited to each meeting. The Quality team will then invite relevant colleagues to the staff and student meetings in line with the agreed programme. Please refer to *section 13* of the handbook for guidance at the student meetings. The DoT should hold the review date in colleagues' diaries as soon as the review date is agreed.

Student voice

The School President will gather feedback from students from all levels of study to produce a 'Student Voice' document. This will summarise what is working well and areas for development or exploration on the review day. In addition, the School President will compile feedback collected over previous years for inclusion in the Student Voice. This may include class representative handover notes, School President handover forms and SSCC minutes. With the School President's permission, the Student Voice will be shared with the DoT in advance of the review. Further information on the Student Voice document and the School President's role in the review process can be found in *Appendix 6*.

7.   Review of the documentation

The review team will be asked to provide the following reflections based on their analysis of the RA, AIS and student voice:

- areas of good practice
- areas of interest to explore on the review days.

These will be collated to produce key themes and will act as a guide for discussion on the review days. The key themes will be shared with the review team and with the School/Department in advance of the review and can be shared with colleagues and students who are participating in the review. The review team may request additional information up to ten days prior to the review.

8.   The review

The review will be held over one and a half days. The review is intended to be a positive and valuable process for the School/Department. It aims to recognise and commend good practice and support the enhancement of provision and the student learning experience. The review team will meet with colleagues and students during the visit. Colleagues are encouraged to discuss the operation of their School/Department, reflect on issues and challenges, highlight examples of good practice worthy of dissemination across the University, and to contribute fully and openly in meetings. Due to time constraints, aspects evidenced as routinely positive may not be discussed during the review but may feature in the evaluative report. The review team will focus on innovative activities and areas of interest identified in the key themes document. Other discussion topics may emerge during the review. Practical arrangements for reviews can be found in *Appendix 8*.

The student meetings will be conducted in parallel sessions to ensure the views of each level of study are represented and captured. The review team will split into two groups; one group will meet with sub-honours and PGT students, while the other group will meet with Honours and PGR students.

The review team should be mindful that colleagues and students may feel apprehensive about the review and should be made as comfortable as possible. The Chair should ensure the meetings are conversational and that all colleagues and students are given an opportunity to share their views.

The team is encouraged to note examples of good practice and areas for development throughout the course of the day for easy retrieval at the final meeting on day two. The final meeting will be an opportunity for the review team to reflect on commendations and recommendations. These will be captured by the Academic Policy Officer (Quality) and will form the basis of the evaluative report.

9.   Evaluative report

The evaluative report will be written to the same headings as the RA and will conclude with a series of commendations and recommendations for action, as well as a confidence statement ('confidence', 'limited confidence' or 'no confidence').

The Academic Policy Officer (Quality) will share a list of commendations and recommendations with the review team within one week of the review. Feedback from the final meeting of the review day will form the basis of the commendations and recommendations. The review team will be asked to provide feedback via tracked changes. The externals will be invited to provide commentary for two sections of the report within four weeks of the review day. This commentary will include context for any relevant commendations and recommendations that have been agreed by the team.

The Academic Policy Officer (Quality) will circulate a draft report to the review team for feedback within five weeks of the review. Once approved by the team, the report will be provided to the School/Department within six weeks of the review. This will be in final draft form to allow for correction of factual errors. A final version of the report will be

submitted to AMG. Recommendations that pertain to other areas of the University will be forwarded to the appropriate colleague/committee/unit.

The DoT is asked to share the review outcomes with staff and students as follows:

- Meet with the School President to discuss the evaluative report and the proposed actions in response to the recommendations.
- Prepare a summary for the SSCC comprising: the commendations and recommendations arising from the review; the outcome of the review (confidence statement); the School/Department's proposed actions in response to the recommendations; and a formal note of thanks to those who participated in the process. The DoT is strongly encouraged to provide the SSCC with a progress update at a future meeting.
- Share the summary with the School/Department's Teaching Committee
- Circulate the summary prepared for SSCC to all students in the School/ Department.

Review outcomes can also be shared in marketing materials and on the School/ Department website.

To assist the Quality team to identify enhancements that can be made to their internal processes, the review team, School President, and DoT will be asked to complete a short survey.

10. Action plan

The School/Department will be asked to submit an action plan (*Appendix 9*) to outline intended actions and timescales in response to the review recommendations. The action plan should be discussed with the School/Department's Learning & Teaching Committee and SSCC prior to submission, and actions should be clearly understood by students. The action plan should include a statement outlining the steps taken to share the review outcomes and related actions with staff and students.

AMG will review the plan to ensure that the recommendations have been adequately addressed, and that staff and students receive feedback on the outcomes of the review and were consulted on the production of the plan. AMG may request further follow-up reports, for example where the plan indicates the setting up of a working group, pilot, or initiative.

11. Year-on update

The School/Department will be asked to provide a progress update (*Appendix 9*) one year from the submission of the action plan. The DoT will be asked to revisit the action plan and provide a short update highlighting the outcome and impact of each action. AMG will consider the update and either approve or request additional information to complete the review process.

12. How review data is used

Personal data will be shared in line with the statutory code for information sharing. When planning and conducting reviews, the University will only share personal data as necessary to meet the requirements of the review process. DoTs are asked to take care when authoring the RA and compiling the AIS to ensure that individuals and their experiences are only identified where necessary to inform the review process. The

Quality team and the University Data Protection Officer are available to provide advice and support.

The University reflects on strategic issues arising from reviews and other quality processes and makes use of this information as part of its strategic approach to quality enhancement.

The Quality team produces an annual summary of themes and feedback from the University-led reviews of learning and teaching for the AMG and the University's Learning and Teaching Committee. Schools/Departments may be invited to share good practice identified in the review process with members of the community.

Review documentation is shared with University staff via the Education SharePoint site. When documentation is uploaded to SharePoint, a notification informing colleagues that the documentation is available is issued via the Education Updates by the Education and Student Experience team.

13.   Student engagement

Student engagement is a vital part of the review process. Guidance on the School President's role in the review process can be found in *Appendix 6*.

Prior to the review

The School/Department should notify students of the review at an early stage, for example at the first SSCC meeting of the academic session in which the review will be held, and by email early in the academic year. Schools/Departments are encouraged to use/adapt the student briefing note (*Appendix 7*). This outlines the purpose and format of the review and how students can contribute to the process.

As outlined in section 6 of this handbook, the School President will gather student feedback to produce a 'Student Voice'. Further information on this document can be found in *Appendix 6*.

The DoT, with input from the School President, will be responsible for identifying a cross-section of students to meet the review team. The student meetings are conducted via parallel sessions to ensure that the views of each level of study are represented. Efforts should be made to ensure that the students are representative of as many different cohorts of the student body as possible. For example, international, home and RUK students; students studying on joint degrees and collaborative programmes; students who have entered university via supported pathways routes, such as the Gateway programme; and students studying part-time, solely online or on the MA Combined Studies programme.

On the review day the review team will split into two groups; one group will meet with sub-honours and PGT students, while the other group will meet with Honours and PGR students. We ask that the DoT provides a list of at least 12 students from each group, who are willing to meet with the review team. The student groups should include (but not limited to) class reps. The School President will be expected to take part in the meeting with Honours students.

The Quality team will be responsible for sending invitations to these meetings.

On the review day

The review team will ask students about their experiences, for example in relation to assessment and feedback, the availability and quality of learning resources and study space, and support services such as the Library and Careers. Students will be able to raise and discuss other topics and are encouraged to share any difficulties or shortcomings they have encountered.

Whilst notes will be taken during the discussions, no comments will be attributed to any individuals. Staff members from the School/Department will not be present during the student meetings. Students are also represented on the review team by way of the President of Education or delegate from the Students' Association and a PGR representative.

After the review

As noted in section 9, the DoT is asked to share the review outcomes with students as follows:

- Meet with the School President to discuss the evaluative report and the proposed actions in response to the recommendations.
- Prepare a summary for SSCC comprising: the commendations and recommendations arising from the review; the outcome of the review (confidence statement); the School/Department's proposed actions in response to the recommendations; and a formal note of thanks to those who participated in the process. The DoT may wish to provide SSCC with a progress update at a future meeting.
- Share the summary with the School/Department's Teaching Committee.
- Circulate the summary prepared for SSCC to all students in the School/ Department.

The DoT should invite comments from the School President on proposed actions to be taken in response to the review team's recommendations prior to the submission of the action plan. The action plan and year-on update will require input and approval from the Teaching Committee.

Appendix 1: Checklist for Directors of Teaching

In advance of the review

- Attend an initial meeting with the Chair of the review team, the Academic Policy Officer, and Quality team Administrator to discuss the review process.
- Provide three nominees in order of preference for the external subject specialist and the names of three colleagues from a cognate discipline in St Andrews for the internal review team member.
- Book two suitable venues in the School/Department to act as the main base for the review team and for any parallel meetings. The main base must comfortably accommodate up to 16 people.
- Notify students of the review at an early stage, for example the first SSCC meeting in the academic session in which the review will be held and an email to all students.
- Draft the Reflective Analysis (RA) in collaboration with colleagues.
- Submit the RA and Advanced Information Set (AIS) to the relevant channel in Teams.
- Create a programme for the review day in consultation with the Quality team. This includes:

  - Determining the sequencing of the meetings for the review day.
  - Recruiting the relevant staff for each meeting.
  - Working with the School President to recruit students for the student meetings.
  - Circulating the final programme to staff and students.

The Quality team will organise travel and accommodation for the review team and catering for the review. Further information on practical arrangements is available in *Appendix 8*.

On the first day of the review

- Provide a 10-minute presentation or introduction at the first meeting of the day. This is delivered by the Head of School and/or DoT. This should include a brief overview of the School/Department (e.g. student and staff numbers, management structure, current status of School/Department and future plans/strategy) as well as what the School/ Department would like to get out of the day.
- Attend other relevant meetings including the last meeting of the day. The review team would like to meet with a wide selection of staff, so it should not be necessary for the DoT to attend all meetings.

After the review

- Review the draft evaluative report produced by the review team and notify the Quality team of any factual corrections.
- Provide a response to the recommendations arising from the review by way of an action plan. A template is available in *Appendix 9*.
- Share the review outcomes with students and staff.
- Submit a year-on update one year after submission of the action plan. A template is available in *Appendix 9*. This will be considered by AMG who will approve the update or recommend further actions.

Appendix 2: Summary of the review process

The key stages of the process are summarised below along with indicative timeframes.

Timescale	Prior to the review day
Academic year prior to review	Chair of review team, Academic Policy Officer, and Quality team Administrator attend an initial meeting with Head of School and DoT to discuss review process
Academic year prior to review	Quality team provides access to URLT Team and School/Department specific channel in MS Teams
Start of academic year of the review	School/Department inform staff and students that the review is taking place and how they can contribute
6 weeks prior to review	DoT submits RA, AIS and draft programme, and School President submits Student Voice
	Documentation considered by review team. Some additional information may be requested by the team
4 weeks prior to review	DoT submits final version of the programme. Quality team Administrator issues meeting invites to all attendees
2 weeks prior to review	Review team submit areas of good practice and areas for exploration on the review day. These key themes are circulated to the review team in advance of the pre-meeting.
7-10 days prior to review	Review team attends pre-meeting to discuss key themes and programme
1 week prior to review	Key themes are shared with DoT for circulation to review participants
	The review
	Review team meets with Head of School and DoT, and groups of staff and students
	After the visit
1 week after review	Academic Policy Officer circulates draft commendations and recommendations to review team for approval
4 weeks after review	Externals submit commentary for inclusion in evaluative report
5 weeks after review	Academic Policy Officer circulates draft evaluative report to team for input
6 weeks after review	Report shared with School/Department in final draft form to allow for any factual corrections. Once finalised, School/Department shares report outcomes with staff and students, and Academic Policy Officer (Quality) shares report with AMG
6-8 weeks after report finalised	School/Department produces action plan in response to recommendations. Action plan considered by AMG

One year after submission of action plan	School/Department provides year-on update for consideration by AMG

Appendix 3: Reflective Analysis template

**REFLECTIVE ANALYSIS
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF XXXX
<DATE OF REVIEW>**

1. Introduction (approx. 2 pages)

a. The development and approval process for the RA and how students were consulted in the review process.
b. What the School would like to gain from the review process and specific areas the School would like the review team to explore.
c. A brief update on the impact of the enhancements made in response to the last review.
d. Any significant developments since the last review and the impact of these on the student experience

2. School/Department context and strategy (no more than 2 pages)

a. Full range of provision under review (see section 2 of the handbook)
b. Staffing
c. Student numbers, composition, and key trends
d. Strategic priorities and alignment with the Education and Student Experience Strategy themes, i.e. world-leading, diverse, digital, sustainable and entrepreneurial.

3. Enhancing the student experience

Schools are asked to provide brief commentary on the approach to and effectiveness of:

a. Supporting students in their learning (*e.g. advising, transitions support, wellbeing, internships*)
b. Listening and responding to the student voice
c. Equality, diversity and inclusivity
d. Employability skills and graduate attributes in line with our Employability Strategy *(e.g., this could include modules with a specific focus on employability and/or industry involvement, internships, placements, subject-specific skills and knowledge, authentic assessments, VIP modules, etc., as well as co-curricular activities. You could also highlight how you communicate the employability relevance of the teaching and assessment methods used in teaching that is not explicitly employability focused. At PGR level, please highlight activities related to academic and non-academic careers, e.g., tutoring / demonstrating, research assistant, conference (co-) organisers, commercialising research, placements / internships.*

4. Enhancing learning and teaching

Schools are asked to provide brief commentary on the approach to and effectiveness of:

a. Curriculum design and development (at modular and programme level)
b. Intended learning outcomes
c. Assessment and feedback
d. UG and PGT teaching structures and methods
e. PGR supervision, review, and skills training
f. Resources for learning and teaching (*e.g. teaching/study/communal spaces/labs, Library and online resources*)
g. Identifying and sharing good practice within the School, University and beyond
h. Engaging, supporting, and developing both staff and PGRs who teach (*including engagement in peer observation of teaching*).

5. Managing quality and academic standards

Schools are asked to provide brief commentary on the use (and usefulness) of external and internal benchmarks in the design and delivery of programmes.

a. Reflection on the alignment of modules to UK Quality Code, SCQF and Subject Benchmark Statements (*Please ensure you comment on all three external reference points*)
b. Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (if relevant)
c. Course and programme approval
d. Annual Academic Monitoring (*this should include reflection on the effectiveness of the three-stage process (reports, dialogues, and dissemination event) and follow up on School and University-level actions arising from the process*)
e. External Examining (*including approaches to encourage diversity within the External Examiner population*)

Appendix 4: Advance information set

Documents should be converted into PDFs (unless otherwise stated), labelled as shown and documents provided should be clearly described in the 'Requirements' column. For example, module titles should be provided for each handbook included. If appropriate, additional context may be added.

File name	Requirements
AIS00 Contents list	Coversheet that briefly outlines contents of AIS
AIS01 Draft programme	Include names and job titles of staff. A final version with student names should be submitted four weeks before the review. **The programme should be submitted in Word format**.
AIS02 Cohort handbooks	UG, PGT and PGR handbooks as a single PDF with bookmarks or provide hyperlinks to the handbooks in a PDF
AIS03 SSCC meeting minutes	Sample (2-3) of Student-Staff Consultative Committee meeting minutes. Each meeting should be clearly titled, and minutes should be combined into a single PDF
AIS04 Module handbooks	<u>No more than</u> two module handbooks for each level (1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, and 5000) as a single PDF with bookmarks
AIS05 Staff list	A staff list including teaching and administrative duties. Please indicate which members of staff act as External Examiners and for which institution.
AIS06 MEQ response rates*	Last two years' data showing School, University and highest School response rates.
AIS07 External Examiner reports*	External Examiner reports for previous two years
AIS08 Programme specifications*	Hyperlink to the School/Department's programme specifications
AIS09 AAM report*	Annual Academic Monitoring report from previous academic year
AIS10 Teaching factsheet*	Teaching factsheet produced by Planning
AIS11 URLT year-on update*	Year-on update from previous review
AIS12 Strategic plan/ statement*	A hyperlink to the School/Department's strategic plan/statement on the School/Department website, if available
AIS13 Attainment gap data*	Attainment gap data for gender, disability and ethnicity for School and University provided by Planning
AIS14 PSRB documentation	Accreditation letter(s)/report(s) from relevant professional, statutory, or regulatory bodies (PSRBs) if appropriate

AIS15 Graduate Outcomes*	Student views from the Graduate Outcomes survey on questions relating to the relevance of provision for their careers
AIS16 Outcome report *	Outcome report from the Five-stage review process of collaborative provision, if applicable (please note that the review of collaborative provision will not be revisited during the URLT process)
AIS17 PGT report for new programme(s)*	The most recent PGT report/Four-year portfolio report and AMG response for new PGT programme(s), if applicable.

* These files will be provided by the Quality team.

The review day follows a standard format. There is scope to make some adjustments where appropriate, for example adding an extra staff meeting, rearranging meeting times. Please discuss this with the Quality team.

<div align="center">

University-led review of learning and teaching
<School/Department>
<Date of review>

</div>

Main base: <name of room>
Parallel meetings: <Name of room>

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Programme

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DAY 1

0930	**Review team convenes**
0945	**Overview of School** *This will include a 10-minute (max) presentation or introduction by the School/Department. This should include a brief overview of the School/Department (e.g. student and staff numbers, management structure, current status of School/Department and future plans/strategy) as well as what the School would like to get out of the day* 1. Name, Head of School 2. Name, Director of Teaching
1100	**Coffee**
1115	**Recruitment, admissions, advising and exchanges** 1. Name and capacity within which they are attending, e.g. Admissions Officer 2. Name and capacity within which they are attending, e.g. Study Abroad Coordinator 3. Name and capacity within which they are attending, e.g. Sub-Hons Adviser Etc
1200	**Review team reconvenes**
1215	**Curriculum and assessment (including examinations and feedback)** 1. Name and capacity within which they are attending, e.g. Director of Teaching 2. Name and capacity within which they are attending, e.g. Exams Officer Etc
1300	**Lunch**
1345	**Tour of teaching facilities** Name and job title of tour guide
1415	**Review team reconvene**
1430	**Meeting with taught Postgraduate students** *School/Department to recruit around 12 students* 1. Name, year and degree programme 2. Name, year and degree programme	**Meeting with PhD students (including Tutors)** *School/Department to recruit around 12 students* 1. Name and year 2. Name and year 3. Etc.

	3. Etc.	
1515	**Review team reconvene**	
1530	**Meeting with Sub-Honours students** *School/Department to recruit around 12 students* 1. Name, year, and degree programme 2. Name, year, and degree programme 3. Etc.	**Meeting with Honours students** *School/Department to recruit around 12 students including the School President* 1. Name, year, and degree programme 2. Name, year, and degree programme 3. Etc.
1615	**Review team reconvenes**	
1630	**End of Day 1**	

DAY 2

0930	**Review team convenes**
1000	**Recently appointed academic staff at all levels** 1. Name, job title and start date (month/year) 2. Name, job title and start date (month/year) Etc
1045	**Review team reconvenes**
1100	**Management of postgraduate programmes and, if applicable, short courses** 1. Name and capacity within which attending, e.g. Director of PGT programmes 2. Name and capacity within which attending, e.g. Programme Director for X Etc
1145	**Coffee**
1200	**Meeting with support staff** 1. Name and job title 2. Name and job title Etc
1245	**Review team reconvenes**
1300	**Brief meeting with Head of School and Director of Teaching**
1315	**Lunch for review team and draft commendations/recommendations**
1400	**End of visit**

Appendix 6: Guidance for School Presidents

A review of learning and teaching is being carried out in your School/Department this academic year. As School President, you are asked to participate in the review process prior to the review, on the review day and following the review. The School President plays an important role in the review process and your contribution is very much valued.

A University-led review of learning and teaching allows the University to explore all aspects of learning and teaching within the School/Department to enhance the quality of academic provision and the student experience. All reviews of Schools/Departments and student-facing units are carried out on a six-year cycle. These reviews meet external requirements for Higher Education Institutions.

The review is carried out by a senior member of the Principal's Office, two external subject specialists (from the same subject area in other Higher Education institutions in the UK), an internal member of academic staff from a related discipline, the Students' Association President of Education or delegate, a Postgraduate Research (PGR) representative and an Academic Policy Officer (Quality) ('the review team').

At the beginning of the academic year, you will have the opportunity to meet with a member of staff from the Quality team and the Student Representation Co-ordinator from the Students' Association to discuss your role in the review and ask any questions. A 'Student Voice' channel has been set up in MS Teams for School Presidents involved in reviews being held during the academic year and School Presidents are invited to use this channel to contact the Quality team for advice/questions. The President of Education also has access to this channel and can offer support and guidance.

1. In advance of the review

In advance of the review day, the School President is asked to:

a. Comment on the Reflective Analysis
b. Write and submit a Student Voice.
c. Assist the DoT in identifying and recruiting students for the meetings with the review team.

Reflective Analysis

The School/Department prepares a Reflective Analysis and supporting documentation in advance of the review. The Director of Teaching (DoT) will discuss the Reflective Analysis with you and ask you to comment on the document. The Reflective Analysis is submitted to the Quality team for circulation to the review team six weeks prior to the review day.

Student voice

As School President, you will be responsible for gathering student views for your School/Department to produce the 'Student Voice'. The Student Voice is a summary of student feedback. A sample Student Voice is provided. Student views are an important and valuable contribution to the review. It provides students with an opportunity to highlight to the review team areas that are working well in the School/Department as well as any areas that could be enhanced. School Presidents are encouraged to use an online survey to collect feedback from students at all levels of study (undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research students). A short simple survey comprising the following three questions is recommended (a template email to accompany the survey will be provided).

- What is working well?
- Could anything be improved?
- Any additional comments?

School Presidents are encouraged to add to the 'Student Voice' any feedback or issues that have been raised in their School/Department from discussions they have had with class reps/students as part of their School President role.

In addition to the survey feedback, the Academic Representation Co-ordinator will provide School Presidents with student feedback that has been collated from various sources in their School/Department over the past few years. This feedback has been collected by the Students' Association and may be added to the Student Voice.

The student voice document should be uploaded to the 'Student Voice' channel in MS Teams six weeks prior to the review. It is recommended that the survey is distributed to students at least one month before the Student Voice is due to be submitted. For reviews being held in semester 2, feedback may be collected in semester 1.

Meetings with the review team

On the day of the review, the review team will meet with students from the School/Department and hold separate meetings with members of staff. The DoT may ask for your assistance in recruiting students to meet the review team. As School President, you will be expected to take part in the Honours student meeting. For further details on the typical format for the day, please see *Appendix 5*.

2. **On the day of the review**

The meetings with students will be an opportunity for the review team to follow up on anything highlighted in the Student Voice document and to ask about the student experience of studying in the School/Department at St Andrews. The review team may also ask students about: their introduction to the School; their learning experience; assessment and feedback on their work; opportunities for them to provide feedback on their experience; the availability and quality of learning resources and study space; and support services such as the University Library and Careers Centre.

Students will also be able to raise and discuss other topics. Reviewers wish to explore commendable aspects of the degree programmes and student experience. This will enable good practice to be reinforced and disseminated to other School/Departments as appropriate. Students should also tell the team about any difficulties or shortcomings they have encountered, as one of the aims of this review is to help the School/Department improve the quality of provision and the student experience.

Notes will be made on all discussions held during the review, but no comments will be attributed to any individuals. No members of staff from the School/Department are present during the student meetings, so please feel free to speak frankly and encourage your peers to do the same.

3. **After the review**

The review team will write an evaluative report, which will incorporate a summary of the principal strengths and weaknesses of the School/Department's provision, as judged by the review team, together with commendations and recommendations.

The DoT is asked to share the review outcomes with staff and students as follows:

- Meet with the School President to discuss the evaluative report and the proposed actions in response to the recommendations.

- Prepare a summary for SSCC comprising: the commendations and recommendations arising from the review; the outcome of the review (confidence statement); the School/Department's proposed actions in response to the recommendations; and a formal note of thanks to those who participated in the process. The DoT may wish to provide SSCC with a progress update at a future meeting.
- Share the summary with the School/Department's Teaching Committee.
- Circulate the summary prepared for SSCC to all students in the School/Department.

If you would like to discuss the role further or if you have any queries, please contact Laura Palmer from the Quality team via the 'Student Voice' Team in MS Teams.

Below are some examples of the enhancements that Schools/Departments have made as a result of student feedback. Please feel free to share these examples with students.

1. Updated Student handbooks and revamped School webpages to provide clearer guidance for entrant and current students.
2. Addressed sustainability and accessibility issues around field trips for students.
3. Supported students in engaging with matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.
4. Introduced smaller tutorial groups for sub-honours students.
5. Provided clearer guidance and additional support for postgraduate students who teach.
6. Implemented a strategy on employability and careers engagement for students at all levels.
7. Supported postgraduate students to set up seminars to share their research activities.

Sample student voice

Student voice
University-led Review of Learning and Teaching School of xxx

When gathering feedback from **undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate students**, you may wish to ask for their opinion on aspects such as the curriculum, assessment and feedback, learning and teaching provision, study abroad and work placements (if applicable), progression (for example the transition from junior honours to senior honours), and learning resources. Once you have collated this information, upload this form to the 'Student voice' team in MS Teams. If you need any advice or support, please contact us via the MS Teams channel.

1. How was the student voice gathered?

The student voice was gathered in two ways. Primarily, for the role of Student Voice Survey, a Student Voice Survey form was circulated via email and lecturers displayed a QR code in their lectures in Week 3 of Semester 2. The survey contained four questions that followed the template of the Student Voice: cohort (UG, PGT, PGR), what is working well, what could be improved, and any further comments. The Student Voice Survey had some engagement, with 38 responses, 37% UG, 55% PGT and 8% PGR. Additionally, the mid-semester feedback form open from Week 4 to 6 of Semester 2 was used to gather further information. Whilst this survey does have a larger range of questions, insights can be gained on what is working well and what can be improved in the school. This form is available to UG and PGT, and got 68 responses. To ensure a fair representation of PGR students, I also contacted the PGR representative who had sent a similar survey, with 14 responses.

I have also had informal chats with several students from across the School. Whilst most of the content of the Student Voice are from the two forms, I have supplemented answers with informal discussion if needed.

This has been further supplemented by support from the St Andrews' Students' Association. To form a beginning draft of the Student Voice Report, the Students' Association Staff members synthesised student feedback and comments in the School from the following data sources:
- Class and Postgraduate Rep Handover forms (approx. 4 years of data)
- School President Handover Forms (approx. 2 years of data)
- School President Weekly Report Forms (approx. 2 years of data)

The comments from these existing data sources provide historical context and commentary on what students perceive to be working well and areas for improvements in the School. The School President ultimately reviewed the staff-synthesised content, making edits, removals, and additions, as deemed appropriate.

2.	What is working well in the School? *Please provide feedback at each level of study*

Undergraduate

Students find the atmosphere of the school very friendly, and this is, in my opinion, one of the best things about the school. Students appreciate that they can talk to lecturers and students from all year groups (UG to PGR) about anything. There is a feeling that all the students are here together, and there is a good support system throughout the school. Specific support for sub honours students is available through the Lab Demonstrator Scheme. The Lab Demonstrators are PGR students who are available in the xxx from 2-5pm Tuesday to Friday, with Tuesday and Wednesday prioritised for second-year students and Thursday and Friday prioritised for first-year students. On a scale of 1 – 10 on the confidence of students asking for help from lab demonstrators, the average was 7.38. The coffee area is also highly

valued by students. Free events are regularly hosted in the coffee area, from Jannetta's to coffee breaks, which promote students and staff from across the School to chat outside of a teaching environment.

Furthermore, lecturers are truly appreciated in the School. Since the pandemic, the School of xxx has made significant strides in improving student experiencing, building a responsive academic environment. Responsive School Presidents and an open-door policy with staff and lecturers ensured a successful transition from online learning to hybrid models of teaching. Lecturers are always available for students. They are happy to answer questions on coursework, course content or any other clarifications students may have. Lecturers make it clear where their offices are in the beginning of the year, and if they have any specific office hours.

In terms of academics, students highly praise lectures. They find lectures well-presented and the course to be engaging. Furthermore, to solidify their learning, all modules have exercise classes or tutorials. In these classes, students are given questions to prepare beforehand, which then can be discussed in these sessions. Students find them useful to help understand content covered and make understanding and implementing coursework easier. In some modules, discussion in small groups is encouraged during the lectures to answer questions from the lecturers. This makes lectures more engaging, and students feel more confident answering questions. Coursework improvements include more timely and structured feedback), flexible marking policies, and additional examples during xxx sessions. Targeted support, like tutorials for students new to group projects in xxx, was also provided.

Taught Postgraduate

PGT students had similar praises to UG students.

There is a range of module and dissertation choices. Students can take 4th and 5th level modules, giving them a wide range of topics that they may be interested in. The modules are well structured, engaging and interesting, with high quality lectures and teaching materials. There are many resources available to students, to help with understanding of course content and coursework. Lecturers are seen as approachable and friendly, which is appreciated by PGT students who are new to the school this year.

Research Postgraduate

PGR students find the communication across staff, students and supervisors to be good. There is a well-defined support network for the cohort, and students know how to find support if needed. Furthermore, PGRs find the xxx support and admin team useful, with people happy to help during induction and any issues with the set up.

PGR students are happy with the resources they are given as students. Needs of the students are met with regards to equipment and office space. The PGR students appreciate that they get their own building, the PHD Lab.

Finally, there is an excellent social life for the PGR students. There are good opportunities to socialise with other PGR students, including events on Friday evenings and the Burn trip.

| 3. | Could anything be improved in the School? If so, please provide details. |

Undergraduate

Students have commented on the structure of coursework. Some students find that there is little guidance in how to start a piece of coursework, especially in sub-honours, and think that they would benefit from slightly more structure when they start their work. Furthermore, students also want clearer guidelines on coursework report requirements. In some instances, there is a variation in what different tutors want for a piece of coursework. This confuses
students, as they may have different tutors for different modules, and will be praised by one tutor and critiqued by another for writing a report one way. Some modules do offer guidance on

what is expected in a report, for example xxx, however it is more difficult in sub-honours where there are multiple tutors for one module. This was discussed with myself, my fourth-year class representative and our Director of Teaching after the Staff- Student Consultative Meeting last semester, so we are aware of this and are actively working on a solution. I am aware that the Director of Teaching has asked tutors, especially in sub- honours, to ensure consistency with marking of coursework reports.

Timetabling is also a major concern for students. Many students have commented that their lectures are at inconvenient times (9am and 5pm), which is especially difficult for commuting students. Commuting students noted that they would skip lectures as if they came to a 5pm lecture, they would not be able to get home until 7:30pm if not later. Furthermore, joint degree students struggle with this as well. One first year student noted that they have a schedule conflict with a required class in another module, and therefore they had been skipping lectures every other week.

Taught Postgraduate

To provide some context, students on the xxx MSc, xxx MSc, and xxx MSc are required to have a 2.1 degree in xxx and be competent xxx and students on the xxx MSc and xxx MSc are required to have a 2.1 degree in any subject. In previous years, there has been no expectation for PGT students to be required to xxx in first semester. However, from this year, this has been changed, and PGT should expect to xxx. Upon discussion with the Deputy Director of Teaching, this change is made clear to applicants to the program.

However, many PGT students have found that the level of xxx knowledge required is too high, and there are very high expectations from lecturers. For students who have come to the university with no xxx experience, they have struggled with some modules due to the expectations that they will be able to pick up xxx and are often only given one lecture as a review for the xxx that is to be used. Students have noted that some lecturers have problems explaining content for complete beginners, especially in modules that 4th year students are able to take, given the experience of the honours students. The opposite occurs for students who have a xxx degree background. These students have made complaints that they are not able to take all the modules they wanted due to pre-requisites despite having studied those modules in their undergraduate degree from a different university.

The School of xxx offers a xxx MSc Online. Students on this course have expressed that they feel disconnected from the university. Engagement from the online cohort is low, and despite having a Microsoft Teams with the students studying the online MSc, only a few are active. Online MSc students have expressed wanting a way to connect with each other, and have online events that could support them with societies and career events.

Research Postgraduate

PGR students feel that issues being raised by students are not handled with well. It can be difficult for a struggling student to be heard, and PGR students want a better point of contact to listen to issues. PGR students noted that the workload expectations could be improved.
Furthermore, students have expressed wanting follow-ups to issues, to ensure that issues are adequately resolved, as some students feel alone. A suggested solution to this is improving reviews. Students believe reviews could catch issues earlier and could provide more support for resolving these issues.

4.	**Additional comments**

Students have 24/7 access to two buildings, xxx and xxx. Both these labs have xxx labs, with xxx also having a quiet lab after requests from students to make this change. The xxx labs allow for collaborative working with group-working and social areas with large screens that students can use. There are powerful and up-to-date PC workstations, and laptop desks where students can plug into the monitor. PCs contain all the software that students will need to complete their practicals, with more powerful machines able to be reserved for dissertation work if needed. The labs are a great place for both work and socialising wtih friends, allowing informal discussion between students. There is a coffee machine for students to use, along with vending machines for a larger variety of snacks and drinks.

Whilst many students have career concerns, the School is very good at providing opportunities to students mainly through the Careers Liaison Officer, Dr Kirsty Ross. For example, the Junior Honours group project has now been collaborated with an external company for the last two years. In 2023-2024, the collaborator was xxx, and in 2024-2025, the collaborator was xxx. This incredible opportunity provides insights to students on how an external company works, and what they may be looking for in prospective employees. Furthermore, it gives students a contact inside the company to chat to for potential recruitment or advice on interviews. Furthermore, the two xxx societies, St Andrews xxx and xxx, are sponsored by a variety of companies who host events for students to attend and learn more about their companies. These two societies are well-supported by the school.

Student representation is truly valued in the School of xxx. The School of xxx student representation is made up of 15 class representatives and 1 school president. There are two class representatives per year group, along with four school roles: sustainability, careers, EDI and disability. Each class representative can be contacted using the school emails (for example: xxx, which are provided to students in the first week of lectures and in the student handbook. Staff are always willing to chat with class representatives, no matter the problem being raised, and are always open to ideas that the student representation may have. There is one Staff-Student Consultative Committee meeting a semester, where class representatives and staff discuss feedback from modules, and potential issues that may have arisen.

☒This feedback can be shared with the School/Department.

xxx

Appendix 7: Communication with students regarding the review and student meetings

The School/Department is encouraged to adapt the information below when notifying students of the forthcoming review and recruiting and briefing them in preparation for the review day.

Suggested text for circulation to students from DoT regarding upcoming review

I am writing to inform you that the <School/Department> is scheduled for a University-led review of learning and teaching (URLT) on <date>. These reviews allow the University to explore all aspects of learning and teaching within the School/Department with the aim of enhancing the quality of academic provision and the student experience.

Student participation in the review process is very much valued and allows students within the School/Department to contribute to the process and have their views heard. There are two opportunities for students to participate in the review process. The first is to complete a short survey which will be issued by the School President, <name of School President>. to all students in the <School/Department>, The survey will ask for your views on what is working well in the <School/Department> and what could be improved. Your feedback will be collated to produce a document, the Student Voice, which will be circulated to the review team in advance of the review day.

Students are also invited to meet with the review team to explore any issues raised in the Student Voice.

To ensure that your views are heard, you should complete the survey and/or volunteer to meet with the review team on the review day.

Following the review, a summary of the review outcomes and actions to address the recommendations made in the report will be shared with all students in the <School/Department>.

Briefing note for students who have agreed to participate in a review meeting

University of St Andrews
University-led Review of Learning and Teaching
<School/Department>
<Date of review>

Information for students

A University-led review of learning and teaching is being carried out in the <School/Department of X> on <date>. Reviews of Schools/Departments are carried out on a six-year cycle and allow the University to explore all aspects of learning and teaching within the School/Department to enhance the quality of academic provision and the student experience. Students play an important role in the review process and your contribution is very much valued.

Groups of students from all levels of study are asked to attend a short meeting on the review day to chat with the review team about their experiences at St Andrews. Your School President will already have gathered student feedback and produced a document, the Student Voice. This is circulated to the review team in advance of the review day. Following the review, a summary of the review outcomes will be circulated to all students in the <School/Department>.

The review is carried out by a senior member of the Principal's Office, two external subject specialists (from the same subject area in other Higher Education institutions in the UK), an internal member of academic staff from a related discipline, the President of Education (DoEd) from the Students' Association, a Postgraduate Research (PGR) Representative and an Academic Policy Officer (Quality) ('the review team').

Meeting with the review team on the review day

The review team will talk to representative groups of students and staff about learning and teaching. They will ask about your experience of studying <subject> at St Andrews, for example in relation to:

- your introduction to the School/Department
- your learning experience
- assessment and feedback on your work
- opportunities for you to provide feedback on your experience
- the availability and quality of learning resources and study space
- support services, e.g. Library and Careers.

You will also be able to raise and discuss other topics. The reviewers wish to explore commendable aspects of the teaching you receive and the learning opportunities you are given. This enables good practice to be reinforced and disseminated to other Schools/Departments as appropriate. You are also encouraged to tell the team about any difficulties or shortcomings you have encountered, as one of the aims of this review is to improve the quality of provision in the <School/Department> and the student experience.

Notes will be made on all discussions held during the review, but no comments will be attributed to any individuals. No members of staff from the <School/Department> are present during the student meetings, so please feel free to speak frankly.

Meeting times

The review team will divide for parallel undergraduate sub-honours and Honours meetings and also for the postgraduate meetings.

A meeting invite will be emailed to you advising you of the location and time of the meeting.

Your participation and feedback in the review process is very much valued and appreciated.

Appendix 8: Practical arrangements for reviews

Communications and documentation

MS Teams is used as a platform/portal for review-related communication and documentation for all reviews. A review team will be set up in MS Teams with a private channel for each School/Department scheduled for review.

All DoTs will be invited to join the general review team and relevant private channel for their School/Department. Additional colleagues such as the Head of School can be given access upon request of the DoT. The Quality team Administrator will upload the Reflective Analysis (RA), evaluative report, action plan and programme from your School/Department's previous review into the School/Department's private channel for reference. A template RA and programme will also be provided.

The Quality team will also post a list of key dates for the review process (including the submission deadline for the RA and evaluative report) in the School/Department channel. A separate channel will be set up for School Presidents to upload their 'Student voice'.

Requirements for the review day

The review team will require a meeting room within the School/Department to use as their main base on the review days. This should be arranged by the School/Department. The meeting room should be large enough to accommodate the review team as well as colleagues invited to the meetings (6 members of the review team and approx. 10 staff members/students). As lunch and refreshments will also be served in this room, please ensure there is an additional surface/table available for this use. A meeting room will also be required for the parallel sessions with students on the first day of the review.

The review team will require access to the meeting room from 0830 until 1730. The School/ Department is asked to ensure that the review team can enter and exit the building with ease at these times.

Access to power sockets for charging laptops throughout the day will also be required. Extension cables should be supplied if there is an insufficient number of power sockets in the room.

Lunch and refreshments for the review team will be arranged by the Quality team through University catering. Dietary requirements will be requested in advance of the meeting.

Appendix 9: Action plan and year-on update

Schools/Departments are asked to submit an action plan in response to the recommendations outlined in the evaluative report. The Quality team will add the recommendations from the evaluative report and the School/Department should summarise their intended actions in response to the recommendations. The Quality team will complete this column for any University recommendations made when agreed by the Academic Monitoring Group. Timeframes for the completion of actions should also be provided. These should be as specific as possible, e.g. May 2024.

University-led Review of <School/Department>
<Date>
Action plan in response to recommendations

Recommendation	Response/action	Timeframe
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

☐ Action plan produced in consultation with the School/Department's Learning and Teaching Committee

Please provide a statement on the steps taken to share the review outcomes and proposed actions with staff and students.

Schools/Departments are also asked to submit a year-on update in the format below. The action plan can be used a starting point. The short year-on updates should be provided in red, and the title of the document should be updated to clearly indicate that it is a year-on update. The updates should include the **outcome** and **impact** for each action.

University-led Review of <School/Department>
<Date of review>
Year-on update

Recommendation	Response/action **and year-on update in red**	Timeframe
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

☐ Update produced in consultation with the School/Department's Learning and Teaching Committee

Please provide a statement on the steps taken to share the update on actions in response to the review with staff and students:

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.1	Appendix 3 updated to reflect ELIR recommendations.		Quality team, Proctor's Office	August 2022
1.2	Annual updates		Quality team, Education and Student Experience	August 2023
1.3	Update to programme template		Quality team, Education and Student Experience	September 2023
1.4	Annual updates		Quality team, Education and Student Experience	July 2024
1.5	Update links to SFC guidance and update AIS template		Quality team, Education and Student Experience	August 2024