



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 2023

## 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:

- [Scottish Funding Council guidance to Colleges and Universities on Quality for AY 2022-23 and AY 2023-24](#)
- [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 of 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, 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 new 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.
- **Director of Education:** The elected sabbatical officer who represents UG and PGT students 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 most 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 the scope for 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 but can be extended to the night of the first day where appropriate.

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 Centre for Educational Enhancement and Development. The inclusion of a PGR student member on the team will encourage a greater focus on the PGR student experience.

## **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 (SSCC)s, module evaluation questionnaires (MEQs) 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 on 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'. This will summarise what is working well and areas for development or exploration on the review day. With the permission of the School President, this feedback 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:

- examples of good practice
- areas of interest to explore on the review day
- quick questions for the School/Department to clarify in advance of the review day.

These key themes will be collated and discussed by the review team during a planning meeting, which will be held one week in advance of the review via MS Teams. The key themes will also be shared with the School/Department. The review team may request additional information up to ten days prior to the review.

## **8. The review day**

Reviews are normally held over one day. 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. Colleagues will be encouraged to discuss the operation of their School/Department, reflect on issues and challenges, and highlight examples of good practice worthy of dissemination across the University. Colleagues are encouraged to contribute fully and openly in meetings. Due to time constraints on the review day, aspects evidenced as routinely positive may not be discussed during the review day 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 day. Practical arrangements for reviews can be found in [Appendix 8](#).

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

The review team should be mindful that colleagues in the School/Department may feel apprehensive about the review. Staff and students meeting with the review team should be made as comfortable as possible. The Chair should ensure the meetings are conversational and that all colleagues 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 of the day. 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, Student 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 received feedback on the outcomes of the review and were consulted on the production of the plan. AMG may request further follow-up reports in certain circumstances, 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.

## **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 the first SSCC meeting of the academic session in which the review will be held, and by email to all students. 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 each stage of the process.

The RA should include reflection on student feedback obtained via routine quality mechanisms such as SSCCs, module evaluation questionnaires (MEQs) and external national surveys.

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 half of the team will meet with sub-honours and PGT students, and one half will meet with Honours and PGR students. We ask that the DoT supplies a list of at least 12 students from each group, who are willing to participate in the review day. 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 out 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 Director of Education 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 DoTs**

### **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 nominees for two external subject specialists and a senior internal colleague from a cognate discipline.
- 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 day. Further information on practical arrangements is available in [Appendix 8](#).

### **On the day of the review**

- Provide a presentation or introduction of no more than 10 minutes 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.

<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Prior to the review day</b>
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 submits key themes and any quick questions for the School/Department to respond to in advance of the review
7-10 days prior to review	Review team attends pre-meeting to discuss key themes and programme
1 week prior to review	Collated themes shared with DoT for circulation to review participants
	<b>The review day</b>
	Review team meets with Head of School and DoT, and groups of staff and students
	<b>After the visit</b>
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

Further to the Enhancement-led review of learning and teaching (ELIR) held in 2020, it was agreed that the following areas for enhancement would be followed up at University-led reviews of learning and teaching: School-based training and support for PGRs who teach; MEQ response rates; and staff engagement in peer observation of teaching. **Please ensure commentary is provided in these areas.**

### 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 actions taken in response to the previous review and any significant developments since the last review.

#### 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. Developing employability and graduate attributes

#### 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 staff
- i. Delivering an inclusive digital/blended offering

## **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

For ease of reference, documents should be converted into PDFs, 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
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
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)

\* These files will be provided by the Quality team.

## Appendix 5: Programme for reviews of Schools/Departments

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

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

**Main base:** <name of room>

**Parallel meetings:** <Name of room>

#### Programme

0845	<b>Review team convenes</b>	
0900	<p><b>Overview of School</b> <i>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</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name, Head of School</li> <li>2. Name, Director of Teaching</li> </ol>	
1015	<p><b>Recruitment, admissions, advising and exchanges</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name and capacity within which they are attending, e.g. Admissions Officer</li> <li>2. Name and capacity within which they are attending, e.g. Study Abroad Coordinator</li> <li>3. Name and capacity within which they are attending, e.g. Sub-Hons Adviser</li> </ol> <p>Etc</p>	
1100	<b>Coffee</b>	
1115	<p><b>Curriculum and assessment (including examinations and feedback)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name and capacity within which they are attending, e.g. Director of Teaching</li> <li>2. Name and capacity within which they are attending, e.g. Exams Officer</li> </ol> <p>Etc</p>	
1200	<p><b>Tour of teaching facilities</b></p> <p>Name and job title of tour guide</p>	<p><b>Meeting with support staff</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name and job title</li> <li>2. Name and job title</li> <li>3. Etc</li> </ol>
1230	Lunch	
1315	<p><b>Meeting with taught Postgraduate students</b></p> <p><i>School/Department to recruit around 12 students</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name, year and degree programme</li> </ol>	<p><b>Meeting with PhD students (including Tutors)</b></p> <p><i>School/Department to recruit around 12 students</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name and year</li> <li>2. Name and year</li> </ol>

	2. Name, year and degree programme 3. Etc.	3. Etc.
1400	<b>Meeting with Sub-Honours students</b> <i>School/Department to recruit around 12 students</i> 1. Name, year, and degree programme 2. Name, year, and degree programme 3. Etc.	<b>Meeting with Honours students</b> <i>School/Department to recruit around 12 students including the School President</i> 1. Name, year, and degree programme 2. Name, year, and degree programme 3. Etc.
1445	<b>Coffee break</b>	
1500	<b>Recently appointed academic staff at all levels</b> 1. Name, job title and start date (month/year) 2. Name, job title and start date (month/year) 3. Etc	
1545	Comfort break	
1600	<b>Management of postgraduate programmes and, if applicable, short courses</b> 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 3. Etc	
1645	<b>Review team reconvenes</b>	
1650	<b>Brief meeting with Head of School and Director of Teaching</b>	
1700	<b>Review team reconvenes</b>	
1730	<b>End of visit</b>	

## **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 Director of Education (DoEd), 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 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 DoEd 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.

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

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

The student voice document is to be uploaded to the 'Student Voice' channel in MS Teams six weeks prior to the review day. 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 students 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

### 1. How was the student voice gathered?

The student voice was gathered in a number of ways. Primarily, a school-wide online survey was circulated via email. The survey contained very open-ended questions as below to determine an unbiased view. Students were asked their year, what was working well, and what could be improved. This survey was then mentioned in lectures by class reps, encouraging the students to follow my email link and complete the survey.. The whole-school survey was interacted with well, gaining nearly 100 responses, including representation from every year group (including postgrads).

Outside of surveys, as school president I have spent a lot of time talking with diverse groups of students in all year groups and modules, in order to develop a rounded student view. The majority of the information on this form is from the school wide survey, and the additional comments have come from my experience in discussions.

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

#### Undergraduate

Students commented on the smooth running of all lectures/labs/tutorial/workshops – the organisation of the school is working like clockwork. As well as this, the resources provided by the school and different lecturers have received high praise: lecture notes, reading material, lectures themselves are all regarded as very high quality and easy to access. Many students also discuss the enjoyment of tutorials – most appreciate the ability to discuss xxx outside of the lecture theatre in small groups alongside fellow students in a supportive atmosphere. Following from this, the level of challenge in the degree is appreciated. While students feel challenged and that they are working hard, most comment on this in a positive light, they are enjoying the xxx they are learning and feel it is at the appropriate level.

The standard of teaching in the school is very high. Students often comment on their enjoyment of the interactive side of lectures. The school uses “clickers” to promote active response and participation in the lectures. A large number of the survey questions mention clickers, noting how helpful they are, and how they encourage positive learning by building from mistakes rather than shutting them down. Interactive learning is also present in workshops, which are highly regarded.

The community and support in the school are the things I personally am most proud of. A number of responses both in the survey and during discussions reflected the same opinion. Often commented on is the excellent signposting from the school. People know where to go and who to talk to if they have issues. Furthermore, a number of staff members adopt an ‘open-door’ policy, encouraging students to speak to them about anything, whether it is school related or not. This is very appreciated by everyone in the school. As far as community, we have several group study spaces which foster a great community atmosphere. Most students are part of some kind of study groups, whether that be as part of a module or just as friends. The teamwork aspect of xxx is very important to us, both inside and outside of the classroom, and common spaces such as these allow for all years to mix together and for students to gain a lot of insight from those with different university experiences. This community is also reflected in strong student-staff relations.

#### Taught Postgraduate

Similar praise as undergraduate. All lectures/labs are well run, and organisation is clear and well signposted. The timetable is sympathetic and fits well with other schedules. As the taught postgraduate classes are very small, there is a great community that forms amongst them, and most also integrate well with the undergraduate students. Again, teaching is appreciated and students find the course interesting. Masters students are represented by both their own class rep and also the respective representatives from their individual module, this works well and ensures a full student view for the student staff council.

#### Research Postgraduate

Good pastoral support both for incoming PhD students and also continuing support throughout their time here. As well as this pastoral support, PGR students also remark on there being a great deal of academic support over their PhD. They find the first year reviews very helpful, and appreciate the measures in place to ensure people are on track with both their research and their wellbeing. Students feel they have good relationships with their supervisors, which is professional without being distant. Within the research groups at the school, there is a good social aspect, with meetings, journal clubs, and lunchtime discussions fostering good relationships between students and staff. There is good funding available, and support for this. People are proud of the work and resources the department creates.

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

#### Undergraduate

Students ask for more support during the labs – this has come up several times, and usually comes down to difference in demonstrator style/approach. As is expected, there is also difference between the tutors, with comments that some tutors are less engaging than others. Every year, we run tutor specific surveys to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each of the tutors, following this up to help them improve.

There has also been a call for a student mentoring scheme: partnering up older undergraduates with entrant students to improve inter-year socialising and provide guidance to younger students. This is something that I as school president and a couple of other students have been working towards this year alongside the Director of Teaching, and will hopefully be in place by the next academic year (if not earlier).

With regard to clickers: as mentioned, they are very much enjoyed by students, to the extent that many survey results mention wanting more clickers in lectures, and harder questions put on them.

As many xxx take a number of xxx modules during their time at St Andrews, it is important to work closely with the school of xxx to ensure there are as few as possible clashes with regards to timetabling, deadlines etc. While the DoTs for both departments work hard in tandem to find the best compromise possible, of course there will always be clashes and deadlines close together. Several students have commented on this as a negative aspect of their degree experience, sometimes feeling overwhelmed by the timings of class tests. This is revised year on year, and hopefully we are able to improve the timetable again next year.

#### Taught Postgraduate

As some students will be entering the MSc course without necessarily a xxx undergraduate degree, it is important to make the course accessible for anyone we accept, without assuming xxx degree knowledge. It has been commented that this is



perhaps not recognised by all lecturers/tutors. So, it will be useful in the future for anyone teaching MSc students to have an idea of their backgrounds beforehand, to avoid any assumptions made in teaching.

#### Research Postgraduate

The main issues that come out of discussions with PhD students are remarks relating to the social aspect of their time at St Andrews. It is noted that, while the community is strong within research groups, it is lacking between different groups. Students have suggested that they would appreciate more PhD events across the whole school, to learn more about the research that goes on within the school, and to feel more involved with university life. As well as this, some students feel that not all information (such as guidelines for taking holidays/maternity or paternity leave) is not 100% clear, sometimes resulting in a bad work-life balance caused by uncertainty.

#### **4. Additional comments**

We are lucky in xxx to have our own building, with multiple spaces dedicated to just xxx students. This has fostered a very supportive community, with people very willing to help each other both pastorally and academically. While we do have this support network, it does not mean that xxx students are invincible. In fact, many of us will face some kind of stress related mental health problems over our time here (as in most schools). This is particularly prevalent in the junior honours year, where deadlines increase and work becomes harder. The school has responded well to this, making people very aware of the support available to them (student services, nightline, members of support staff) and continually revises the JH structure to improve strains on students. Myself and the previous school president also have welfare at the top of our agendas: implementing wellbeing training for staff and introducing a whole school "wellbeing day".

xxx UK-wide has a problem with gender balance. We are lucky at St Andrews to see a large number of our staff being women, including those in important roles. We had a comment on the survey saying it felt like there was "no gender, racial, or LGBT+ bias" in the school, which was great to see. The equality and diversity committee is constantly and diligently working towards eliminating that gender gap, and looking at how to tackle any other imbalances we may have.

Another area under current maintenance is the coding preparation we do. As xxx worldwide turns away from paper and pen and towards computer models, universities must respond with their teaching. We are looking at how to better include coding in our curriculum, and student societies are running pioneering workshops alongside computer science for a number of coding languages.

Careers, while not mentioned in the survey, are something highly focussed on by the school. We have both a designated member of staff as a 'link' with the careers centre, and a careers representative on the Student Staff Council. We work to make everyone aware of the opportunities available to them, and host events including but not limited to: internship panel discussions and PhD information sessions. The careers centre comes into talk to students about scholarship and internship funding, and the university-wide science careers fair hosts many xxx relevant employers (from the industry, financial, and academic sectors). A careers survey will be circulated to determine what students feel is lacking from our approach to careers soon.

Finally, I will comment on academic representation. As well as the school president, every year has their own class reps (3 for each year), including representation for MSc and PhD students. People feel well represented by these people, and comment on

how nice it is to see changes in the degree programme acted out as a direct response to their comments and suggestions. We take our student representation very seriously in xxx, with two student staff council meetings per semester, as well as a mid-semester survey half way through each semester to gauge student experience as we go along, rather than all at the end. As well as academic reps, we also have representation for careers, disabilities, and the library, meaning students are very involved with the inner workings of the school, and student-staff relations are close.

This feedback can be shared with the School/Department.

School President Signature  
Date

## **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**

*Draft text suggested for circulation to students prior to a review of School/ Department. The text may be emailed to students or circulated via any other medium.*

I am writing to inform you that the <School/Department> is scheduled for a University-led review of learning and teaching (URLT) on <date>. The URLT allows 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 provides an opportunity for students within the School/Department to contribute to the process and have their views heard. The School President, <name of School President>, will be in touch with a short survey to ask for your views on what is working well in the <School/Department> and what could be improved. I would very much appreciate if you would take the time to complete this short survey.

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. On the review day, the review team will meet with small groups of students to explore any issues raised in the Student Voice. 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 their 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 Director 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 day. 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.

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 <b>and year-on update in red</b>	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:

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Purpose / changes</b>	<b>Document status</b>	<b>Author of changes, role and school / unit</b>	<b>Date</b>
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