

Enhancement-led Institutional Review of University of Dundee

Outcome Report

November 2018

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About the Enhancement-led Institutional Review method

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The QAA website explains the method for [Enhancement-led Institutional Review \(ELIR\)](#) and has links to the ELIR handbook and other informative documents.¹ You can also find out more about the [Quality Assurance Agency](#)

Threshold judgement about the University of Dundee

The University of Dundee has **effective** arrangements for managing academic standards and the student learning experience. In order to secure the effectiveness of its arrangements for collaborative activity, as a matter of priority the University is asked to improve its academic oversight at institutional level.

This is a positive judgement, which means that, overall, the University meets sector expectations in securing the academic standards of its awards and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience it provides, currently and into the future. The University is asked to take action to demonstrate it meets sector expectations for managing the provision it delivers in collaboration with its partners. This judgement confirms there can be public confidence in the University's awards and in the quality of the learning experience it provides for its students.

Commendations

- 1 The University is commended for the following areas of good practice.
- 2 **Student partnership** - the University and Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA) have a productive and collaborative relationship bringing a wide range of benefits to the student experience, for example there is a well-established Student Partnership Agreement in place which the University and DUSA monitor through mutually-agreed key performance indicators (KPIs) and, through SRC online, students can provide feedback anonymously with examples of feedback topics being considered and actioned by the University.
- 3 **Postgraduate research student experience** - there is an excellent postgraduate research student experience provided across the University including monitoring which takes place at least twice-yearly through thesis monitoring committees, independent of the student's supervisor, and includes both academic progress and pastoral support needs. In addition, a range of imaginative support is available to students such as the Thesis Bootcamp.
- 4 **Institutional oversight and enhancement** - the University has brought about greater institutional oversight and opportunities for systematic enhancement through the introduction of the pivotal associate dean role. Associate deans enhance communication within and between schools, for example through their membership of school committees, bringing greater consistency in the student experience. Together they form an effective cross-school community which serves to enhance learning and teaching and share good practice across the University.
- 5 **Prioritising learning and teaching** - since the previous ELIR in 2013, the University has introduced a number of measures which prioritise learning and teaching across the institution. Staff are recognised for the delivery of high-

of its academic schools, integrating the use of TESTA with the institution's periodic programme review method. This has had a positive impact on assessment design and the experience of students.

7 **Staff and student development provided by the Academic Skills Centre**
- the University's Academic Skills Centre (ASC) is a centre of excellence with a wide-ranging, innovative, responsive and proactive portfolio for students and staff. In addition to the Academic Induction Programme, the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Higher Education and a shorter Learning to Teach in Higher Education programme, the ASC provision includes liaison staff dedicated to schools. For students, ASC offers a comprehensive selection of academic skills support and also works with the Centre for Technology and Innovation in Learning to provide bespoke training in response to topics identified by the schools.

Recommendations

8 The University is asked to consider the following recommendations.

9 **Institutional oversight of collaborative activity** - the University should, as a matter of priority, improve its oversight of collaborative activity to ensure it has effective arrangements in place for identifying and mitigating academic risks. There would be considerable benefit in reviewing the location of responsibility at institutional level for the academic standards and quality of collaborative provision to ensure adequate oversight of key academic quality processes including approval and follow up. There would also be benefit in providing greater clarification of the associate deans' roles in overseeing collaborative provision within schools.

10 **Online distance learning** - progress its work aimed at improving student engagement, representation and support for distance learning students. The University is also asked to develop guidance for programme teams on expected good practice for the design and use of its virtual learning environment in order to provide greater equivalence of experience across programmes and schools.

Further information

14 A more detailed [Technical Report](#) is also available for this review. The Technical Report sets out the team's findings under each heading in the ELIR 4 method.

15 This review and its findings relate to the institution as a whole and do not provide information about individual programmes of study or subjects. For further information about those, contact the institution or visit its [website](#).

16 University sector institutions in Scotland also engage in systematic Enhancement Theme activity. Further information about that work, which has a sector-wide and institutional focus, can be found on the [Enhancement Themes website](#).

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