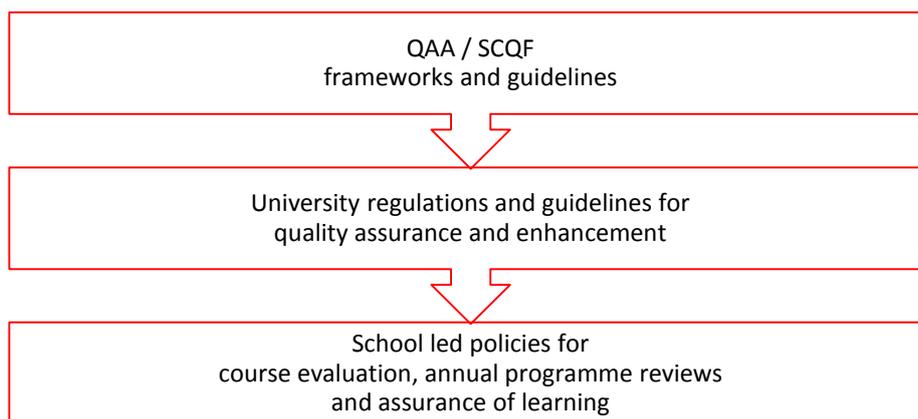


## The quality assurance framework

The University operates within the framework of the QAA, whose role it is to “safeguard quality and standards in UK universities and colleges”, and the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework<sup>1</sup> (SCQF). Central to the work of the QAA is the UK Quality Code for Higher Education<sup>2</sup>, which sets out the expectations all providers of UK higher education are required to meet. Formal academic surveillance is exercised internally in the University and externally through the QAA framework of External Examiners<sup>3</sup> on both programme and course level. Informal academic surveillance is exercised through engagement with external accrediting bodies.

### The quality framework



## Steering committees

### Senatus Quality Assurance Committee

*Senatus Academicus* (Senate) has devolved responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement to the *Senatus Quality Assurance Committee* (SQAC), led by the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance. The committee is responsible, on behalf of the Senatus, for the University's academic quality assurance framework. The committee also acts as a planning forum for the discussion and promotion of developments in academic quality assurance, whether from internal or external incentive.

Membership is available at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/committees/quality-assurance/members>

The full remit of the committee is available at:

<http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Committees/QAC/QACRemit.pdf>

The Quality Unit manages all University-level arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement of degree programmes. The full scope of this may be seen at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality-unit>

### College Quality Assurance Committees

The College, through its Quality Assurance Committee, has responsibility for implementing the University's strategy for quality assurance of learning and teaching across the College. The Director of Quality from each school within the College is a member of the committee.

## Practical implementation of quality assurance and enhancement in the Business School

### University led programme reviews

Under the terms of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Agency all programmes are subjected to a comprehensive review every 5-6 years. The terms of the review allow for flexibility where schools, in advance, can evidence substantial activity which would impact on the review. The review takes into consideration

standard remit items as well as items identified by the school and items identified by the school's students. The main features of the review are:

- A review team composed of internal and external reviewers, including student membership.
- An overarching University remit for all reviews based on the key themes and areas covered in the Quality Assurance Agency's Enhancement-Led Institutional Review:
  - Management of the student learning experience.
  - Management of quality and standards.
  - Management of enhancement and promotion of good practice.
- Remit items selected by the school.
- Remit items selected by students of the school.
- A report containing commendations of good practice and recommendations for action.
- Follow-up of progress of action through the annual quality assurance reporting process.
- Publication of review reports and School/subject area responses on the University website.
- Dissemination of good practice across the University.

### School level annual monitoring

The School reports annually on quality assurance and enhancement within the School based on set items:

- Student performance on courses or programmes, and related trends.
- Feedback from students.
- Feedback from external examiners.
- External accreditation reviews.
- Internal subject reviews.

This report is reviewed by CQAC, which reports annually to the Senatus Quality Assurance Committee. Themes relating to enhancement feature as part of the Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee. CQAC identifies examples of good practice and highlights issues for investigation or action.

### Student-staff liaison committees (SSLC)

SSLCs provide a formal mechanism for communication and discussion between faculty, administrative staff and representatives of the student body about matters relating to the programme and the student experience. The SSLC is a forum for information sharing, with staff sharing information such as themes arising from student surveys, themes from External Examiners reports course evaluation and accreditation visits, while representatives for each course being taught will provide feedback on behalf of the class. The SSLC allow student representatives and staff to identify trends and areas for improvement.

### Course evaluation surveys/end of programme surveys

A comprehensive schedule of course evaluation surveys and end of programme surveys is carried out each year with students taking a course or a programme being invited to participate in these surveys. This information feeds into the quality assurance and enhancement processes in numerous ways, alongside data and information obtained via the national student surveys, NSS, PTES and PRES. After the implantation of robust processes the School has succeeded in improving its response rates considerably.

### School led annual programme reviews

While only recently implemented by College, the School has undertaken annual reviews of all programmes, both taught and research programmes, for a number of years.

Based on a set template, Programme Directors, with input from the relevant member(s) of the programme support team(s), the review leads to a discussion about changes to be made and any resources needed to implement the agreed changes. The template has, over the years, been adapted to take into consideration issues relating to accreditations, such as Assurance of Learning.

Agreed changes including those made to programme aims and learning outcomes will be implemented through consultation processes with the Subject Groups as well as relevant support staff.

## Assurance of Learning

Annual processes for Assurance of Learning has been implemented for all programmes. At the end of each academic year the Programme Director will reflect on attainment of ILO/Programme Outcomes in an 'Assurance of Learning Report'. The Programme Director will reflect on the level of attainment against the set benchmark on the basis of the following principles. Where the cohort fails to meet the benchmark the Programme Director will be required to identify and implement necessary action. In the following year the Programme Director will be required to comment on the effectiveness of the previous year's initiatives. Where a cohort meets the set benchmark the Programme Director will be required to reflect on whether the benchmark, after careful consideration, should be set at a more ambitious level. The School's model for Assurance of Learning has been identified as Best Practice in the University.

## Internal moderation

The process of internal moderation involves another knowledgeable member of staff, the Internal Moderator, inspecting the proposed wording of all assessments prior to this being sent an External Examiners for final moderation prior to this being made public to the students. In addition the Internal Moderator will inspect a selection of assessed work to consider the range of marks, borderline work and comments given in feedback. This may result in changes to marks.

## External examining

External examiners are asked to confirm that standards are at least equal to those of other UK universities of comparable standing. Exam questions and other assessment are moderated by the External Examiner who will also inspect all cases of failed or marginal overall marks as well as representative cases from the complete range of marks. External Examiners are expected to attend meetings of the Board of Examiners and have access to all assessed work before these boards. Reports from External Examiners are scrutinised by the School before a formal response is sent to the External Examiners, explaining how problem raised, if any, will be addressed.

## Course monitoring

At the end of each run every course is evaluated by its teaching staff, and a course monitoring report is completed. Issues that must be addressed are:

- Summary and analysis of final marks, with comment on grade profiles.
- Summary and analysis of the views of all staff involved in teaching the course.
- Summary and analysis of comments (positive and negative) made by External Examiners.
- Issues that arise or proposals for change.

The School has added additional review items to these standard items; items addressing requirements for formative feedback and a reflection of how the course addresses ethics, responsibility and sustainability in business. Course monitoring is carried out for all taught courses. For Exec Ed courses some amendment has been made to the review template.

## Endnote references

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.scqf.org.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/humanities-soc-sci/academic-administration/external-examiners>