The University of Sheffield undertook a QAA Institutional Review in the w/c 10 December 2012. The outcomes of the visit were very positive and the following judgements were made:

- Academic standards at the University meet UK expectations for threshold standards.
- The quality of student learning opportunities at the University meets UK expectations.
- Information about learning opportunities produced by the University meets UK expectations.
- The enhancement of student learning opportunities at the University meets UK expectations.

The following action plan has been produced in response to the Review report and will be updated annually.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How we will respond to the recommendations made</th>
<th>Body responsible for action</th>
<th>To be completed by end of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Action with updates made May 2014 (in blue)</strong></td>
<td><strong>QSC /LeTS and CICS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Establish systems, by the end of the academic year 2013-14, that monitor the duration of external examiner appointments and record the University's own staff appointed to external examiner roles so as to avoid reciprocity.</td>
<td>Work on an online system for managing the external examiners process will commence from summer 2013. The system will cover all aspects of the process including appointment of external examiners, the management of reports, payments to external examiners. This will ensure that the two aspects of this recommendation are addressed. The system will include a database for 1. External examiners appointed to the University 2. University of Sheffield staff who are appointed as external examiners elsewhere For both parts it will include the names, titles and affiliations of external examiners along with their dates of appointment, end dates and subject speciality (both UG and PG). This will also provide the University with a database of staff (both</td>
<td>QSC /LeTS and CICS</td>
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</table>
locally and from outside Sheffield) with expertise in assessment who can be drawn upon for future programme development work. Due to conflicting priorities, the development of a system as described above has not been possible within the timeframe. However, other systems and processes have been put in place to ensure that the University is able to monitor external examiner appointments effectively.

- The database of external examiners appointed by the University has been updated
- A database of University of Sheffield staff who work as external examiners at other institutions is in the process of being set up. Academic departments will be asked to provide details for this on an annual basis.

LeTS staff will use the two databases in conjunction with each other to ensure that reciprocal arrangements are avoided. Heads of Department are also asked to confirm that there are no reciprocal agreements when signing off nominations forms for new external examiners.

| 2. | Ensure all departments share summaries of external examiner reports with students in the current academic year and make external examiner reports available in full to students from 2013-14. | Departments will continue to be required to share summaries of external examiners reports with students at the end of 2012/13 session.

A group, which has been working on ensuring that the external examiner’s system is in line with the QAA Quality Code Chapter B7 on external examiners, will review the format of reports and approaches to sharing the reports with students. The group will also consider issues around communication with current external examiners to inform them of this requirement as well as the wording of invitations to future external examiners to ensure they are aware of the public nature of their reports. This will also feed into work outlined in (1). Departments will then be required to provide students with copies of the full reports from 2013-14. | QSC /External Examiners’ working group | July 2013 |
This requirement has been communicated to staff through the Bulletin for Academic Departments (Sept 2013). From 2013-14, it has been monitored as part of the Policy and Guidance Review. (This takes place every 5-6 years for all departments and precedes the Periodic Review.) A revised report will be used by all external examiners from 2014-15 to help facilitate the sharing of the reports with students. Communications regarding this new report will be sent to all external examiners in May 2014 as part of a communication regarding wider changes to the role of external examiners.

3. Strengthen and ensure consistency in the evaluation of placement learning by students and placement providers, and by the end of the academic year 2013-14 ensure these evaluations are considered in Periodic Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How we will continue to work on areas affirmed by the review</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The steps being taken by the University in cooperation with the Students’ Union to improve student satisfaction with personal tutoring</td>
<td>Ongoing work between the University and the Students’ Union.</td>
<td>ESSC / LeTS /SUSU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Guidance developed on the LeTS Learning and Teaching toolkit website.</td>
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<td>- Development sessions have taken place at Faculty level</td>
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during 2012-13 and departmental level sessions are planned in some faculties for 2013-14

- Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health are running student led projects on personal tutoring
- Work to ensure consistency with information provided on other Student Services websites and the Student Union website.

Ongoing and positive progress reported against this in Annual Reflection 2013-14. For example a system to support the management of personal tutoring meetings has been developed by one department, and several others are planning to adopt it. The Student Ambassadors for Learning in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities project in 2013/4 was on personal tutoring. Work continues to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across the University.

| 2. | The implementation of the Estates Development Plan to incorporate consideration of social space in future capital developments | Ensure communication of the Estates Development Plan to departments and Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees along with guidelines on how this may be achieved. An example of its implementation is the development of the new Engineering teaching building. Ongoing | Learning Infrastructure and Space Management Group | October 2013 |
| 3. | The establishment of a University working group reviewing student engagement in accordance with Chapter B5: Student engagement of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education | The group have produced a definition of “student engagement” following an exercise to map existing practice against QAA Quality Code Chapter B5. This sets out what is understood by “student engagement” at the University and provides a set of principles for further work in this area. A set of web pages will be developed providing details of case studies of good practice from around the University. A Steering Group will be established to ensure that the framework and recommendations relating to it are implemented. The Steering Group has been put on hold due to staffing changes in QSC/ LeTS / Student Engagement Steering Group | July 2013 |
2013-14 but is due to reconvene in 2014-15. However work has
continued to explore greater student involvement in quality
assurance processes, with student involvement in the Annual
Reflection piloted in 2013-14.

| 4. | The proposed steps by the University to share module evaluations with students more widely | Departments have been encouraged to ‘close the feedback loop’ for some time and there are examples of good practice across the University. A reminder and examples of good practice to be sent to departments via Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees. Completed and ongoing monitoring takes place via the Periodic Review | QSC/LeTS/SUSU / FLTCs | October 2013 |
| 5. | The action being taken by the University to align the faculty learning and teaching strategies with the institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy 2011-16 | Faculties are asked for regular progress updates on the University’s Learning and Teaching strategy including implementation plans. This ensures that faculty priorities are in line with the University Learning and Teaching strategy. This has been agreed to be a more effective approach than asking faculties to rewrite their faculty strategies. Ongoing. | ESSC/LeTS/FLTCs/ FDLTs | ongoing |
| 6. | The University's steps to clarify the policy on the status of individuals who may sign collaborative agreements and ensure consistent implementation | This was agreed by QSC in October 2012; Director of Finance or the Chief Financial Officer to sign collaborative agreements; PVC L&T or relevant FPVC to sign off academic content. All future contracts will follow this approach and all guidance documents are being updated accordingly. This will be communicated to all relevant staff. In place. | CPC/FLTCs | July 2013 |

**How we will capitalise on Good Practice identified**

| 1. | Measures to reward and support teaching excellence, including Senate Awards, funding for master's degrees, and promotion routes rewarding teaching excellence | Consultation about a draft University Framework for Professional Development in Learning and Teaching is in progress. The Careers Pathways Working Group is due to report to the HR Management Group and Council before the end of 2012-13 to develop this work further. Senate Award holders will be encouraged to contribute to the | ESSC /CPD working group | July 2013 |
Learning and Teaching Toolkit to promote their good practice. Once agreed, the University Framework for Professional Development will be promoted to staff, including Heads of Departments as part of the Staff Review and Development Scheme and promotions round. The Learning and Teaching Professional Recognition Scheme has been submitted to the HEA and approval granted subject to some minor amendments in April 2014. The Scheme will be promoted to staff during 2014-15.

2. **The institutional scheme of buddying Students’ Union sabbaticals with senior managers**

   The scheme will continue to be run as in previous years as this is found to work well.
   
   **Ongoing**

   **SUSU/UEB Administrator**

   **ongoing**

3. **The work of Student Services in enhancing the student experience through their use of student feedback**

   Work is currently being undertaken within LeTS to review how we manage the national student surveys that the University participates in (NSS, PTES, PRES and SB), looking at the analysis that is carried out and how the results are disseminated.

   **A surveys working group was set up in July 2013 for greater co-ordination within the University of national student surveys both in terms of promotion and the analysis and dissemination of results.**

   **ESSC/LeTS**

   **July 2013**

4. **The appointment of a Disability Transition Officer to coordinate support for disabled students from application to graduation**

   A number of activities to further develop and support this role:
   - Further development of Disability Champions role (student ambassadors who access support through DDSS) including consultative work e.g. evaluation of Dyslexia screening tool; involvement in outreach activities (both in-house and at local schools and colleges);
   - Induction activities (e.g. Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) Event); development of transition experiences for current students (e.g. Students’ Union DDSS Information Stand).
   - Expansion of discrete disability-specific outreach activities with local schools and colleges.

   **DDSS**

   **July 2014**
| 5. | The provision of a residential orientation scheme to introduce international students to their university environment as part of the wider programme of induction |
|---|
| 6. | The involvement of Student Ambassadors for Learning and Teaching in the processes for enhancing the quality of the student experience |

- Undertaking ASC mentoring programme pilot
- Development of pre-entry web pages for DDSS
- Continued expansion of collaborative work with SHU (including development of Disability Transition Network)

**Ongoing**

| 5. | The provision of a residential orientation scheme to introduce international students to their university environment as part of the wider programme of induction |
|---|
| As the residential scheme is only able to accommodate 350 students, an additional series of orientation events open to all international students is planned to take place during the same week from September 2013. Additional orientation events will also be run in October and November for late arrivals. Consider the involvement of home students in international student orientation especially at faculty and department level to improve integration of home and international students. Orientation Week 2014 will be open to as many students as wish to attend. Accommodation will be provided but is not compulsory. Non-traditional UK student groups and returning study abroad / Erasmus students will also be invited to attend. The programme of events will be much expanded to allow students the flexibility to attend whichever events are most interesting or relevant to them. |
| International Student Support |
| For start of 2013-14 |

| 6. | The involvement of Student Ambassadors for Learning and Teaching in the processes for enhancing the quality of the student experience |
|---|
| - Exploring options as to how to introduce SALTs into the International Faculty.  
- SALTS and the SALT LeTS project officer will be presenting at the HEA Conference in July 2013.  
- Completed SALT projects will form case studies to exemplify the different strands of the definition of Student Engagement as referred to in Affirmations point 3 above. A number of SALTS have been successfully involved in Periodic Reviews as panel members. They have also been involved in a number of projects to enhance the student experience such as an HEA funded Flexible Formative Feedback project and the Institution- |
| LeTS |
| For start of 2014-15 |
A presentation was made to the HEA Conference by Amy Jeffries on the Institutional scheme for SALTS, and by Ida Kemp on a faculty SALT project on developing an interdisciplinary module.

Discussions regarding the introduction of SALTs into the International Faculty are ongoing.

**Acronyms**
- CiCS – Corporate Information and Computer Services
- CPC – Collaborative Provision Committee
- CPD – Continuing Professional Development
- DDSS – Disability and Dyslexia Support Service
- ESSC – Enhancement and Strategy sub-Committee
- FDLT – Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching
- FLTC – Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee
- FPVC – Faculty Pro Vice Chancellor
- LeTS – Learning and Teaching Services
- PVC L&T – Pro Vice Chancellor for Learning and Teaching
- PVC R&I – Pro Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation
- QSC – Quality and Scrutiny sub-Committee
- SAL – Student Ambassadors for Learning and Teaching
- SHU – Sheffield Hallam University
- SUSU – Sheffield University Students’ Union