1. PROVIDER CONTEXT

1.1 About the University of Dundee

The University of Dundee is a modern, research-intensive, student-centred university with a cultural heritage from the Scottish ‘older’ universities.\(^1\) We first became an independent university in 1967, having been a college of the University of St Andrews since 1897. We expanded the breadth of our provision between 1994 and 2001 as a result of mergers with Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, Tayside College of Nursing and Midwifery, Fife College of Health Studies and the Dundee Campus of the Northern College of Education. The University now has over 3,000 staff and an annual income of £239 million in 2015/16.

The University has an exceptionally strong research portfolio. Our annual research grants and contracts income is around £73 million, amounting to 30% of our total annual income. Given the prominence of our research profile we take a proactive approach to ensuring that learning, teaching and the student experience have an equal status to research, and to creating an environment where our students' learning is developed and enriched by the world class research at the University.

A testament to the quality of our provision at Dundee is the fact that we have been named Scottish University of the Year in the Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide for the past 2 consecutive years. We were ranked 2\(^{nd}\) in Scotland in the most recent Guide (published 2016).

‘Dundee proves it is possible to be both an outstanding teaching university and one at the cutting edge in research work.’ Alastair McCall, editor of The Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide.

We have a vibrant and engaged students’ association. The Dundee University Students’ Association (DUSA) was originally founded during the University of Dundee's period as a college of the University of St Andrews. The ancient tradition of a Student Representative Council (SRC) was also preserved and further developed. The University has worked together with DUSA and the SRC over many years with an overarching ethos of mutual respect and partnership. In recognition of the key role that DUSA plays in enhancing learning, teaching and the wider student experience, the University has expanded its support for student representation over the past 4 years and now provides funding for 6 DUSA sabbatical student leaders as well as executive, communications, democratic and advocacy support officers to help with continuity and operational management.

Our teaching provision covers a broad range of disciplines and is organised into 9 Schools: Art and Design; Dentistry; Education and Social Work; Humanities; Life Sciences; Medicine; Nursing and Health Sciences; Science and Engineering; and Social Sciences.

Teaching is delivered on 3 campuses with the majority provided at the City Campus in the centre of Dundee. Our Medical School is at Ninewells Hospital on the outskirts of Dundee and we have a small campus in the town of Kirkcaldy where a proportion of our undergraduate Nursing provision is delivered. In 2015/16 just under 16,000 students were enrolled at the University, with the student population comprising approximately 10,000 undergraduate students and 6,000 postgraduate students. Around 4,500 of our students are enrolled on distance learning programmes, predominantly at the taught postgraduate level, so that the student population on our campuses is approximately 11,500.

We have a long-standing commitment to the local community and widening access. In addition to our access summer school, our on-line access programme and our approach to contextual admissions (described in Section 3.3), the University enrols around 100 students a year who either articulate with advanced standing (i.e. into second year or above) from Scottish Colleges of Further Education or enter via our co-curriculum route in partnership with Dundee and Angus College whereby students are enrolled at the University but spend their first year at the College with close curriculum and pastoral support from the University.

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\(^1\) The Universities (Scotland) Act 1966 uses the term ‘older universities’ to refer to Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews. The act provided for the independence from St Andrews of Dundee, which was then granted a similar form of governance under its Royal Charter.
The University developed a 25 year Transformation Vision in 2012. The Transformation Vision has at its centre our purpose to ‘transform lives, locally and globally, through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge’. The 5 core values at the heart of our Transformation Vision are: valuing people; working together; integrity; making a difference; and excellence. The 25 year Transformation Vision is supported by specific strategies that are reviewed on a quinquennial basis and relate to key themes. Our Learning and Teaching Strategy 2012-17 is a mainstream strategy which we refer to throughout this document.

Our most recent Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) was undertaken in 2013. The outcome report highlighted only 3 areas for development. These related to institutional oversight of policy and practice, our approach to recognition of prior learning, and support for postgraduate students who teach. Each of the areas for development have been fully addressed and described in our follow-up report which is published on the QAA website.

There were 7 areas of positive practice highlighted by the ELIR method: effective development and implementation of vision and strategy; student engagement; proactive student support; widening participation; employability; staff support and development; and enhancement from quality assurance processes. We have continued to build on our strengths in these areas. Specific examples are provided throughout this TEF submission.

1.2 Student representation and engagement

We have a strong track record in the area of student representation and engagement, and have a well-developed student representation system that includes class representatives, School Vice-Presidents, School Presidents and DUSA. In addition to our SRC (described above) we have a School Presidents’ Forum where the School Presidents meet together regularly with DUSA sabbatical officers and the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) to share experiences, identify any issues in common across the Schools and work collectively to resolve any issues. The principal focus of this group is on matters relating to learning and teaching.

It has been the norm for us for many years to include student representatives as full members of all relevant University and School committees. In addition, student representatives are full members of all appointing panels for senior staff that relate to the student experience. This includes appointments for the Chair of Court², Principal, Vice- Principals, Deans, Associate Deans and Directors of Professional Services. Student representatives are also full members of our Periodic Programme Review Boards, as well as the assessment panels for the scrutiny of proposals for new taught programmes.

‘Student engagement - Students are very positive about their experience of the University. There is a strong partnership with the Dundee University Students’ Association, and student representation is embedded at all levels of the institution. During the review students confirmed that their views are actively sought and contribute to the University’s enhancement agenda.’ ELIR Outcome Report, November 2013.

The University Court has 2 student representatives as full members. The President of DUSA has ex officio membership and there is an elected independent student member. Students are also represented on Court by a Rector nominated and elected by the student body.

Schools have Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs), or equivalent forums, to cover the different subjects/disciplines. The SSLCs involve formalised opportunities for student representatives to engage with academic and support staff to discuss positive practice and areas for development. We set out the expectations for student representation through a Joint Agreement on Student Representation which is agreed by the Learning and Teaching Committee and the SRC annually.

Students and staff work together to continually enhance learning, teaching and the student support environment. This culture of working together was further improved by the introduction of formal Student Partnership Agreements in 2013. Our Student Partnership Agreements set out priorities and actions agreed between staff and students on an annual basis, and act as positive drivers for enhancement.

² Court is the University’s supreme governing body.
Working with our student representatives is core to almost everything we do, and involving students in our TEF submission was ‘business as usual’. Following endorsement to proceed with a TEF submission by the relevant University committees, all of which have 2 or more student representatives as full members, we prepared this TEF narrative together with our students. The President of DUSA was a member of our TEF steering group with drafting the submission. We discussed the metrics and outline proposals with the SRC early in December 2016. The President consulted with the other DUSA sabbatical officers to provide input to the TEF submission. The School Presidents’ Forum discussed the draft document in January, with the DUSA sabbatical officers working together to develop the concluding remarks to the narrative. The final submission was discussed and endorsed by the SRC on 24 January.

1.3 Contextual analysis of the TEF core and split metrics

1.3.1 Context for core metrics

NSS context. We were very pleased to note the 3 double positive flags for the TEF metrics derived from the NSS: ‘teaching on my course’, assessment and feedback’ and ‘academic support’. To provide further context, according to the Times/Sunday Times Good University Guide 2017 the combined ranking of the University for these 3 measures is 7th overall in the UK (up from 9th the previous year). According to the same source the University also ranks 7th in the UK for the other elements of the NSS (Organisation & Management, Learning Resources, Personal Development, and Overall Satisfaction) (up from 17th the previous year) with 91% overall satisfaction. Prior to that the Times/Sunday Times produced only 1 combined measure of all elements of the NSS, ranking the University 18th in the UK in the 2015 guide (based on the 2014 NSS, the first year of data incorporated in the TEF metrics). At the same time DUSA has been consistently ranked 4th in the UK for student satisfaction for the last 3 years according to the NSS, with satisfaction levels of 86% in 2014 and 88% in 2015 and 2016.

Widening access context. The measure of widening access in Scotland is the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD or MD for short). The contextual data on the University of Dundee provided in the TEF metric workbook indicates that the University has 12% in the lowest quintile (referred to in Scotland as MD20) and 14% in the second quintile (MD40). This does not, however, capture the rapid progress made by the University in admitting students from MD20 and MD40 in the 3 years from 2011/12.

According to the latest annual report from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) on widening access (Learning for All: Measures of Success, published on the SFC website on 10/08/2016), the University has increased the proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants from the MD20 areas from 11.3% in 2011/12 to 15.9% in 2014/15, and its proportion of MD40 entrants (which includes MD20) from 26.8% to 35.5%. In other words the University has moved from admitting over a quarter of its students from widening access backgrounds to admitting over one third in the 3 years covered by the TEF (2012-2015). In doing so the University has made more progress in increasing the proportion of entrants from MD20 and MD40 backgrounds than any other Scottish University (with the exception of the small, specialist provider Glasgow School of Art) over this 3 year period, and now admits the fourth highest proportion of MD20 and MD40 students of any Scottish University (behind the University of the West of Scotland, Glasgow Caledonian University, and Glasgow School of Art), and the highest proportion amongst research intensive universities.3

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3 All data taken from the SFC’s statistical publication SFC/ST/06/2016, Table 30 – Selected Outcome Agreement Indicators.
We have no negative flags for full time students for our TEF metric on non-continuation, and it is important to consider this in the context of our approach to widening access and the Scottish HE sector. The TEF guidance document states that ‘providers in Scotland typically have slightly lower retention rates’. We believe that this, combined with the step change in widening access to the University over the 3 years covered by the TEF metrics, means the University of Dundee’s performance in retention is very strong indeed. It is notable too that there are no negative flags for non-continuation in the disadvantaged column or any other of the split metrics. We set out in Section 3.3 the work that is being done to improve retention rates still further. Non-continuation for part time students is dealt with below.

**Part-time study non-continuation context.** The University has received a double negative flag for non-continuation for part time students, being 10.9% below benchmark, with negative flags replicated across the split metrics. Detailed investigation shows that the student population referred to here comprises 374 students across 3 years, but with a significant decrease in volume after 2010/11, where there were 195 students, with 94 students in 2011/12 and 85 students in 2012/13. This student population therefore represents a small and shrinking proportion of our provision.

Of this student population, 65 were post-registration Nursing students undertaking distance learning modules while in the workplace (61 in 2010/11 alone, after which demand for the post-registration programme diminished when Nursing became an all graduate profession in the UK). 60 of the 374 students over 3 years were students on Humanities and Social Sciences evening degree programmes, and the large majority (249 or 67%) were students enrolled on Childhood Practice and related programmes in the School of Education and Social Work. The latter programmes are distance learning programmes undertaken by those already in work. Retention rates are typically likely to be lower, and it is our contention that the benchmarking here is unlikely to be comparing equivalent provision and should therefore be treated with great caution in terms of indicating below average performance in non-continuation. It should be noted too that the non-continuation metric should be seen in the context of the corresponding employability indicators for part time students, with 98.1% in employment or further study and 86.9% in highly skilled employment (for which the University received a positive flag, including positive flags and no negative flags across the split metrics on this measure).

**Employment or further study and highly skilled employment or further study context.** As further context for the Employment or Further Study metric, while the University has not been positively flagged for this, our performance has improved year on year over the period of the TEF metrics, with the most recent year’s data leading it to being ranked 8th equal in the UK according to the Times Higher (7 July 2016 – excluding small providers with fewer than 500 respondents). In terms of graduate level employment or further study, the University was ranked in the top 20 in the UK in the 2016 Guardian, Complete University and Times/Sunday Times guides.

We note that, as set out in the Scottish Contextual Statement, the use of POLAR data to benchmark Scottish universities for highly skilled employment or further study has resulted in a small understatement of performance against benchmark for Scottish universities on this measure, with unknown effects on the generation of flags in the split metrics. The absolute performance summarised above provides further context to understand the University’s performance in both measures of employability, including in the split metrics which are discussed in detail below.

**1.3.2 Context for split metrics**

**Employment or further study: negative flag for full-time disabled students.** Detailed investigation has revealed that in 2012/13 19 out of 135 (14%) full-time disabled students were unemployed, falling to 15 out of 168 in 2013/14 (9%) and 11 out of 159 (7%) in the most recent year. The percentages for non-disabled students over the same years are 7%, 5% and 4%. Therefore the absolute numbers of disabled students not in employment or further study is small, and the gap between disabled and non-disabled students has closed from 7% to 4% to 3% over those 3 years, indicating that our strategies for improving employability described in Section 4 are proving particularly effective in improving the employability prospects of students with a declared disability.

**Highly skilled employment or further study: negative flag for full-time BME students.** It should be noted that the number of full-time BME students in each year cohort is very small (60/65/70 in the 3 years, or a total of 195 over 3 years). This means that a different outcome for just 1 student affects
the percentages by just over 0.5% and by just over 1.5% on average for each year cohort. In 2012/13 36/60 (60%) BME students were in highly skilled employment or further study, rising to 51/65 in 2013/14 (78.5%) and 54/70 in 2014/15 (77%). The percentages for non-BME students over the same years are 71%, 79% and 80%. Therefore the gap between BME and non-BME students has been 11%, 0.5% and 3% over the 3 years. This indicates both strong improvement and a narrowing of the gap over the 3 years.

It is worth mentioning that the general comment in Section 1.3.1 on benchmarking using POLAR for highly skilled employment also applies here. It is our contention that the negative flag here, based on very low numbers and noting the effect of POLAR benchmarking being to depress performance against benchmark for Scottish HEIs, does not indicate performance that should give cause for concern. Our strategy to improve levels of graduate level employment or further study are benefitting BME students more rapidly than non BME students, almost eliminating any gap in the most recent 2 years.

**Full-time highly skilled employment or further study: negative flag for male students.** We have given careful consideration to the negative flag in the split metrics for full time highly skilled employment or further study for male students. Here the University is 2.9% below benchmark with a Z score of 2.7. Male students account for just over a third of the student population for this split metric (1,503 vs 2,731 female students). We note that the University has a higher benchmark for female than male students (78.2 vs 76.4) presumably because of the University’s subject mix: we have large numbers of female students (approaching 90%) in both Nursing and Health Sciences and Education and Social Work, subjects that typically have very high rates of highly skilled employment. Our own analysis of performance on this metric by gender reveals the following: virtually full highly skilled employment of male and female students in Dentistry and Medicine; higher rates amongst males in the Schools of Art and Design, Humanities, Nursing and Health Sciences, and Science and Engineering; and lower rates in the Schools of Education and Social Work, Life Sciences and Social Sciences.

We have, however, been unable to identify any particular structural issues of underperformance amongst male graduates on this metric. We will continue to investigate as we develop our Gender Action Plan to be submitted to the SFC in July 2017 as part of the Scottish Outcome Agreement process.

### 2. TEACHING QUALITY

#### 2.1 Student engagement (TQ1)

An outline description of our student engagement and representation framework is provided in Section 1.2. Some examples about how our framework encourages students to engage and actively commit to their studies are described below.

Our programme and module approval processes are designed to rigorously scrutinise the approach to the quality of provision using internal, external and student reviewers. Programme approval involves the initial approval of a business case at the level of the University, followed by the design of the programme and development of the programme specification. As a rule, programme design is informed by the views of students on related programmes and potential employers/industry. The programme specification template requires a description of the intended learning outcomes that reflects the relevant descriptors of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and the QAA subject benchmark statements. There is also a requirement to describe the assessment strategy including how the learning outcomes are assessed. Programme specifications are considered at an event where a scrutiny panel (comprising academic reviewers external to the School, external subject experts, a student reviewer and Professional Services reviewers) meet with the programme team to discuss the proposed programme and ensure that it will provide a high quality learning experience. Following the scrutiny event there are further formative stages, each of which involve student representatives, before final approval by the University’s Quality and Academic Standards Committee which includes 2 DUSA representatives as full members.

Students are asked to provide feedback on their modules. Our annual review process ensures that student feedback is considered at both the module and programme level. The process requires a
commentary on student feedback and allows programme leaders to consider areas where there is positive and negative feedback and take steps to address any issues.

Our quality assurance infrastructure (which includes the areas mentioned above) was identified as an area of positive practice in our most recent ELIR report:

'Enhancement from quality assurance processes – The University has been successful in ensuring that the design of its quality assurance processes contributes to enhancement of the student learning experience by, for example, including quality enhancement as a standard heading in templates for annual monitoring reporting and the external examiner system. The quality assurance processes, alongside the committee structures and college roles, also facilitate the deliberate and systematic sharing of good practice across the institution.'

University policy is that we expect attendance at all teaching events, and student attendance is monitored to promote engagement with learning (see also Section 3.3).

SSLCs (see Section 1.2) operate effectively in our Schools/disciplines and provide opportunities for further dialogue and closing the feedback loop.

We use the NSS as a driver for enhancement and our positive NSS scores rising year on year are a testament to the work we have undertaken in partnership with our students to enhance the student experience. Since 2007 we have also been using the International Student Barometer (ISB) to evaluate the experience of international students and to respond to their feedback. The survey is sent to all of our full-time EU and international undergraduate, taught postgraduate, research and exchange students across all levels for completion. This is the main mechanism for us to measure how satisfied our non-UK students are with their experience across a number of areas. Since 2012 the survey also includes on-campus UK students.

We have consistently had high levels of satisfaction from students undertaking the survey. Student satisfaction for the various elements of the ISB averaged over the 3 most recent surveys we have taken part in (2013, 2014 and 2016) is as follows: overall satisfaction, 92%; learning overall, 88%; living overall, 90%; support overall, 91%; and arrival overall, 90%. The ISB data is shared with Schools and Professional Services to celebrate excellence and promote enhancement.

2.2 Valuing teaching (TQ2)

A key aim of the University’s 2012-17 Learning and Teaching Strategy is to ‘recognise and reward our academic excellence in learning and teaching publicly and through promotion’. In 2013/14 a radically new academic promotion system and procedure was developed. The previous system created a binary divide between research and teaching, with research as the key driver of academic promotion (such that staff who wished to highlight teaching excellence as grounds for promotion were required to complete an additional section of the application form, promotion to Reader was exclusively reserved for staff demonstrating excellence in research, and promotion to Chair was heavily weighted towards excellence in research). The new system removes the binary divide between teaching and research entirely, with the words ‘research’ and ‘teaching’ no longer being mentioned at all in the criteria for promotion for any grade. Rather the onus is on the candidate to make the case for promotion under 3 headings aligned with the University’s values: ‘excellent academic practice’, ‘valuing people and working together’ (which encompasses effective leadership), and ‘making a difference’. Sitting alongside the promotions criteria are ‘Indicators of Excellence’ which provide guidance to candidates on what constitutes outstanding performance in learning and teaching, research, wider impact, and valuing people and working together.

In order to have some means to monitor progress in achieving the aim of recognising academic excellence in teaching and learning through promotion, the University has a performance indicator monitoring the numbers of applicants on Teaching and Scholarship contracts applying for and being awarded promotion which is monitored by the University Executive Group, Senate and Court. This shows that whereas in both 2011 and 2012 only 5 staff on Teaching and Scholarship contracts applied for promotion in each year, with 4 being successful in 2011 and 5 successful in 2012, the numbers in subsequent years have been 11 (11 successful), 20 (17 successful), 8 (6 successful) and 24 (11 successful). This indicates a step change in the numbers of staff on Teaching and Scholarship contracts coming forward for and achieving promotion, and a measure of the success of the new system is that those numbers include 6 promotions to Chair and 1 to Reader.
Whereas in 2011 and 2012 staff on Teaching and Scholarship contracts accounted for 14% of all academic promotions, over the subsequent 3 years they accounted for 31% of academic promotions. It should be noted that this data does not capture the extent to which staff on Teaching and Research contracts applying for promotion are now, to a much greater extent than under the old system, making their case for promotion on the basis of academic excellence in teaching as well as research.

The University’s Centre for the enhancement of Academic Skills, Teaching, Learning and Employability (CASTLE) provides development opportunities for academic staff, including a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Higher Education (PG CAPHE). The PG CAPHE is accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and comprises an Associate module and 2 Fellowship modules. Teaching staff are required to undertake the Associate module as part of their probation. All staff are required to successfully complete our on-line equality and diversity training programme which includes a specific module for staff involved in learning and teaching.

DUSA has been running student-led teaching awards since 2011. Students nominate academic and support staff for a variety of award categories including Best Adviser or Personal Tutor; Best for Assessment and Feedback; Most Innovative Teaching; and Most Inspirational Teaching. The judging is carried out by a panel of students and staff and there is an annual dinner to announce and celebrate the awards. There is recognition of winners and all those nominated through posters displayed throughout the University campuses.

The University also confers a number of awards for teaching. The most prestigious of these is the University’s ‘Chancellor’s Award’ for teaching which recognises outstanding contributions to learning and teaching over a sustained period and is conferred on up to 4 staff per year. The award is given as part of our graduation ceremonies and the recipients are invited to speak, along with newly promoted professors, at the University’s annual Discovery Days. This University-wide event was originally conceived as fulfilling the function of inaugural lectures for newly appointed or promoted professors and was initially heavily focused on research. The inclusion of talks by teaching award recipients, along with the increasing prevalence of promotions to professor for staff on Teaching and Scholarship contracts, ensures that this key event in the University calendar is now as strongly focused on teaching as research and thereby serves to embed a culture of recognition of excellent teaching across the University.

We also have an annual University Honorary Graduates’ Award for Inclusive Practice to recognise and encourage development of inclusive practice across the University and promote the removal of barriers to access for students protected by the Equality Act. The winner(s) receives a prize to fund practice development. In addition to the University-level Chancellor’s Awards and Inclusive Practice Awards, all Schools have in place their own teaching awards to recognise excellent and innovative teaching.

Taken together, these initiatives and their demonstrable impact indicate that an institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards excellent teaching and learning support is firmly embedded across the University.

2.3 Rigour and Stretch (TQ3)

One of the principal aims of our Learning and Teaching Strategy 2012-17 is that ‘our curricula are designed for breadth and depth allowing for experimentation, change and diversity: breadth to recognise the need for our graduates to experience inter- and cross-disciplinary learning; and depth, because our graduates need to develop critical enquiry and deep thinking skills, enabling them to have open minds to challenge problems’.

In addition to our enhancement-focused quality assurance processes (described in Section 2.1 above), where detailed attention is paid to the curriculum and assessment, we have a Learning and Teaching Development Forum which meets at least 3 times each year to share practice and develop thinking relating to our strategy and quality enhancement. The Forum is chaired by the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) and comprises the School Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching and for Quality and Academic Standards, student representatives and relevant Professional Services staff. Topics have included interdisciplinary learning; embedding enterprise and entrepreneurship in the curriculum; innovations in learning, teaching and assessment; student buddying; engaging students with feedback; retention and progression; advisers of studies; teaching efficiency; the future
of Digital in learning and teaching; and teaching spaces. In addition one Forum each year is
dedicated to the NSS. The opportunity for academic and professional services leads and student
representatives to get together on a regular basis to exchange ideas and share practice has led to
the promotion, communication and sharing of good practice in learning and teaching, and has
strengthened the shared approach to the quality culture at the University of Dundee.

Our student staff ratios are low (12.6 to 1 in 2016), with the University ranked 15th or 16th in the UK
on this measure according to all 3 major UK university guides published in 2016. Our NSS results
provide evidence that our students are positive about the teaching they receive and that they find
our programmes to be intellectually stimulating. This is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSS Question</th>
<th>% Satisfaction (UK ranking*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q 2 Staff have made the subject interesting</td>
<td>88 (12)  91 (1)  90 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 4 The course is intellectually stimulating</td>
<td>90 (14)  90 (15)  90 (19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The ranking excludes specialist organisations. Some of the ranks are tied.

Further evidence of the rigour and stretch of our provision is the fact that 7 of our 9 Schools deliver
undergraduate programmes that are accredited by Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies
(PSRBs). Our professionally accredited undergraduate programmes are: Accounting; Architecture;
Biological Sciences; Childhood Practice/Studies; Community Learning and Development;
Computing; Dentistry; Education; Engineering; Finance; Law; Mathematics; Mathematical Biology;
Medicine; Nursing; Oral Health Sciences; Physics; Psychology; Social Work; and Town and Regional
Planning. Several of our PSRB-accredited undergraduate degrees are integrated Masters
programmes.

We make effective use of our external examiner system to assure quality and promote enhancement.
External examiners complete an annual report that is shared with teaching teams, students,
Associate Deans (Learning and Teaching, and Quality and Academic Standards), the Vice-Principal
(Learning and Teaching) and the Director of Quality and Academic Standards. The report form
specifically asks external examiners to comment on the curriculum, learning outcomes, assessment
and alignment of assessment tasks with learning outcomes, academic standards and student
performance, and opportunities for enhancement. The Director of Quality and Academic Standards
produces an annual digest of the external examiners' reports which is shared with our Learning and
Teaching Committee and Quality and Academic Standards Committee with a view to disseminating
good practice and discussing the lessons learned. Schools are also required to provide formal
responses to external examiners on their reports.

2.4 Feedback (TQ4)

Assessment and feedback is an area of focus for our Learning and Teaching Strategy (2012-17)
where we set out our aim to ‘enhance our learning and teaching approaches and practices through
rigorous and appropriate assessment and feedback systems, recognising that these areas are the
most likely to make a significant difference to the success of our graduates and to their satisfaction
with the student experience’. We have given this area particular attention over the past few years
and it has been a feature in all of our Student Partnership Agreements. Student satisfaction has
improved year-on-year.

Our students’ association took the lead on a collaborative project with the University on assessment
and feedback during academic year 2012/13. A triangulated approach was taken, where NSS
scores, open comments from the NSS and the outcomes of focus group interviews with students
were examined together to identify common themes where improvements could be made. The
project report included a series of recommendations which led to modifications of programme/module
approval and review templates to include greater emphasis on assessment and feedback, and supported the University’s decision to implement Transforming the Experience of Students Through Assessment (TESTA). We adopted the TESTA method (developed as an HEA
funded joint National Teaching Fellowship project by Bath Spa, Chichester, Winchester, and
Worcester universities in 2009-12) in 2012 and now use it as part of our periodic programme review
process. TESTA takes a programme-level approach to examining assessment and feedback regimes and, in addition to auditing the balance of assessment across an entire programme, the method focuses on students’ experience of assessment through questionnaires and student focus groups. Following a 1 year pilot we appointed a dedicated officer in 2013 to support full implementation of TESTA. To date the TESTA method has been applied to over a dozen programmes: Accountancy; Animation; Childhood Practice; Dentistry; Education; Finance; Fine Art, History; Marketing and Management; Medicine; Nursing; Pharmacology; Social Work; and Textile Design. 10 further programmes are participating in TESTA during AY 2016/17. TESTA has resulted in positive changes to our assessment regimes, including rationalisation of assessment and more effective testing of learning outcomes, and has contributed to improved student satisfaction in this area.

We recognise the importance of timely feedback for students and our assessment policy, which was subject to a root and branch review and revision during academic year 2014/15, requires that students are provided with their provisional grades and feedback within 3 weeks of submitting coursework. In addition, there is a requirement that students receive feedback on their performance in examinations.

3. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Resources (LE1)

The learning environment in Dundee is diverse and carefully managed to ensure full engagement with student learning and development across all disciplines. Each of our 3 campuses has extensive library, IT and student support services.

The physical learning and teaching environment includes state-of-the-art teaching rooms, lecture theatres, tutorial spaces and laboratory facilities. A regular investment programme ensures that our facilities are maintained to a high standard. Recent investments include £17 million during 2012-2016 to update 3 large lecture theatres, innovative learning suites, IT suites and the library on the Ninewells Campus, and £28 million during 2006-2009 to create the Dalhousie Building (a dedicated learning and teaching facility for use by the whole University) and the Queen Mother Building (for computer science teaching and research) and an extension to the main library on the City Campus.

Our ongoing investment in digital components of the learning environment benefit on-campus and distance learning students. Online learning environments are maintained with a suite of tools managed centrally within the Centre for Technology and Innovation in Learning (CTIL). Developments are guided by a subgroup of the University’s Learning and Teaching Committee to ensure continued alignment with the pedagogic approaches in use throughout the disciplines. Lecture theatres and teaching rooms have IT facilities for online media, projection and demonstration. These are maintained and updated through a standardised platform which is remotely managed to ensure high availability.

Many of the learning opportunities at Dundee utilise individual and group study, and the library and IT resources have been designed (and are continually updated) to meet expectations. Students can utilise over 700 University PCs, each of which are provided with a comprehensive and secure managed desktop allowing access to over 300 licenced software packages to support learning and research. Our wireless provision is currently undergoing a £6 million upgrade, which upon completion in summer 2017 will provide close to 100% coverage across all campuses including the student residences.

The libraries are highly popular and efficient learning environments, carefully designed to meet student requirements for both collaborative and private study opportunities. They are well provisioned with extensive functional units to ensure student-led learning is easily facilitated. Library staff are on hand to respond positively and creatively to requests. Support extends to mobile, email and online chat environments to ensure all student queries can be efficiently addressed on both library and IT matters. The facilities are appropriately sized to ensure demand does not exceed availability. Particularly popular resources are collaborative study tables and rooms, silent study desks during assessment periods and the library café for mixing work with social interactions.
Library opening hours are among the most extensive in Scotland, with the Ninewells library being available to all students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year, and with the main library having 24 hour opening during assessment periods and being open 7:30 am to 2:30 am, 7 days a week, during the rest of the semester periods.

The research activities and facilities of the academic Schools provide exceptional opportunities for our undergraduates to gain access to a wide range of high-specification specialist equipment and research methodologies. Our academic staff and post-doctoral researchers engage with students to ensure that the research ethos and capabilities of the University are inculcated within the learning environment. The library information resources, in both physical and online formats, are available to all students and researchers. Expenditure on journals, books, ebooks and multimedia packages exceeds £2.7 million per annum, and provides critical resources to support learning in diverse disciplines.

Academic staff use a reading-list management system to ensure continual alignment between the teaching requirements of modules and the library provision of resources. A sophisticated library management system ensures that usage analytics are available to guide purchase decisions, frequently permitting multiple copies of resources to be licenced ahead of peak demand.

In 2015 the University introduced a Digital Literacies Framework. The purpose is to ensure that all students are able to derive maximum benefit from the digital resources available to them, and to prepare them to thrive in a digital world after they graduate. A range of online materials has been developed to facilitate the acquisition of digital skills, including a self-assessment exercise to aid student learning. The Digital Literacies Framework also encompasses teaching staff, ensuring that digital resources and behaviours are utilised effectively and consistently across the curriculum and that staff keep pace with developments in the digital landscape. The effectiveness of implementation of the Framework is monitored though our Periodic Programme Review process and through promotional and advocacy work from a Digital Literacies Community of Practice. CTIL supports staff and students in making the most effective use of technology in teaching and learning.

The quality and availability of the learning resources for students is reflected in our very high and increasing satisfaction levels for learning resources in each of the past 3 years in the NSS, shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSS Question</th>
<th>% Satisfaction (UK ranking*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources overall</td>
<td>92 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 16 The library resources and services are good enough for my needs</td>
<td>92 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 17 I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to</td>
<td>94 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 18 I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities or rooms when I needed to</td>
<td>89 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The ranking excludes specialist organisations. Some of the ranks are tied.

3.2 Scholarship, Research and Professional Practice (LE2)

Approximately half of our undergraduates are on professionally-accredited programmes, many of which involve direct experience of professional practice including practice placements. Section 2.3 provides details of our professionally-accredited programmes.

Our Learning and Teaching Strategy states that ‘our aspiration is to be a research-intensive institution which uses that research strength to contribute to a first-class learning experience for our students’. We work to ensure that our students benefit from the research-rich environment and most of our honours programmes provide an opportunity for students to undertake a capstone project.

Interdisciplinary working is a key part of our Learning and Teaching Strategy. It is embedded in several of our professionally accredited programmes, and in recent years we have developed a range of opportunities for students from different disciplines to come together to work on real world
challenges. For example, our undergraduate students participate in the annual IGEM (International Genetically Engineered Machine) competition. This is a global challenge for students which asks them to tackle a real-world problem by designing and building a new device from a kit of biological parts. Our interdisciplinary student teams drawn from the Schools of Life Sciences, Science and Engineering, and Art and Design have received gold medals at this international jamboree every year from 2011 to 2016. A further example is our Tayside Global Health Challenge in 2016, which brought together 36 undergraduate students from across our 9 Schools to work together to design innovative solutions to the problem of health inequality. The students worked in 6 teams, each partnered with a charity and an expert sponsor, over a 4 week period. Feedback from students on this learning opportunity was exceptionally positive. Expanding opportunities for collaborative learning across disciplines in partnership with practitioners will form a cornerstone of our next Learning and Teaching Strategy.

3.3. Personalised Learning (LE3)

The University has an outstanding track record of recruitment, retention and success for students from a wide variety of backgrounds, based on catering to the individual needs of students from the point of application. Through our ACES and Reach projects we offer additional support to around 600 students each year from deprived backgrounds who wish to be considered for entry to our high demand professional degree subjects, such as Dentistry, Medicine, Law, Art and Architecture. The proportion of students admitted from deprived areas or circumstances is a key performance indicator (KPI) under our Learning and Teaching Strategy. The University operates a comprehensive contextual admissions framework, a key element of which involves offering tailored academic support for students from widening access backgrounds. We target non-traditional students from their second year of secondary school onwards. Around 180 students a year attend our 6 week Access Summer Schools (Dundee University Access to Learning (DUAL) and Discover Learning at Dundee) which are offered face-to-face and online respectively. The courses are undertaken immediately prior to entry, with admission contingent on successful completion.

The University has strong articulation pathways from Dundee and Angus College and has developed a co-curriculum route whereby students are enrolled at the University but spend their first year at the College. The University employs a full-time Transitions Officer to provide individualised support to students making the transition from College to the University and offers a bespoke transitions module for students from the College.

The success of our strategy to widen access is evident from the high and rapidly growing proportion of students from widening access backgrounds noted in Section 1.3.1 above. The ELIR team commended the University as follows:

*The University has an effective approach to recruiting and supporting the entry of students from non-traditional backgrounds. It provides a range of opportunities including articulation routes and the Dundee University Access to Learning (DUAL) Summer School. This programme provides academic and study skills support for students, particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds, who may lack the standard qualifications for entry into the University. Students accessing the University via the DUAL Summer School commented positively on the effectiveness of the programme in preparing them for study at the higher education level.*

The University is equally committed to increasing rates of retention and progression, which is another strategic KPI. In 2014 the University developed a separate Retention and Progression Strategy and Action Plan, the implementation of which is monitored by the Retention and Progression Committee.

To support retention and progression the University assigns an Adviser of Studies to each student to provide academic guidance and where necessary to refer students to the extensive range of support services provided by the University. In 2014 the University and DUSA jointly reviewed these arrangements to ensure that they were operating effectively and to enhance consistency of implementation.

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4 ACES (Access to Creative Education in Scotland – Art and Architecture) and Reach (access to Law, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry) are national SFC funded initiatives in place to improve access to high demand professions.
We undertook a periodic review of our student-facing services during 2013 and, in response to the outcome of the review, in 2014 the University established a ‘one stop shop’ Enquiry Centre for students at the heart of the City Campus, in partnership with DUSA at a cost of £200,000. The Enquiry Centre deals with around 500 enquiries a week and provides the interface between the student and Student Services, including Registry, the Careers and Enterprise Hub, CASTLE and the Support Hub which contains: Counselling; the Health Service; Disability Services; and the Student Funding Unit. The Support Hub provides a comprehensive range of support services for all students, including those with diverse needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. In 2016 the University invested £600,000 in creating a new Nursery on campus for students and staff.

Support for the complete learner journey is provided to students by CASTLE (see Section 2.2). CASTLE, *inter alia*, delivers one-to-one support sessions and a comprehensive series of workshops including an annual Academic Skills Week co-organised with DUSA. It also provides a number of student-facing resources including the Live Smart, Learn Smart Toolkit and the Exam Revision Toolkit. The University has a rigorous early warning system for student disengagement, monitoring student attendance and assignment submissions to identify students at risk and following up with individual meetings. The coordination and smooth running of all these support services is overseen by the Student Experience Oversight Group, comprising senior officers from the University and DUSA and co-chaired by the President of DUSA and the University Secretary.

The very strong performance in the NSS for Academic Support (TEF metric 3) is testimony to the effectiveness of our support arrangements for students, which were commended by the ELIR team as follows:

‘The University is successful in supporting a diverse student population. Academic and professional services provide integrated support across individual services for all students, both pre and post enrolment, as well as effectively targeting support for particular student groups. Feedback from students is particularly positive in relation to Disability Services, the Careers Service and the Library and Learning Centre’.

While not positively (or negatively) flagged for non-continuation in core or split metrics, it is pleasing to see that the University is 1.6% above benchmark for retention amongst disadvantaged students. In view of the large expansion in the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds over the past 3 years this is an excellent performance, indicating that the measures put in place to support retention and progression of all students are effective.

4. STUDENT OUTCOMES AND LEARNING GAIN

4.1 Employment and Further Study (SO1)

The first aim of our Learning and Teaching Strategy is that ‘our graduates and postgraduates make an impact in their chosen fields, with the skills and knowledge to shape and lead society in the professions, research, and the wider world’. In view of the importance of this agenda the University decided in 2012 to develop a specific 5 year strategy for Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. While overall levels of employment or further study (TEF metric 5) are important, the University’s main focus under this strategy is on achieving outstanding levels of highly skilled employment or further study (TEF metric 6), and so it is this measure which is used as a University key performance indicator for Employability, monitored by the University Executive Group, Senate and Court. By Enterprise we mean that all our students should develop an enterprising mind-set that will be of value to future employers. We define Entrepreneurship specifically as the development of ideas that have the potential to lead to new businesses. Each School in the University has an academic lead for Employability and Enterprise. Those leads come together at the University’s Employability and Enterprise Committee, which also has student and employer representatives as well as representatives from the Careers Service and other relevant Professional Services.

*Employability.* Our programme approval, monitoring and review procedures are all designed to ensure that there is a strong focus on the achievement of high levels of graduate employability or further study. The programme approval process requires consultation with potential employers, and in describing learning outcomes in programme specifications there are 3 required headings, one of which is ‘transferable, employability and enterprise skills and attributes’. Annual programme
monitoring requires a description of plans for enhancement of graduate employability, and our annual School Learning and Teaching Enhancement Reports, which are the focus for annual discussions between School teams and the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching), require a critique on employment and employability including transferable skills, enterprise and approaches to personal development planning. Periodic programme review also requires full consideration of graduate destinations.

We strive to embed career planning into all our programmes, tailored as far as possible to the needs of the students on the programme. In some programmes this means the inclusion in the curriculum of a subject-specific careers module. In others it involves the embedding of career planning elements at key points in the programme. These elements are co-developed by the academic School and the Careers Service. The Careers Service also offers credit-bearing career planning modules in both classroom based and online learning modes that are open to students across the University. The online module offers individually tailored learning in a supportive online environment and received the University’s Honorary Graduates’ Award for Inclusive Practice in 2012 in recognition of its flexibility in catering to the needs of a diverse range of students such as those with family responsibilities, disabilities and health conditions. The strong focus on Employability across the University saw numbers taking these optional modules increase from 122 in 2013/14 to 187 in 2014/15 and a recent Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU) funded research project undertaken by the Careers Service has demonstrated the impact of these modules, with the chances of students who have completed them reaching a positive graduate destination 21.9% higher than if they had not taken a module.

In addition to delivering career planning modules and working in partnership with academic Schools to embed employability into the curriculum, the Careers Service offers a wide range of services outside the curriculum to promote employability. This includes the Dundee Plus award, a personal skills development programme which recognises and adds value to the activities students engage with outside their degree. Through a combination of workshops, reflective writing and peer review, the programme helps students to reflect upon the skills they are developing, communicate their achievements, and investigate their desired career pathway. Around 1,000 students are registered for and working towards the award at any one time. In addition the Careers Service offers one to one careers guidance through daily drop-in slots, bookable appointments, telephone and email. This service is accessed by over 2,000 students annually and 100% of students who visited in 2015 would recommend this service to others. The University also provides an online personal development and career planning tool, MyCareerPlan, featuring a range of video resources, online learning programmes and self-review exercises.

The Careers Service works closely with DUSA, collaborating on a ‘Design your Career’ series of lunchtime workshops covering a range of employability topics. In recognition of the importance of employability DUSA has created an SRC representative for employability. Employability has been a key focus of our 2 most recent Student Partnership Agreements.

The University’s 2013 ELIR report noted that:

‘The University provides a comprehensive range of opportunities for students to develop their employability skills’.

The effectiveness of our strategic focus on the enhancement of employability from 2012 on can be seen in the year by year breakdown of TEF metrics 5 and 6. Levels of employment or further study amongst full-time students have risen from 92.5% to 94.8% to 95.8%, while there has been a similar step change in highly skilled employment or further study from 70.3% to 79.5% and 79.6% (with figures for part time students showing the same significant upward trend as well as being positively flagged for highly skilled employment or further study). As a result the University of Dundee now has one of the highest levels of both employment or further study and highly skilled employment or further study amongst all UK universities, as detailed in Section 1.3.1 above.

**Enterprise and Entrepreneurship.** The University’s Centre of Entrepreneurship within the Careers Service is the umbrella body that oversees the University’s efforts to promote enterprise and entrepreneurship amongst students. It promotes enterprising skills for all students by offering, with CASTLE, both credit bearing modules in Enterprise and an extra-curricular Enterprising Skills
Programme\(^5\) that exposes students to enterprising thinking delivered by experienced industry speakers, which almost 1,000 students engage in each year. This programme is delivered by a team of student interns who benefit from the opportunity to network with a wide range of business contacts as well as developing skills in organisation and professional communication.

For those students ready to progress to the next stage the Centre provides a bespoke programme of support to nurture entrepreneurship. This part of the Centre's activities is overseen by an Entrepreneurship Steering Group with strong representation from leading Scottish entrepreneurs. The Centre of Entrepreneurship also works closely with the Scottish Institute for Enterprise, Enterprise Campus and Entrepreneurial Scotland to ensure that a clear pathway for entrepreneurial development is available to all students. An annual Enterprise and Entrepreneurship symposium promotes best practice in Enterprise Education across the University and the most recent event brought together students, staff and local secondary school pupils to apply the HEInnovate framework to our provision and identify areas for ongoing development.

This activity culminated in a strong performance in the 2016 Converge Challenge (a national company-creation competition and start-up development programme for staff, students, and recent graduates of Scottish universities), with a finalist in every category, 2 of whom finished as runners-up.

\subsection{4.2 Employability and transferable skills (SO2)}

As described in Section 4.1 above, our quality assurance processes have a strong focus on employability and transferable skills. In addition, the University seeks to maximise opportunities for students to engage in work-based learning. A significant proportion of our students as a matter of course spend considerable proportions of their time training in the workplace (e.g. all students in Architecture, Dentistry, Education, Medicine, Nursing and Social Work). The University also offers a credit-bearing internship module open to all students, during which undergraduates complete a 30 hour internship with a local business alongside learning and teaching activities to support reflection on and application of the skills gained, and an Internship Graduate Certificate involving a 6 month graduate level internship combined with intensive career management learning.

In view of the extent and strategic importance of work-based learning at the University, we successfully applied to the HEA's Vice-Chancellor’s Strategic Excellence Initiative for funding for a project on ‘Capturing Learning Gain from Work Placements’ which was completed in 2016. The project findings demonstrated a statistically significant increase in employability skills amongst students involved in the project, including effective communication and team working, through their experience of work-based learning. Additionally, attributes such as independence, confidence-building and personal growth were also reported by the students, indicating that their placement experiences had also enhanced their self-awareness, which has been identified as the key to graduate employability.\(^6\)

The University maintains strong links with a wide range of employers who have opportunities to develop and contribute to the curriculum. For example, an Industrial Advisory Board in Science and Engineering ensures that the curriculum develops to meet the needs of industry while graduate employers carry out assessed mock interviews during the Career Planning Module. Students also have extensive opportunities to network with employers at 5 annual Careers Fairs as well as employer-led skills sessions and presentations. These links with employers ensure that a wide range of internships, part-time roles, volunteering opportunities and graduate jobs are promoted to all students through the University-wide Jobshop portal (previously known as the Placement Base) as noted in the most recent ELIR review:

\textit{‘During the review students commented positively about the range and relevance of the initiatives provided, including the Enterprise Gym and the Placement Base.’}

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\(^5\) Until September 2016 known as the Enterprise Gym.

\(^6\) Ruth O'Riordan and Sophie Morrison, 'The Self-Aware Graduate', in Carey Normand and Lorraine Anderson (Eds.), \textit{Graduate Attributes in Higher Education: Attitudes on Attributes from across the Disciplines} (Abingdon: Routledge, forthcoming April 2017), pp. 39-57.
Evidence of the success of our approach to developing transferable skills can be gauged from the NSS, with the University consistently performing very strongly in the Personal Development questions, including being ranked joint top in the UK for personal development in the most recent NSS as indicated in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSS Question</th>
<th>% Satisfaction (UK ranking*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal development overall</td>
<td>87 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 19 The course has helped me present myself with confidence</td>
<td>84 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 20 My communication skills have improved</td>
<td>89 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 21 As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems</td>
<td>86 (12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The ranking excludes specialist organisations. Some of the ranks are tied.

4.3 Positive Outcomes for all (SO3)

Given that students from disadvantaged backgrounds make up over one third of the University’s intake, the University does not have specific initiatives in place for disadvantaged students or other groups. Rather our approach is to ensure that our Employability, Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Strategy and action plan in relation to preparing students for employability or further study meets the needs of all students. The evidence from the metrics is that this approach is appropriate and effective, and as noted in Section 1.3 rates of employment for disabled students and highly skilled employment of BME students are rising faster than for the rest of the student population. We will, however, continue to keep these metrics under review, and should consistent and compelling evidence emerge of systemic and sustained underperformance by any group in relation to positive outcomes we will design interventions to address that underperformance.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS FROM THE DUNDEE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ ASSOCIATION

‘Since its inception as an independent university 50 years ago, the University of Dundee has continued to grow and emerge as a progressive leader in the provision of higher education in the UK. It has managed to balance intensive and leading research with providing the best possible education and support for students to attain their aspirations and potential, as well as providing a dynamic and enriching student experience.

At the heart of its work is its students. The University provides a varied portfolio of high quality programmes, attracting a diverse student population. Furthermore, the University has taken significant steps to establish routes to ensure that no student with potential to achieve is denied their opportunity to excel. The partnership with Dundee and Angus College as well as achievements in Widening Access showcases its commitment to remove the barriers to education.

Much of the University’s enhancement in its learning and teaching and the student experience has been the result of its continued commitment to engaging with students and their representatives in all areas of operations. The unique relationship with the students’ association has resulted in a strong and honest partnership, which has been encapsulated in the Student Partnership Agreement. However, it goes beyond merely written pleasantries and has resulted in vital action towards enhancing a wide variety of critical elements to learning and teaching, as well as resolving the key issues students are facing during their educational journey.

The creation of an effective and supported engagement and representation structure is a reflection of the Institution’s understanding that students are experts in their learning. The student representation framework undertakes a vital role in maintaining the infrastructure and development of high-quality programmes, teaching, progression and achievement. This is supported through the continual enhancement of the learning resources and facilities available to students and teaching staff as well as rewarding both for their effort and hard work.’