Enhancing the Student Experience: Periodic Review of the Student Support Environment

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1. Rationale and overview

Enhancing and assuring the quality of services that support the learning and teaching environment and the out-of-classroom student experience is a critical part of our approach to the development of the quality culture at Dundee. The principal aim of periodic review of the student support environment is to promote improvement of services and the overall support environment by providing a framework to:

- evaluate the effectiveness of support provision
- reflect on how provision could be improved for the future
- plan and implement changes.

Additional important aims of the review process are to identify and share good practice, develop areas of collaboration between units and Directorates and, importantly, ensure a holistic approach to the quality of the student support environment at Dundee.

As for the periodic review process for taught programmes (‘Programme Review’), periodic review of the student support environment should be carried out in a spirit of open, collegial discussion, with the aim of enhancing future provision. It is not an audit of past performance.

The quinquennial periodic review process will be supplemented with thematic reviews that will be undertaken mid-cycle or on an ad hoc basis to ensure agility to respond to strategic initiatives. The process will take account of, and be informed by, existing annual service evaluation processes (where relevant) as well as emerging user needs and internal and external drivers such as changes in legislation and quality assurance requirements.

The periodic review process involves the development of an over-arching, evidence-based Student Support Environment Reflective Review (SSERR) of the support of the learning and teaching environment and the out-of-classroom support at the University of Dundee, which is informed by structured self-evaluation reports from each support unit.

The SSERR captures the key messages that have emerged from unit/Directorate self-evaluation reports, and contains an enhancement-focused forward plan. The SSERR is considered by a Review Board, which examines submitted documents and supporting material, and meets with the relevant groups of staff and students to discuss their views and experiences.

The Review Board comprises administrative and academic staff and student sabbatical officers from within the Institution, as well as at least one external representative. The Board develops a formal report (which should include commendations and recommendations, and may include priority recommendations) which informs the development of an implementation plan.

The report and implementation plan are considered by the Quality Forum (QF), Directors’ & College Secretaries’ Group and the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), before formal approval by Senate and Court. The outcome of the review is reported as part of the Annual Institutional Statement to the Scottish Funding Council on Internal Subject Review: (http://www.sfc.ac.uk/news_events_circul/2012/SFC1412.aspx). Note Section A, paragraph 19. ‘The role of support services (guidance, learning resources, ICT, recruitment, student finance and so on) is of crucial importance in determining the overall quality of the student learning experience. Institutions should satisfy themselves that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to facilitate periodic review of the strategic and operational role of support services in relation to their impact on the student experience…..’.

2. Outline of the process

The process for review of the quality of student support has been designed to align with expectations of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, see the UK Quality Code ‘Assuring Standards and Quality’,
especially Chapter B2: Admissions and Chapter B4: Supporting student achievement) and with the Scottish Funding Council’s Council Guidance to Higher Education Institutions on Quality (2012).

2.1 Applicability and timing

There should be a periodic review of the student support environment every 5 years. Any deviation from the 5-yearly cycle of review must be discussed with and formally approved by the Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching in consultation with the Director of Quality Assurance.

It is envisaged that at least four Directorates should form part of a collective review of student support:

**Student Services (comprising the units detailed below).**
- Academic Achievement Teaching Unit
- Admissions and Student Recruitment Services
- Advice Team
- Careers Service
- Counselling Services
- Disability Services
- Enquiry Centre
- Enterprise Gym
- Health Service
- International Advice Service
- Nursery
- Peer Connections
- Registry
- Residences
- Student Funding
- Student Support Team
- Widening Participation.

**Information and Communication Services**

**Library and Learning Centre**

**Estates and Buildings.**

Other Directorates and units that support the student experience at Dundee may be asked to contribute as the review process is developed further.

2.2 The process

The review process involves four main stages:

1. evaluation, consultation and planning at the level of each Directorate/unit
2. development of an over-arching Student Support Environment Reflective Review
3. a formal Review Board event that will develop commendations and recommendations
4. development of an implementation plan and review of planned changes.

2.3 Responsibilities within the review process

The relevant Student and Academic Support Services (SASS) Directors (or designated deputies) have collective responsibility for the conduct of the review. Guidance on the conduct of the review will be provided by the Director of Quality Assurance.
Responsibility for ensuring that the Review Board is appropriately supported by a Review Board secretary lies with the University Secretary.

The primary responsibility for organising the review process and developing the SSERR lies with the Directors (or designated deputies) of the relevant SASS Directorates. It is recommended that one of those individuals takes overall responsibility for authoring the final draft of the SSERR. The duty to develop a reflective review for each individual support unit rests with service unit managers and their staff.

Students will have opportunities to engage in the process by:
- informing the evaluation and consultation stage with feedback and suggestions for improvement
- participating in the Review Board event.

Students should be included in the evaluation process in ways that:
- are systematic and rigorous, but are appropriate and sensitive to the nature and diversity of the student body
- positively encourage students to contribute their views on the effectiveness of the service and to make suggestions on how it could be improved.

2.4 Scope of the review

The unit reflective reviews and the SSERR should address the standard and quality of the service, with particular focus on the following aspects:
- the role and effectiveness of the service in providing high-quality support to students and other users
- feedback and enhancement arrangements
- resources and the environment
- partnerships and collaboration
- benchmarking
- external accreditation where applicable
- barriers and challenges.

The reflective reviews should highlight areas of strength and areas where good practice should be shared. They should also summarise needs and opportunities for change, providing an evidence-based case for areas that require development. Opportunities for collaborative working should be identified where appropriate. The reviews should also identify areas where resource constraints exist as well as areas where savings might be made. Reference should be made to previous efficiency measures and their impact, where relevant.

The reflective reviews should draw upon the outcomes of annual service evaluations and existing Directorate operating plans. They should contain proposed development plans, containing short-term targets (for the next planning cycle) and longer-term goals over the 5-year review period as well as taking account of the Transformation Vision for the University. Priorities should be highlighted. Where appropriate, performance indicators should be identified and used to analyse progress during subsequent annual service evaluations.

2.5 Conduct of Review Boards

The Review Board includes University administrative and academic staff members external to the Directorates being reviewed, student sabbatical officers, and at least one external expert. Its discussions are managed by two co-convenors (the President of DUSA and the Vice-Principal/Deputy Principal for Learning and Teaching), supported by a Review Board secretary.

Review Board members should receive relevant documentation at least three weeks prior to the event (including access details for any online materials supporting the submissions). The convenors
should arrange an opportunity to review and discuss the information provided prior to meeting panels of staff and students.

Membership of these panels (see Section 3.2.2) should be agreed by the Review Board convenors and the Director of Quality Assurance in consultation with the relevant SASS Directors.

Following these meetings, the Review Board arrives at a formal conclusion in relation to future operating arrangements and considers any commendations and recommendations they may wish to make.

A formal report is drafted by the convenors, agreed by the Review Board members, checked for factual accuracy by the lead author of the SSERR, and then submitted to the relevant SASS Directors, the Deputy President of DUSA, the University Secretary, The Director of PGLA and the Director of Quality Assurance. The report informs the development of an implementation plan. Formal approval of the report and implementation plan is at the level of Senate and Court, via relevant subcommittee structures.

The SASS Directors should ensure that the report and implementation plan are disseminated to their support teams, and are discussed at a follow-on meeting that should include unit managers, relevant SASS Directors (or their deputies) and members of the DUSA Executive Team.

2.6 External audit

The review and enhancement processes should be organised, referenced and archived in ways that could be easily audited, for example, as a sample within an external review of the University at institutional level.

2.7 Recognition of the importance of quality reviews

The University recognises:

- the importance of the review of the student support environment in assuring and promoting the enhancement of standards and quality
- the administrative expertise and time required to implement the process effectively.

Commitment and effective effort by individual members of staff in review activities should be recognised and valued in staff promotion and advancement as evidence of contribution to continual enhancement and excellence in all aspects of the student experience.

2.8 Costs of the Review Board event

The costs associated with the Review Board event will be met by PGLA.

External members of Review Boards will be:

- reimbursed for all reasonable expenses associated with travel, subsistence and accommodation
- granted an honorarium payment in recognition of their time. In keeping with current practice for reimbursement of external members of Programme Review Boards, the current recommendation is 500 pounds.

2.9 Monitoring and review of this policy

The University QF, reporting to the LTC, will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the policy, procedures and guidance.
3. Guidenotes and templates

These guidenotes provide advice on the conduct of periodic review of the student support environment and describe the formats for development of self-evaluation reviews from each support unit/Directorate and the over-arching SSERR.

3.1 Evaluation, reflection and planning within the review process

3.1.1 Self-evaluation of each support unit/Directorate

The aim of the self-evaluation process is to analyse and judge the effectiveness of each support service unit/Directorate and develop ideas and plans for future enhancement. The formats of the unit self-evaluation reports and the SSERR are similar, with the latter providing a distillation of the key points from the unit self-evaluation reports. A template for structuring the self-evaluation document is provided in Appendix 1, though with the recognition that units/Directorates may wish to modify the structure of their reports to reflect the focus of their activities.

3.1.2 Development of the Student Support Environment Reflective Review

The SSERR is the top-level over-arching reflective review of the student support environment at Dundee. This review should distil key points from self-evaluation reviews of units and Directorates, taking into account their individual self-evaluations and proposed forward plans. Whilst responsibility for authoring of the review should lie with one individual (in a senior management role with responsibility for student support), it is important that the review comprises a collective and holistic view on the quality, effectiveness and integration of student support at the University of Dundee rather than a summary of the separate inputs from individual units. The review should contain a commentary on how the final review report was developed and how the various support units contributed to the over-arching report. A template for structuring the SSERR is provided in Appendix 2.

3.2 Conduct of the Review Board

3.2.1 Composition of the Review Board

Membership of the Review Board will be agreed by the President of DUSA, the Vice-Principal/Deputy Principal for Learning and Teaching and the Director of Quality Assurance, in consultation with the relevant student support Directors. It will normally comprise:

1. the President of DUSA (co-convenor)
2. the Vice-Principal/Deputy Principal for Learning and Teaching (co-convenor)
3. the University Secretary
4. a DUSA sabbatical officer (normally the Deputy President)
5. the Director of Policy, Governance and Legal Affairs
6. a College Secretary
7. at least two experienced members of academic staff (normally with a quality enhancement/assurance role) from within the Institution
8. a minimum of one external expert with experience in student support and quality enhancement. Additional external reviewers could be an employer representative and/or a member of staff from the secondary education sector.

The Review Board convenors should be supported by a Review Board secretary nominated by the University Secretary. The chief role of the Review Board secretary is to support the convenors in the preparation of the report. The Review Board secretary should have experience in the support of
academic ‘Programme Reviews’. Additional administrative support should be provided by an organising secretary, who should contact proposed members well in advance to agree availability.

3.2.2 Composition of student support environment review panels

The Review Board examines submitted documents and other information and meets with separate panels comprising:

a. heads of student support units and relevant Directorates
b. operational staff from within the relevant support units and directorates
c. students (nominated in consultation with DUSA sabbatical officers and the University Equality and Diversity Officer, and reflecting the diversity of the student population at Dundee)
d. School secretaries and relevant College administrative staff
e. academic staff (including College Heads of Learning and Teaching or nominees, and other academic staff with key student support roles identified by College Heads of Learning and Teaching).

There should not be merging of the panel meetings. Whilst there is not an expectation that all of the School Secretaries will attend the meeting of Panel d, all School Secretaries should be invited and encouraged to contribute and attend.

All of the panel members should be given the opportunity to access and read the supporting documentation, which should be made available through My Dundee.

3.2.3 Conduct of the Review Board event

A recommended model, which assumes the Review event lasting two days, is as follows:

1. Before the Review Board event. The organising secretary should ensure that members receive electronic copies of the following documentation a minimum of three weeks prior to the Review Board event (preferably earlier).

Organisational information:

- membership of the Review Board and panels
- timetable for the event, including location and maps.
- for external members, an expenses claim form.

Reference documentation

- a copy of this policy and guidenote
- guidance for participants
- a copy of the relevant chapters of the QAA Quality Code.

Review documentation

- a copy of the SSERR, with supporting appendices (this may be via hyperlinks to a dedicated website) that include the individual unit/Directorate self-evaluation reports.

Members should be invited at the outset to declare any prior interests or connections within the context of the Review.

If a Review Board member has any questions, or wishes hard copies of any of the supporting documentation (including copies of any of the references cited), they should contact the organising secretary in the first instance.
The convenors may request preliminary written comments by Review Board members to be submitted prior to the Review Board event.

2. **Private pre-meeting of the Review Board.** This may be held on the morning before the first meetings with the Student Support Review Panels. Here, members of the Review Board will be introduced, and will be asked to give their initial views of the submitted materials. The convenors should then ask for topics and issues that the Review Board members would like to pursue with the different groups, and agree upon who will lead on these issues during the face-to-face meetings, and the panels at which each topic should be addressed. The convenors should discuss and finalise a plan of action, which should be agreed by the Board.

3. **Meetings with the Student Support Review Panels.** The meetings will normally take place during the afternoon of the first day and morning of the second day. It is suggested that the Board meets with the unit/Directorate heads panel first to clarify and address the points that emerge from the SSERR. At the discretion of the convenors, this meeting may include a short presentation from the designated Director to highlight key points. The presentation should not dominate the meeting, and should be used as an opportunity to highlight areas of good practice and areas where there are challenges. The meeting with unit/Director heads should be followed with a meeting with the operational staff, then students, then School secretaries (and College administrative staff where appropriate), then academic staff. It is recognised that the order of the meetings may need to be adjusted to accommodate availability of students and staff. The order does not reflect the importance of the input from each of the panels.

4. **Second private meeting of the Review Board.** The Review Board discusses the Review and agrees conclusions. This should cover:
   - recommendations to Senate and Court regarding the effectiveness of the student support environment and proposals for future operations
   - aspects of good practice that the Review Board wishes to highlight
   - suggestions regarding the future conduct of periodic (and thematic) review of the student support environment
   - any additional comments.

A synopsis of the conclusions of the Review Board may be given orally to the lead Director and the designated heads of student support units and relevant Directorates. Before doing this, the convenors should confirm the wording of the Board’s decision (including any good practice to be commended and areas that require development).

5. **Meeting with the lead Director for the student support environment (SSERR author) and designated heads of student support units and Directorates.** One of the convenors conveys the synopsis of the collective view of the Review Board to the lead Director and designated heads of student support units and relevant Directorates (including recommendations and points of good practice to be highlighted). This is an initial reporting meeting rather than a discussion meeting. The convenor should describe the key points of the conclusions and recommendations to the group, then close the event, indicating approximately when the formal report will be available.

6. **Drafting of the report.** The convenors and Review Board secretary are responsible for preparing the report. They may invite individual Review Board members to prepare drafts of specific sections. Having drafted the report, the Review Board secretary should circulate this to Board members for comment and suggestions for revision. A final draft report should be circulated to the lead author of the SSERR for comments on its accuracy. Any comments on the accuracy of the report should be addressed by the Review Board convenors and secretary (ensuring consultation and agreement with the Review Board members), before submission of the final report.

7. **Submission of the final report and development of an implementation plan.** The convenors submit the agreed, final report to:
• the University Secretary
• the Director of PGLA
• the Director of Quality Assurance
• the relevant SASS Directors
• the Deputy President of DUSA.

The University Secretary, in consultation with the relevant SASS Directors and the DUSA President, develops an implementation plan with proposed timescales.

The SASS Directors should ensure that the report and implementation plan are disseminated to their support teams, and are discussed at a follow-on meeting that should include unit heads, relevant SASS directors and DUSA sabbatical officers.

The Director of Quality Assurance ensures that the report and implementation plan are conveyed to the appropriate University committees, and that key points are highlighted for the attention of the University Senior Management Team.

3.2.4 Suggested areas of focus for Review Board Members

Suggestions on areas of particular focus for individual members are outlined below. It should be noted, however, that all members, including the convenors, have both the authority and responsibility to comment on any aspect or issue.

The DUSA sabbatical officer

The student representative should, in general, read and comment on the documentation and plans from a student perspective and specifically:

• consider how the elements of the student experience for which SASS is responsible are being supported and whether the needs of all students (on- and off-campus) are being addressed appropriately (comments on areas that fall outside the scope of the review should also be explored, to aid the development of the review process in the future)
• comment on the approach to enhancement. In particular, scrutinise the ways in which student (and other user) feedback is taken into account and acted upon, and fed back to users of the services
• examine the approach to equality and diversity
• comment on the management of communications and public information for students where relevant.

The University Secretary

The University Secretary should focus on the effectiveness of the student support environment in the context of the University vision and strategy, and specifically:

• consider how the development plan supports the University vision, strategy and relevant Directorate operating plans
• comment on the proposed forward plan for managing the environment for student support
• examine the evaluation and proposed forward plan for resourcing future operation of the student support environment.

The Director of PGLA

The Director of PGLA should consider the documentation and review in the context of policy development to support the ambitions of the student support environment. It is suggested that the PGLA Director should concentrate on:
• the alignment of University policies and regulations with practice in the arena of the student support environment
• how student support operations map to external guidelines and expectations (e.g. the QAA Quality Code).

**College Secretary**
The College Secretary should focus on how the central student support services align with support at College and School level. Specifically, the College Secretary should:

• consider how communication works between College, School and central support services
• explore and comment on areas where there might be overlapping provision in student support
• explore and comment on issues that cut across one or more units or Directorates and how well these are integrated from a user perspective
• consider the resourcing of student support across the Institution.

**The academic staff members**
The academic members of staff should focus on:

• the effectiveness of the central support environment on enhancing the overall student experience
• the contribution of the central support environment to the development of graduate skills and attributes
• the effectiveness of central student support units/Directorates in supporting the needs of academic staff in terms of their delivery of learning and teaching
• challenges faced by student support units/Directorates in accommodating the varying needs and approaches of different Schools and Colleges.

**The external expert(s)**
The external member(s) of the Board should focus on:

• the effectiveness of the student support environment in the context of national, European and international developments and best practice
• the reflection, evaluation and development plan in the context of national government agendas
• opportunities for internal and external collaborations
• the benefits from existing or potential accreditation by external bodies where relevant.

**3.2.4 Structure of the Review Board report**
The Review Board Report should be structured as shown in Appendix 3.

**3.2.5 Status of the Review Board report**
The status of the Review Board Report is that of a recommendation to the University Senate, Court and the Senior Management Team. An implementation plan developed by the University Secretary, SASS Directors and the DUSA President (see Section 3.2.3, sub-section 7) will be considered alongside the Review Board Report by relevant Senate and Court Committees. The implementation plan should inform the future development of Directorate operational plans. Subsequent annual service evaluations should identify progress against the implementation plan.

*Dr Lesley McLellan, Director of Quality Assurance, February 2013*
# Template for structuring the unit/Directorate self-evaluation report

## PART 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Name of unit or group of units
(e.g. Careers Service)

### 1.2 Key features of the service provision

#### 1.2.1 Purpose and role
Provide a brief statement of purpose and role of the support unit(s).

#### 1.2.2 Distinctiveness and relevance
Describe the distinctiveness of the provision and relevance to the student population (and staff client population where relevant).

### 1.3 The evaluation process
Give a brief explanation of how the evaluation was undertaken - e.g. how it was structured, who did what, how the views of students (and other users or stakeholders) were taken into account.

## PART 2: REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

### 2.1 The role and effectiveness of the service in providing high quality support to students and other users

#### 2.1.1 Profile of the service provision
- alignment of activities with the University Strategy and Transformational Vision
  - Describe (where relevant) how the role and purpose of the unit/Directorate aligns with the University Strategy and Vision.
- scope and operating statistics
  - Give a detailed description of the scope and operating statistics of the unit/Directorate.
- key activities and responsibilities
  - Describe the activities that the unit/Directorate has responsibility for (breadth and depth).
  - How many staff support the unit/Directorate?
  - What is the user profile?
  - What are the trends in use of the service?
- notable characteristics of the student/user profile and analysis of future needs
  - Include any notable characteristics of the student/user profile, implications for management of enhancement of the student experience and any future discernible trends. Give an assessment of the ability of the service to meet current and likely future demands for its provision.

#### 2.1.2 Approach to quality enhancement
- approach to obtaining feedback and evaluating quality
  - Describe the unit’s/Directorate’s approach to routinely obtaining, evaluating and responding to feedback from students and other users, and how feedback influences

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1 Units may find it helpful to illustrate the report with case studies as examples of practice.
practise. Provide an evaluation of the unit’s effectiveness of obtaining and responding to feedback. Describe the unit’s/Directorate’s approach to equality and diversity, and ensuring appropriate staff/student training.

- key messages from feedback

Where possible, provide a collation of quantitative feedback on satisfaction with the support unit from the preceding year(s), and indicate the response rate where appropriate. Give an evaluation of the themes arising from qualitative feedback (i.e. comments and recommendations from students/users). Where appropriate, this can be drawn from annual service evaluation activities, which should be referenced through web-links or added as appendices.

- approach to acting on feedback

Give an overview of the key themes arising from feedback, highlighting areas of high satisfaction as well as areas where there are challenges, and describe how the unit/Directorate has acted (or plans to act) on feedback. Use examples as appropriate.

- Evaluation of approach to quality enhancement

Provide an evaluation of the unit’s/Directorate’s effectiveness in responding to feedback. Use examples (e.g. you said, we did) as appropriate, highlighting areas where the unit/Directorate could or could not respond to feedback in a satisfactory way. Give an evaluation of other approaches to quality enhancement as appropriate.

2.1.3 Approach to communicating with students and other users

Describe how the unit/Directorate communicates with students and other users and, where possible, provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach to communication.

2.2 Resources and the environment

Describe and comment on the resources and the environment under the suggested headings given below, and provide an evaluation of effectiveness. This commentary and evaluation of effectiveness should be supported by evidence (referred to in appendices or web-links to on-line supporting materials as appropriate). Cross-referencing to feedback reports and annual service evaluations may be useful.

- the location
- accessibility for students and staff
- facilities
- staffing levels
- the operating budget where relevant.

2.3 Partnerships and collaborations

2.3.1 Approach to working with internal operative units

- collaborations with internal units/Directorates

Give details of the unit’s/Directorate’s approach to working with and partnering with other support units, Schools, Colleges, Directorates and DUSA. Highlight successful collaborative initiatives as well as any barriers to collaborations.

- evaluation of the effectiveness of collaborative working

Provide an evidence-based evaluation of the effectiveness the unit’s/Directorate’s approach to collaborative working within the Institution.

2.3.2 Approach to working with external organisations and stakeholders
Describe the unit’s approach to working with external organisations and stakeholders where relevant, and provide an evaluation of the unit’s/Directorate’s effectiveness in this area.

2.4 Benchmarking

2.4.1 Approach to benchmarking with external reference points
Describe the mechanisms that the unit has in place for benchmarking with external reference points (e.g. the QAA Quality Code and/or external Professional Bodies).

2.4.2 Mapping to external reference points
Provide a mapping of practice to external benchmarks (where appropriate) and an evaluation of whether practice fits with external norms.

2.5 External accreditation (where applicable)
Give details of accreditation by external bodies where relevant. Describe the benefits and costs.

2.6 Barriers and challenges
Describe any difficulties that the Directorate/unit face which result from issues outside its control. Examples of these may be external factors like legislation and statutory responsibilities, or internal factors such as varying practice and differing demands across Schools and Colleges.

PART 3: CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Summary of strengths and good practice
Identify points of strength and areas where good practice can be shared.

3.2 Summary of needs and opportunities for change
Provide an evidence-based case for areas that require development. Consider the appropriateness of existing structures and options for enhancement. Consider areas where collaborative working and sharing of resources could be strengthened. Using appropriate evidence from evaluations described in Section 2 above, identify areas that are under-resourced and identify areas where there are opportunities for efficiencies.

PART 4: DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This should indicate how the unit proposes to manage and enhance the service for the future. The plan should contain ideas for short-term targets (for the next planning cycle) and longer-term goals over the 5-year review period and beyond towards the University Transformational Vision.

Priorities should be highlighted.

Plans should be evidenced-based, building on the evaluation and reflection of the effectiveness of the service, as well as drawing upon the national (and international) quality context and the developing quality agenda.

Where appropriate, performance indicators should be identified and used to analyse progress during subsequent annual service evaluations.

PART 5: REFERENCES AND APPENDICES. Refer to on-line materials through web-links where possible.
Appendix 2

Template for structuring the SSERR

PART 1: INTRODUCTION
1.1 Scope of the Review
1.2 The evaluation process
Give an overview of the how the SSERR was developed and how units and Directorates contributed to the SSERR.

PART 2: REFLECTION AND EVALUATION
2.1 The role and effectiveness of the services in providing high quality support to students and other users
2.1.1 Over-arching profile of the student support environment at Dundee
- overview
  Provide an overview of the student support environment, drawing upon the data provided within the self-evaluation reports.
- scope and operating statistics
  Describe the scope and operating statistics e.g. staffing, user ‘foot-fall’, annual budget.
- analysis of current and future effectiveness
  Provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the current provision, and an assessment of the ability of the service to meet likely future demands for its provision.

2.1.2 Approach to quality enhancement
- overview
  Give an overview of the practices of units/Directorates in routinely obtaining and responding to feedback from students and other users, and how feedback is used for quality enhancement.
- assessment of effectiveness of approach to quality enhancement
  Provide an assessment of the effectiveness of approaches to quality enhancement. Describe how the units/Directorates approach equality and diversity, and ensure appropriate staff/student training, and give an evaluation of the effectiveness of the approaches.

2.1.3 Approach to communicating with students and other users
- overview
  Give an overview of the practices of units/Directorates in communicating with students and other users.
- assessment of effectiveness of approach to communication
  Provide an assessment of the effectiveness of approaches to communication.

2.2 Resources and the environment
Provide an overview of the resources and the environment under the suggested headings given below, and provide an evaluation of effectiveness. This commentary and evaluation of effectiveness should be supported by the evidence provided by the self-evaluation reports from units/Directorates (referred to in appendices or web-links to on-line supporting materials as appropriate).
- locations of units/Directorates
- accessibility for students and staff
- facilities
- staffing levels
- operating budget.

2.3 Partnerships and collaborations

Give an overview of the approach to collaboration between units/Directorates within the Institution. Highlight successful collaborative initiatives as well as any barriers to collaborations. Provide an evidence-based evaluation of the effectiveness of the approach to collaborative working within the Institution.

Describe the approach to working with external organisations and stakeholders, and provide an evaluation of effectiveness in this area.

2.4 Benchmarking

Provide an overview of the mechanisms in place for benchmarking with external reference points (e.g. the QAA Quality Code and/or external Professional Bodies), and an evaluation of whether practice maps to expectations of relevant external bodies.

2.5 External accreditation

Give a summary of services that are accredited by external bodies. Provide a view on the benefits (or otherwise) of current accreditation of activities and opportunities for further development.

2.6 Barriers and challenges

Give an overview of the external and internal challenges that the units/Directorates face. In particular, highlight areas where solutions could be found by changes in practice at School, College or other Directorate level.

PART 3: CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Summary of strengths and good practice

Identify points of strength and areas where good practice can be shared.

3.2 Summary of needs and opportunities for change

Provide an evidence-based case for areas that require development. Consider the appropriateness of existing structures and options for enhancement. Consider areas where collaborative working and sharing of resources could be strengthened. Using appropriate evidence from evaluations described in Section 2 above, identify areas that are under-resourced and identify areas where there are opportunities for efficiencies.

PART 4: DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This should give a broad, over-arching description of proposed plans for management and enhancement of the student support environment for the future. The plan should contain priorities for short-term targets (for the next planning cycle) and longer-term goals over the 5-year review period and beyond towards the University Transformational Vision.

The over-arching development plan should be evidenced-based, referring to unit/Directorate proposals with the provision of hyperlinks as appropriate, as well as drawing upon the national (and international) quality context and the developing quality agenda.

Where appropriate, performance indicators should be identified and used to analyse progress during subsequent service evaluation activities.
PART 5: REFERENCES AND APPENDICES

Individual self-evaluation reports should be included as appendices (preferably via hyperlinks to online material).
## Template for structuring the Review Board report

### Introduction
Provide an introduction to the context and scope of the review. Give the names and roles of the members of the Review Board as well as the Student Support Review Panel members that were interviewed as part of the event. Provide a précis of how the review event was structured.

### Observations and questions to Student Support Review Panels
The detailed report should be presented under the focus headings of the SSERR, with outcomes of the discussions with each Panel being highlighted within each section:

1. the role and effectiveness of the services in providing high quality support to students and other users
2. resources and the environment
3. partnerships and collaborations
4. benchmarking and external accreditation
5. barriers and challenges.

### Summary of the Review Board’s views
Identify areas of strength and where good practice can be shared.
Provide an assessment of the approach to enhancement and student engagement.
Identify areas where there are needs and/or opportunities for change, including structural change.
Give a commentary on the approach to equality and diversity.
Provide a view on effectiveness, sustainability, the appropriateness of the resource (staff and estate) and agility to respond to local, national and international agendas.
Comment on the effectiveness of communications, and how the student support environment aligns with the University vision and strategy, and the focus on quality enhancement of the student experience.

### Conclusions
Provide recommendations on the future operation of the student support environment. It may be appropriate to develop priority recommendations.
Commend areas of good practice.
Give any suggestions regarding the University policy and process for periodic review of the student support environment.
Provide any other constructive comments.
Abbreviations

DUSA: Dundee University Students’ Association
LTC: Learning and Teaching Committee
QAA: Quality Assurance Agency
QF: (University of Dundee) Quality Forum
PGLA: Policy, Governance and Legal Affairs
SASS: Student and Academic Support Services
SSERR: Student Support Environment Reflective Review