

**Guidance Notes for the**

**Graduate School Review**

**2023/2024**

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**Guidance Notes for the Graduate School Review**

# Introduction

All higher education institutions in the UK are individually responsible for the quality of their educational provision. However, to help ensure that quality is maintained and enhanced throughout the sector the Scottish Funding Council, through the sector’s Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), has developed a Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF)[[1]](#footnote-1) which is the enhancement-led approach to quality in Scottish higher education. The QEF supports institutions, in managing the quality of the student learning experience. It also provides public confidence in academic standards and the quality of the student experience.

The collaborative approach to the framework is very distinct and includes:

* its coherence - the design allows all elements to work together
* its emphasis on enhancement, not only quality assurance
* its focus on the whole student learning experience.

The key characteristics of an institutional self-evaluation and review[[2]](#footnote-2) are that the review process should:

* be at the appropriate level;
* include research students and supervisors of research students;
* recognise the role of support services in the student experience;
* identify a range of developmental issues with a timetable for action in the period between reviews;
* assess the extent to which the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education[[3]](#footnote-3) has been embedded and national benchmarks are considered;
* include at least one external member of the review team with relevant expertise;
* include a student representative on the review team;
* take account of student feedback and assess the extent to which this influences provision;
* promote dialogue on areas in which quality might be improved;
* encourage critical self-reflection on policy and practice at all levels within the institution; and
* promote dissemination of good practice.

The purpose and benefit of an internal Graduate School Review is threefold:

* to provide an opportunity for the University to evaluate its provision, the policies and processes it uses to support its students and the resources available to ensure that provision is of a consistently high quality across the institution;
* to build the case for investment and institutional change to support postgraduate research; and
* to enable the University to provide evidence of the high quality of its postgraduate research provision when required.

The review of postgraduate research recognises that it may not be possible to review the postgraduate research environment and provision within a College Graduate School in isolation from its postgraduate taught provision, since Graduate Schools may cover both. Therefore, while this review focuses only on research degrees, Graduate Schools are free to refer to and highlight issues relating to PGT where appropriate.

The outcome of the review will be a report containing:

* a summary of issues raised or good practice identified during the review;
* an evaluation of the Graduate School’s procedures for assuring the standards of awards and the quality of provision;
* an evaluation of the Graduate School’s approach to the enhancement of provision;
* recommendations for action to address any identified weaknesses and to further strengthen the provision and thereby further enhance the provision of postgraduate research degrees.

# The Review Panel

The Review Panel will comprise at a minimum:

* a Vice Principal (Convener);
* a Senate Assessor;
* a Dean of Graduate Studies, or similar, from a cognate discipline;
* at least one external reviewer, usually an academic with relevant experience;
* a second external reviewer, generally a colleague from professional services with a leadership role in delivering doctoral education;
* a student representative nominated by the Students’ Representative Council (normally from a cognate discipline); and
* a Clerk, normally the PGR Strategy Manager from Research & Innovation Services (R&I).

The size of the Panel may be increased if this is deemed appropriate e.g. for especially large Graduate Schools or to include external professional / managerial staff with relevant experience.

The Convener of the Panel is generally the Vice Principal (Research) although another Vice Principal may convene the Panel in exceptional circumstances. All other members of the Panel have equal status and are expected to take part in all aspects of the review. The number of external Panel members will depend on the range of the Graduate School’s provision and its collaborative activity with external bodies.

The Dean of Graduate Studies from the Graduate School being reviewed may suggest up to 4 external reviewers, ranked in order of preference, for the consideration of the Convener, who will appoint external members. An example of an appropriate external reviewer might be a Head of Graduate School from a cognate discipline at another UK institution.

* The Graduate School will be asked to provide some supporting background information for each person, particularly in relation to their relevant current experience to the postgraduate research being provided through the Graduate School.
* A statement should also be included indicating whether or not the person has had any pervious involvement with the Graduate School. Previous involvement will not normally exclude a person from acting as an external member of the Panel (the information requested is mainly for the benefit of the Convener and other Panel members). An exception to this is where the suggested person has been a member of staff or a student of the University in the three years prior to the review.
* External Panel members will receive a fee plus reimbursement of expenses (subject to taxation).
* R&I / The Office of the VPs is responsible for all communication with the external members, and the payment of costs and will be met from central University resources.

The student Panel member is a full member of the Panel and will be selected by the Students’ Representative Council President or Vice President (Education). Selection will take due cognisance of relevant skills, aptitudes and experience in representation.

* Student members will receive a fee (subject to taxation) at the same rate as the External member.
* R&I is responsible for all communication with the student member, and the payment of costs and will be met from central University resources.

The Clerk is also a full member of the Panel and will liaise with the Graduate School before and after the visit, take notes during the visit and draft the report of the review on behalf of the Review Panel.

# Format and Duration of the Review

Graduate Schools will, from 2018/19, transition onto a three yearly review cycle, subsequently revised to a four yearly cycle in 2020/21. The Schedule in Appendix 3 represents a schedule transitioning from the previous 5 yearly review cycle to the new 4 yearly review cycle. Graduate Schools are fully consulted as to the timing of the Review in order to account for other significant deadlines or issues specific to individual Graduate Schools.

The format of the review can be summarised as:

* Data regarding the postgraduate research student experience will be routinely provided to Graduate Schools in an agreed format by R&I. Graduate Schools also have the facility to review and audit PGR data through Qlikview;
* An agreed data pack will be provided to the Graduate School in order that they may review and correct data they feel to be incorrect. (Appendix 4)
* Graduate Schools will provide a reflective statement based around a set of short questions (Appendix 5) and other agreed documents as appropriate (Appendix 6), including a SWOT analysis;
* Documentation will be provided to the Panel at least four weeks prior to the Review;
* The Panel will be asked to provide comments prior to Panel meetings, with a summary of points raised being provided to the Graduate School;
* Panel meetings will take place with staff and students;
* Production of a report by the Panel which is submitted to the PGR Operations Committee, PGR Executive Committee and Research Planning and Strategy Committee (RPSC);
* Action on the recommendations by the Graduate School and others named within the report;
* Provision of a progress report one year after the Review Report by the Graduate School and others to PGR Operations Committee, PGR Executive Committee and RPSC; and
* further progress reports as deemed necessary by relevant committees.

The duration of the review visit is generally determined by the size of the Graduate School. Most Panels meet briefly to discuss their approach and impressions prior to a full day meeting with staff and students. Where the Review takes place online, the schedule may vary.

Any queries about the format of the documentation should be addressed to the Clerk. The Clerk will take responsibility for disseminating the documentation to the Panel and collating their comments.

The Clerk will make the documentation available to the Panel at least four weeks in advance of the Review. If possible, documents will be distributed via email or an online document repository. Hard copies may be provided if requested. Requests for other documentation may be made in advance of or on the day of the review or post-review.

# Review of the Submission

Given the purposes of the exercise and the background of the University members, the internal Panel members will focus on the robustness of the Graduate School’s procedures and mechanisms for ensuring quality and its plans for enhancement particularly relating to relevant University and College strategies and key performance indicators.

The external Panel members will have a key role in reviewing provision:

* in the light of relevant national benchmarks, and external policy and practice;
* in relation to other stakeholders, e.g. other higher education institutions, industry and non-academic bodies;
* the extent to which the Self Evaluation Questionnaire is reflective, evaluative and constructively self-critical;
* the currency and validity of the postgraduate research supported in terms of developing knowledge within the discipline.

The student member will focus on student-related matters, in particular:

* the usefulness of written information provided to students; and
* the opportunities for students to provide feedback to the Graduate School and the Graduate School’s responses.

Each Panel member will provide the Clerk with a report on any topics for exploration or areas of concern in advance of the review date, and will identify any individuals/groups it wishes to meet two weeks prior to the visit. Panel members will receive a collated version of these reports for reference.

The Dean of Graduate Studies will receive a copy to provide him/her with advance notice of the main areas the Panel wishes to explore during the visit. The Panel may explore some topics in more than one meeting and will not be restricted from exploring others as they arise on the day. Likewise, they may not raise all the topics listed on the day.

The Graduate School should not respond in advance of the visit to the items identified; the note is for information only. However, where the Panel wishes some clarification on minor points, it may make an explicit request for a response prior to the visit. One day prior to the visit the Panel will meet to agree the areas and topics to be covered in the visit.

# Panel Meetings

The panel will hold meetings with individuals and groups of staff and students. On the day of the visit the Panel will meet in private with:

* the Dean of Graduate Studies / Graduate School Manager;
* the Head of College;
* the Postgraduate Convener(s) as appropriate;
* a representative sample of active supervisors; and
* a representative sample of PGR students.

Additional private meetings of the Review Panel will be held at various points in the day. The Panel may request other meetings if it deems this relevant. A sample agenda can be found in Appendix 7.

The meetings with students are held before meetings with Graduate School staff in order to allow students’ views to be discussed with staff. Panels will not formally review students’ work.

The Clerk will work with the Graduate School to recruit students to participate in the review. Efforts should be made to ensure that the students who attend the meetings include representatives of as many different sections of the postgraduate research student body as possible, for example, part time/full time; home/EU/international, able-bodied/disabled, male/female, students on interdisciplinary, cross-College or Doctoral Training Partnership supported students, etc. An information sheet for students who may be asked to participate in the Review is located in Appendix 8 or on the Postgraduate Research Service website: https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/ourresearchenvironment/prs/

The Clerk will ask the Graduate School to approach staff and seek volunteers to participate in the review. Efforts should be made to ensure that the staff who attend the meetings include representatives of as many different sectors of the supervisor population as possible, e.g. postdocs, experienced supervisors, representation from Schools and Institutes, etc. An information sheet for staff members who may be asked to participate in the Review is located in Appendix 9 or on the Postgraduate Research Service website: https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/ourresearchenvironment/prs/

The Dean of Graduate Studies and/or Graduate School Manager will normally attend meetings at the start and end of the Review but is also encouraged to attend the broader Panel meetings with staff and students.

The Clerk is responsible for the organisation of the review visit and for liaising with the Graduate School and Convener over the timetable for the visit, suitable accommodation for the review and will organise any catering.

# Engaging Students in the Review Process

Engagement with and the participation of students are vital components of the Review process prior, during and following the Review. There is also indirect engagement with students’ views and feedback through the documentation submitted for the review.

Student feedback obtained via routine quality mechanisms should also inform the development of the documentation (e.g. end of course questionnaires, staff: student liaison committee minutes and annual monitoring reports, PRES results, etc.). Students should also be informed about the review at an early opportunity and consideration should then be given to how and when feedback should be obtained to ensure that the student experience is evaluated and captured meaningfully in the development of submission to the Panel.

Following approval of the review report by the PGR Executive Committee and RPSC, the Clerk may prepare and circulate a summary report to the Graduate School on request. The main audience for the summary report is students and its main purpose is for consideration at staff/student liaison committees and for posting on Graduate School websites or Moodle for the wider student body to access. It may also be useful for staff to refer to when reporting to students on progress in addressing the recommendations. The Graduate School will be asked to report on the steps it has taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review and on the actions taken in the one-year-on progress report to RPSC.

# The Review Report and Follow-up Report

Following the visit, the Review Panel will produce a report identifying key strengths along with conclusions and recommendations for improvement or change. The recommendations contained within the report should indicate who is to take action: this may be targeted at the Graduate School, the College, a University Service, etc.

The Clerk to the Panel will draft the report which will be circulated initially to the Convener and afterwards to other panel members for comment or amendment. The final draft report will be made available to the Dean of Graduate Studies for the correction of factual inaccuracies or misunderstandings within eight weeks of the review visit. The Graduate School will have two weeks to provide comments on factual accuracy. Any changes to the report suggested by the Dean of Graduate Studies will be subject to the approval of the Convener of the Review Panel.

The report is then submitted to the Head of College for a formal College response within four weeks. The report, together with the formal College response will then be submitted to the PGR Executive Committee and RPSC, which endorses or amends the report and the recommendations and forwards them to the Graduate School and others named in the recommendations for action.

Any issues of research policy arising from the review which impact beyond the Graduate School will be discussed by the PGR Executive Committee, RPSC, Senate, the Senior Management Group and the University Court will be advised, as necessary, of recommendations that have more serious academic or resource implications.

Should it prove necessary, the Review Panel may produce a confidential annex to the main report which is for internal use only by RSIO. This annex is produced only if there is information that the Panel considers sensitive and inappropriate for the main report e.g. information relating to individuals or interpersonal relations, etc. It might also include specific recommendations relating to the distribution of resources within a College. It is anticipated that the need for a confidential annex will be exceptional.

As noted above, a summary report may be produced after the approval of the Final Report by the PGR Executive Committee and RPSC which may be shared with students or staff as appropriate to facilitate discussions about issues raised during the Review.

# External Access to Report

The Graduate School Review reports and progress reports on recommendations are published on the University’s web pages and are publicly available at: https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/ourresearchenvironment/prs/

Graduate School Review reports, Graduate School responses and overview reports are made available to the QAA for annual engagement meetings and Institutional Review. An annual report is also made to the Scottish Funding Council on the progress and outcome of the Graduate School Reviews.

# Appendix 1: Suggested Format for Nomination of an External Member of Review Panel

**NAME OF GRADUATE SCHOOL**

Suggestions for an external member of the Graduate School Review Panel for the forthcoming Graduate School Review are, in order of preference’ as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name**  **Current Title and Affiliations** | **Short Biography**  **(supporting background information)** | **Previous Relationship or Association with the College or Graduate School** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

Signature:

Designation: Dean of Graduate Studies

# Appendix 2: Approximate Timescale for Key Events

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Approximate Timescale** | **Event** |
| **- As soon as possible** | Agree suitable dates for Review as soon as possible. The VP (Research) and the Relevant Dean of Graduate Studies should agree dates as close to the start of the academic year as possible. Once internal dates are agreed, invite internal, student and Senate Assessor Panel members. **Minimum 8 to 12 weeks prior to the Review.** |
| **- October/December PGR Executive Committee meeting** | Table any amendments to these Guidance Notes for discussion and approval by the Committee. |
| **- before the end of the calendar year** | Clerk to solicit suggestions for an external panel member, agree this with the VP (Research) and coordinate the issuance of an invitation with the Support Team to invite them on behalf of the VP. |
| **at least 12 weeks before** | Clerk to hold a briefing meeting with the Dean of Graduate Studies and other relevant staff from the Graduate School to be reviewed to discuss the arrangements for the review and the documentation. |
| **at least 12 weeks before** | Provision of an agreed data pack for review |
| **- 6 weeks** | Graduate School submits final documentation to the Clerk. |
| **- 4 to 6 weeks** | Travel, accommodation and catering arrangements made. |
| **- 4 weeks** | Documentation sent to Panel members |
| **- 2 to 3 weeks** | Any further requests for information from the Panel to be provided to the Graduate School. |
| **-1 week** | Panel provides Dean of Graduate Studies with a summary of topics for discussion at the Review. |
| **0** | **The Review Visit** |
| **+ 8 weeks** | Draft report will be made available to the Dean of Graduate Studies for the correction of factual inaccuracies or misunderstandings. |
| **+10 weeks (2 weeks from provision of report to the Graduate School)** | The Graduate School responds with comments on the factual accuracy of the report which are reviewed by the Convenor. |
| **+ 12 weeks** | The Report is presented to the Head of College for a formal College response. |
| **+16 weeks** | The report and the College response are submitted to the next available meetings of the PGR Operations, PGR Executive Committee and the Research Planning and Strategy Committee (RPSC). |
| **+1 year from RPSC meeting** | The Graduate School and others responsible for taking action will report on the progress made in addressing the recommendations of the review in the Annual PGR report submitted to the PGR Operations and PGR Executive Committee. The Graduate School should also report on the steps it has taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review and on the actions taken. |

# Appendix 3: Review Cycle from 2018/2019

**Proposed Review Cycle**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **College** | **Previous Review Year** |
| 18/19 | Arts | 2014 |
| 19/20 | MVLS (postponed) | 2015 |
| 20/21 | No Review |  |
| 21/22 | MVLS | 2015 |
| 22/23 | COSE | 2017 (rescheduled to Autumn 24/25) |
| 23/24 | COSS | 2018 |
| 24/25 | Arts | 2019 |

# Appendix 4: Outline Data Pack

***Data mainly from central sources***

* Student Numbers by load, residence status, nationality, gender, age on entry, withdrawals, thesis pending numbers and duration
* Application and recruitment data – number of applications, number of rejections, number of offers, new entrants, performance against targets
* 4-year submission rates and doctoral degrees awarded
* Data on withdrawals and durations of final stages (post thesis submission)
* Staff profiles – gender, age group, career level
* Supervisory loads and spread
* PGR Survey data

***Data requiring input from Graduate Schools in addition to central sources***

* PGR Survey Action Plans and Action Plan Follow ups
* Researcher Development and supervisor training courses - attendance and evaluation
* Funding source and scholarship data – number of students funded via internal and external means

***Optional Data***

* Annual Progress Review data – participation, outcomes, evaluation
* Student publications
* Information on internships or mobility opportunities
* Student awards or prizes
* Destination data

***Please note:*** Data is provided or collated where it is availabe. Work is ongoing to improve data quality as well as the range of data that is available. This is list is intended to change over time as additional data becomes available.

# Appendix 5: Reflective Questions

Please answer the following questions. The narrative submission should reference the data and the SWOT analysis as appropriate and consist of no more than 2,500 words.

1. What is working well in terms of Graduate School operations or the student experience? Of what successes or achievements is the Graduate School most proud, and why?
2. What problems or challenges is the Graduate School facing and what are the plans for mitigating these?
3. How does the Graduate School encourage its postgraduate students to engage in the local research environment and support the development of a vibrant research culture?
4. How does the Graduate School ensure consistent and robust policies and processes for student support across the Graduate School, Schools and/or Research Institutes?
5. Please discuss the Graduate School’s strategies or plans for consolidation, review or enhancement of the student experience.

# Appendix 6: Additional Documentation

* Formal Strategy Documents
* Organisational Charts
* SWOT Analysis (see below)
* Researcher Development Training Manuals or Guidance
* PGR Handbook, local Code of Practice or similar

**SWOT Analysis**

(Maximum One Page)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths**   * What do you do well? * What are your unique resources selling points? * What do others see as your strengths? | **Weaknesses**   * What could you improve? * Where do you have fewer resources than others? * What are others likely to see as weaknesses? |
|  |  |
| **Opportunities**   * What opportunities are open to you? * What trends could you take advantage of? * How can you turn your strengths into opportunities? | **Threats**   * What threats could harm you? * What is your competition doing? * What threats do your weaknesses expose you to? |
|  |  |

Strengths and weaknesses are generally internal factors while opportunities and threats are generally external factors.

Some resources and examples for thinking about your SWOT analysis:

* <https://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/greatmeetings/greatmeetings018.shtml>
* [https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media\_233979\_en.pdf](file:///C:\Users\marybethkneafsey\Library\Containers\com.microsoft.Word\Data\Desktop\•%09https:\www.gla.ac.uk\media\media_233979_en.pdf)  (internal example)
* [https://www.liveplan.com/blog/what-is-a-swot-analysis-and-how-to-do-it-right-with-examples/](file:///C:\Users\marybethkneafsey\Library\Containers\com.microsoft.Word\Data\Desktop\•%09https:\www.liveplan.com\blog\what-is-a-swot-analysis-and-how-to-do-it-right-with-examples)
* <https://www.medschl.cam.ac.uk/acout/5-year-plan/9-swot-analysis>
* <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/Sustainability/Documents/SWOT-analysis.pdf>

# Appendix 7: Sample Agenda

In-Person Review

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9.00 - 11.00 | **Review discussion with key Graduate School staff**  This will include:   * Dean of Graduate Studies, and Deputy Dean, if relevant * Graduate School Manager * PG Convenors |
| 11.00 -11.15 | **Break** |
| 11.15-12.45 | **Student Meeting**  The panel will meet with a cross-section of postgraduate researchers to discuss their perspective on the postgraduate research experience within the Graduate School. |
| 12.45 – 13.30 | **Lunch** |
| 13.30-15.00 | **Wider staff meeting**  The panel will meet with a cross-section staff to discuss their perspective on the postgraduate research experience within the Graduate School. This group will include new and experienced supervisors and professional staff. |
| 15.00-16.00 | **Consolidation**  The panel (excluding staff from the reviewed Graduate School) will consolidate the day’s findings and agree any issues to be raised in the final report. |
| 16.00-17.00 | **Meeting with the Dean of Graduate Studies and Senior Staff**  The panel will present its main findings from the day to the Dean of Graduate Studies and key Graduate School staff. |
| 17.00 | **Finish** |

**Online Review (3 half days via Zoom)**

**Day 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9:00 – 10:00 | **Panel Review Meeting**  Panel will discuss the review materials and agree key topics and overall approach to the Review. |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | Break |
| 10:30 – 12:30 | **Review discussion with key Graduate School staff**  This will include:   * Dean of Graduate Studies, and Deputy Dean, if relevant * Graduate School Manager * PG Convenors |

**Day 2**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9:00 – 9:30 | **Panel Meeting**  Panel has an opportunity to discuss the previous day’s meeting and agree any changes to approach or topics. |
| 9:30 – 11:00 | **Student Meeting**  The panel will meet with a cross-section of postgraduate researchers to discuss their perspective on the postgraduate research experience within the Graduate School. |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | Break |
| * 1. **o 12.15** | The panel will meet with **PG Convenors** |
| **12:15 – 12:30** | Break |
| **12.30 to 13.30** | **Wider staff meeting**  The panel will meet with a cross-section staff to discuss their perspective on the postgraduate research experience within the Graduate School. This group will include new and experienced supervisors and professional staff. |

**Day 3**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9:00 – 10:30 | **Consolidation**  The panel will consolidate the findings and agree any issues to be raised in the final report. |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | Break |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | **Meeting with the Dean of Graduate Studies and Senior Staff**  The panel will present its main findings from the day to the Dean of Graduate Studies and key Graduate School staff. |

# Appendix 8: Information Sheet for Students

**Graduate School Review: Information for Students**

We are conducting a review of the Graduate School in the College of XX on XX. This is similar to the Periodic Subject Review but for PGR / Graduate School matters and forms a key part of the University’s quality assurance activities.  These Reviews take place in a 4 yearly cycle and form part of the Quality Assurance Agency’s (QAA) Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF).

The purpose and benefit of an internal graduate school review is threefold:

* to provide an opportunity for the University to evaluate its provision, the processes it uses to support its students and the resources available to ensure that provision is of a consistently high quality across the institution;
* to build the case for investment and institutional change to support postgraduate research; and
* to enable the University to provide evidence of the high quality of its postgraduate research provision when required.

The operation of a system of institutional self-evaluation and review demonstrates the University’s commitment to quality to students, external reviewers and other relevant stakeholders.

The views of students are central to the review process and we very much hope that you will participate in the review by attending a Panel session on the morning of the Review. We would like to encourage students to volunteer to meet with the Review Panel and we hope that you will be interested in participating.

The Panel wants to meet with groups that represent the student body within the Graduate School and will be looking for a balanced view of the environment. The Panel hope that those they meet will tell them about the strengths and achievements of the Graduate School and why it is a good place to work and study, as well as areas that could be improved or enhanced.

The meetings with students are normally held before meetings with staff in order to allow students’ views to be discussed with staff. No Graduate School or programme staff are present during the meeting and no comments will be attributed to an individual.

The Panel will be convened by Professor Chris Pearce, Vice Principal (Research) and will also comprise an internal academic member, an external academic member, an external professional services member, a student member, a Senate Assessor and the PGR Strategy Manager as Clerk to the Panel.

Essentially, the process is:

* The Graduate School will provide the Panel with a completed reflective analysis, supporting documentation and an agreed data set.
* This paperwork will be distributed for review by the Panel approximately one month prior to the Review date.
* Panel members will provide some brief comments about the submission and/or request any additional information they would like to review approximately two weeks prior to the Review.
* This will be followed by the Panel Review meetings during which the Panel will interview groups of staff and students from the Graduate School.
* Panel members will then submit reports which will be turned into a final report for submission to the Research Planning and Strategy Committee (RPSC).

Detailed below are some of the areas that the Panel may explore with you:

* The effectiveness and quality of teaching and/or supervision;
* Your opinion of the learning experience and/or research environment;
* How you engage with the research environment and other University activities;
* The provision of training courses to support your personal and professional development;
* The quality and usefulness of handbooks and code of practice documents;
* How you find staff in the Graduate School - friendly, approachable, supportive?
* Your opinion of the adequacy of information on progression and assessment (criteria, methods, deadlines, feedback opportunities, etc);
* The opportunities and mechanisms for providing feedback and how staff respond to the feedback you provide;
* Your views on admission and induction procedures;
* Your awareness or use of student support services;
* The availability and quality of learning resources - Library, IT, etc.

The Panel will also provide you with an opportunity to raise and discuss other issues.

If you have any queries about this process or would like any additional information, please contact your Graduate School Office or the PGR Service ([pgr@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:pgr@glasgow.ac.uk)) or look at the PGR Service web pages: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/postgraduateresearch/graduateschoolreview/>

# Appendix 9: Information Sheet for Staff

**Graduate School Review: Information for Staff**

**Introduction**

We are conducting a review of the Graduate School in the College of XX on XX. This is similar to the Periodic Subject Review but for PGR / Graduate School matters and forms a key part of the University’s quality assurance activities.  These Reviews take place in a 3 yearly cycle and form part of the Quality Assurance Agency’s (QAA) Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF).

The purpose and benefit of an internal graduate school review is threefold:

* to provide an opportunity for the University to evaluate its provision, the processes it uses to support its students and the resources available to ensure that provision is of a consistently high quality across the institution;
* to build the case for investment and institutional change to support postgraduate research; and
* to enable the University to provide evidence of the high quality of its postgraduate research provision when required.

The operation of a system of institutional self-evaluation and review demonstrates the University’s commitment to quality to students, external reviewers and other relevant stakeholders.

**Background**

All higher education institutions in the UK are individually responsible for the quality of their educational provision. However, to help ensure that quality is maintained and enhanced throughout the sector the Scottish Funding Council, through the sector’s Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), has developed and recommended a Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) for use by all institutions. This includes:

* institutional responsibility for quality, incorporating institution-led/self-evaluation and review;
* external review (by QAA in the Scottish University sector – Enhancement-led institution review (ELIR);
* student engagement in quality arrangements;
* information for stakeholders and the public on quality; and
* the promotion of enhancement, for example through thematic approaches in university strategies.

All elements of the QEF are interdependent as one process closely relates to and is referred to by other processes within the Framework. The three key distinctive features of Scotland’s quality assurance and enhancement arrangements are:

* the partnership process through which they are created and maintained;
* their emphasis on systematic and continuous enhancement in the quality of provision; and
* the importance they place on students actively participating in improving the quality of their learning experiences.

The operation of a system of institutional self-evaluation and review demonstrates the University’s commitment to quality to students, external reviewers and other relevant stakeholders.

**The Review Panel**

The Panel will be convened by Professor Chris Pearce, Vice Principal (Research) and will also comprise an internal academic member, an external academic member, an external professional services member, a student member, a Senate Assessor and the PGR Strategy Manager as Clerk to the Panel.

Essentially, the process is:

* The Graduate School will provide the Panel with a completed reflective analysis, supporting documentation and an agreed data set.
* This paperwork will be distributed for review by the Panel approximately one month prior to the Review date.
* Panel members will provide some brief comments about the submission and/or request any additional information they would like to review approximately two weeks prior to the Review.
* This will be followed by the Panel Review meetings during which the Panel will interview groups of staff and students from the Graduate School.
* Panel members will then submit reports which will be turned into a final report for submission to the Research Planning and Strategy Committee (RPSC).

**Meetings with Graduate School and Subject Group Staff**

The meetings with staff are central to the review process. The Panel will be looking for a balanced view of the Graduate School from these meetings, and hope that those they meet will tell them about the strengths and achievements of the Graduate School and why it is a good place to work and study, as well as about areas that could be improved or enhanced.

The Panel will hold meetings with academic staff and others who have pivotal roles in teaching, supervising and supporting students or staff. This may include: Postgraduate Convenors and administrators; supervisors; members of the Graduate School Board or equivalent; individuals with responsibility for student recruitment and careers advice; secretarial, technical and administrative staff who have specific responsibilities in support of teaching, learning, supervision and/or assessment; and up to three additional members of academic staff involved with research students who might not otherwise meet with the Panel to achieve a representative balance. The Panel would also like to include new supervisors to establish the support and preparation for their roles.

The meetings with staff are normally held after meetings with students in order to allow students’ views to be discussed with staff. Panels will not formally review students’ work. The Review Panel is grateful to staff for taking part and hopes that, once the process has been completed, all agree that it has proved useful.

If you have any queries about this process or would like any additional information, please contact your Graduate School Office or the PGR Service ([pgr@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:pgr@glasgow.ac.uk)) or look at the [PGR Service web pages.](https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/ourresearchenvironment/prs/pgrpolicystrategyqualityassurance/graduateschoolreview/informationforstaff/)

1. Quality Enhancement Framework: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/quality-enhancement-framework [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. QAA Scotland Institution-led review: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/scotland/en/quality-enhancement-framework/institution-led-review-(ilr) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code and Advice and Guidance for research degrees on the UK Quality Code for Higher Education: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)