

ACTION PLAN BASED ON REVIEW REPORT RECEIVED JUNE 2024

Recommendations of the QESR Review

Recommendation 1

Consistent implementation of the framework supporting professional development for teachers: SRUC should consistently implement the framework supporting professional development for all those engaged in teaching and that support is in place and training is completed prior to teaching for postgraduate research (PGR) students who teach on a voluntary or employed basis (paragraph 17).

(17) In meeting with students, the QESR team heard that support for teaching and the training available were variable depending on the campus and supervisory support. The team heard how postgraduate research (PGR) students could avoid recording teaching hours, bypassing the need for training, and how PGR students had taught lectures without any dedicated training other than support from their supervisor. The team also heard from senior staff that improvements were needed to improve the consistency of application of the framework across the institution. The QESR team **recommends** that SRUC should consistently implement the framework supporting professional development for all those engaged in teaching, and that support is in place and training is completed prior to teaching for PGRs who teach on a voluntary or employed basis.

Overview: This was a key area of development following ELIR in 2019. Following ELIR, SRUC devised a specific code of practice (which is updated annually) for Postgraduate Teaching Assistants (PGTA). PGTAs are offered to undertake the New to Teaching online module prior to teaching and the SRUC-delivered PDA in Learning and Teaching while undertaking teaching and assessment duties. If PGTAs are undertaking extensive teaching (more than 120 hours per year), then they will be eligible to apply for a SRUC-funded place on UHI's PG Cert in Tertiary and Higher Education. Teaching opportunities are available to students but often they are with another University (specifically the University of Edinburgh) and the opportunities vary between campuses - as a tertiary provider SRUC also employs Instructors who often support lecturers in the delivery of classes. There is also a section on the PGR Resource Moodle site on 'Teaching and Demonstrating'. This section links to the PGTA Handbook as well as providing information on SPF, AdvanceHE Associate Fellowship and the 'new to teaching toolkit'.

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Actions	Lead	Status
<p>Attended SRUC's Learning and Teaching conference with a directory of students interested in undertaking teaching opportunities (guest lecturing, demonstrating etc). This directory will be updated annually and shared, along with the PGTA teaching code of practice, with Heads of Departments/Chairs of Board of Studies and Programme Leads at two points throughout the academic year to remind colleagues of the SRUC approach</p>	<p>Head of Doctoral College</p>	<p>Complete: This occurred at the Learning and Teaching conference in June 2024, to encourage Heads of Departments and Teaching colleagues to think more widely about teaching opportunities for PGR students.</p> <p>Ongoing: Annual update of directory and twice yearly sharing of PGTA code of practice and directory is planned to become business as usual</p>
<p>Continue to support and encourage relevant PGR students to undertake the PDA in Learning and Teaching and, if eligible, UHI's PGCert in Tertiary and Higher Education.</p>	<p>Academic Enhancement Lead (Staff Development), Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching</p>	<p>Complete: This is a key commitment from SRUC and CELT and is a core part of business as usual</p>
<p>Following a successful TDAP, create an SRUC Postgraduate Certificate Learning and Teaching in Tertiary Education to increase capacity for undertaking qualification. The first module of this should be accessible to anyone involved in teaching, i.e., does not require 120 hours of teaching. Prior to accreditation of this programme, those completing module one will be encouraged and supported to apply for Association Fellowship.</p>	<p>Academic Enhancement Officer (Staff Development) Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching</p>	<p>Ongoing: This SRUC Postgraduate Certificate Learning and Teaching in Tertiary Education is due for validation in February 2025. Will complete process by May 2025</p>
<p>Discuss the challenges with implementing the framework in the Annual Quality Dialogue 2024</p>	<p>SRUC Quality Assurance Lead</p>	<p>Complete: There was a solid discussion at the Annual Quality Dialogue (AQD) meeting in November about the challenges of implementing and agreement that this will get increased emphasis going forward.</p>

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Discuss concerns of non-compliance and ensuring compliance at Doctoral college committee	Head of Doctoral College	Complete: This issue has been discussed at the Doctoral College Committee to raise awareness of the issue, encourage compliance and become part of business as usual
Include awareness raising of the framework within the SRUC PGR supervisory training	PhD Programme Lead	Complete: Details of the framework for supporting PGR students to get involved in education opportunities has been included in the PGR supervisory training

Recommendation 2

Student support for blended learning and PGR students: SRUC should address issues concerning access to, and communication about, the support and opportunities available to distance-learning and PGR students to help ensure parity and consistency of the student experience (paragraph 26).

(26) When meeting with students, the QESR team heard a range of experiences that indicated issues relating to the parity and consistency of the support to distance-learning students. These included student perceptions about the lack of practical experiences available for distance-learning students, the lack of access to an IT skills assessment, the need to extend communication from professional service teams in the form of career and professional development opportunities, and the opportunity to input into feedback forums. These issues also extended in parts to postgraduate research students - for example, in relation to engagement with career support and professional opportunities. The QESR team **recommends** that SRUC should address issues concerning access to, and communication about, the support and opportunities available to distance-learning and PGR students to help ensure parity and consistency of the student experience.

Overview: SRUC started to address this recommendation prior to QESR and following the Institution-led review (ILR) of student support services. It had been decided to create the role of a new Head of Student Support Services, and a paper was considered by SRUC Academic Board in May 2024 around the restructuring of the Boards of Service, also an action following the ILR. This has further developed in to a restructure of Student Support Services at SRUC.

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Action from Institution-led review (ILR) of Student Support Services is to appoint a Head of Student Support Services (a new role to SRUC)	Provost	Ongoing: Role is currently in recruitment phase due for completion May 2025
Replace the large Student Support Services Board of Service with three new Boards of Service – Administration and Support, Assurance and Enhancement, and Systems and Processes.	Provost as Chair of Academic Board	Complete: The three new Boards of Service have been agreed and approved by Academic Board and are being rolled out in Academic year 2024/25. Membership includes an enhanced representation from the Doctoral College.
Restructure Student Support with an ethos of servicing all students in an inclusive way, regardless of location and SCQF level	Provost	Ongoing: This will be a two-year project. Draft position papers (covering Careers, Libraries, Student Support, Widening Participation and Campus Management) will be completed by end of December 2024 with the project likely to run to the first half 2026.
SRUC sends a weekly student email newsletter and this includes a weekly “study tip” and once a month this is student support focussed to increase awareness of the student support available to all students	Head of Learning and Teaching	Complete: This has become part of business as usual and will continue throughout the Academic year.
Improve direct communication with PhD students from the Doctoral College in regard to the support available for PhD students.	Head of Doctoral College	Complete: The Doctoral College now produces a monthly newsletter and a per semester ‘Town Hall’ to discuss relevant topical issues. The communication has increased and will continue as business as usual.
Inclusion of more professional skills training in the PhD programme as well as better flagging of available external courses for our PhD community.	Head of Doctoral College	Complete: All relevant professional internal and external training courses, such as those offered by BioSS have become part of business as usual.
Inclusion of career planning training within the final year of the PhD.	Head of Doctoral College	Complete: This has been added into the suite of training courses available on Moodle to final year PhD students and become part of business as usual.

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Inclusion of Enterprising Researcher training module within the PhD programme which supports students to develop their outcomes and ideas into business ideas	Head of Doctoral College	Complete: This has been added into the suite of training courses available on Moodle to final year PhD students and become part of business as usual.
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