Progression and retention data in Scottish sector higher education institutions’ annual monitoring processes: Sharing policy and practice

Report

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**Executive summary**

**Introduction**

The Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience Theme provides a framework within which the sector can examine approaches to the generation, interpretation, sharing and application of evidence to improve the student experience. This report has been prepared as one of the outputs from a commissioned project, which focuses on the use of progression and retention data within annual monitoring reporting (AMR). The project has synergies with a second piece of commissioned work (Gilmour and Cannell 2019), which looks at policy and practice in the use of evidence to inform and evaluate interventions that aim to improve progression and retention data more broadly. The reports and further resources from both projects are available on the [Enhancement Themes website](#).

**Reference points**

Sector reference points establish the context within which higher education institutions (HEIs) in Scotland, and the UK, undertake monitoring and evaluation and the reporting arrangements for such activity.

The Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) Guidance to HEIs on Quality includes the expectation that AMR is conducted within the wider programme of Institution-led Review (ILR). Within the Guidance, it is specified that HEIs should monitor and analyse 'performance indicators, benchmarks and other collected data, particularly those relating to retention, progression, completion, attainment and achievement, and graduate destinations'. HEIs report annually to SFC, and to their governing bodies, on the operation and impact of ILR, including AMR. Peer review of ILR is undertaken on a periodic basis through the Scottish Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR) methodology, which includes a requirement to submit a sample of annual monitoring reports within the Advance Information Set.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Theme within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education identifies the following as part of a commonly used wider suite of data: statistical information, including 'internal data on selected key performance indicators, such as student progression and achievement, retention', course or modular results, graduate employment and grade improvement trends. Within that Theme, there is explicit reference to AMR under the principle to normalise monitoring and evaluation as well as undertaking routine formal activities.

**Key findings**

Table 1 summarises the key project findings. Throughout this report, the use of progression and retention data is considered within the context of the wider AMR dataset. Good practice examples within the report illustrate approaches that are transferable across datasets and have potential to support interventions for progression and retention.

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1 Gilmour, A and Cannell, C (2019) The use of data and evidence in retention and progression in Scottish sector higher education institutions, QAA
AMR processes

Scottish HEIs undertake AMR on multiple levels. Expectations and timelines vary to reflect the structure and culture of the HEI. Reporting requirements range from broad thematic analysis to detailed consideration of matters such as module progression thresholds. There is a relationship between AMR, an institution's SFC Outcome Agreement, and Strategic/Operational Planning. Some HEIs identify this as an area for development.

Progression and retention within AMR

AMR is one of a range of mechanisms in place to evaluate progression and retention data. At some HEIs progression and retention data is not considered in depth through AMR, as there are other (often institution-level) mechanisms through which analysis is undertaken.

Dataset content

Datasets to support AMR are wide ranging and complex. They include quantitative and qualitative data, the nature of which evolves continually to reflect changes in the external and internal environment.

Access to datasets

AMR datasets are increasingly available via a central online resource. There is a trend towards dashboard access, the advantages of which include standardised presentation, 'one truth' data, and access to live information. Some HEI dashboards display detailed progression and retention data, including breakdown by student characteristics and trend analysis.

Student engagement in AMR

Students are routinely (but indirectly) involved in AMR through survey participation and other feedback channels, such as student-staff committees. Student contribution to preparing reports (including data analysis) appears limited. However, students do engage with reports and resulting actions, often through committee or dissemination event follow-up activity.

Using AMR for enhancement

There is good evidence that HEIs are using AMR data to support enhancement activity. AMR can sometimes be perceived as a retrospective process, but HEIs are working to address this through process redesign, which facilitates ongoing engagement and sharing of practice.

Challenges

Challenges affecting engagement with data, and AMR more broadly, include: the complexity of the data; confidence in working with the data; and belief in the accuracy of the data and AMR as a vehicle for change. Challenges associated with progression and retention data relate to definition, measurement and the small numbers for datasets broken down by student characteristics.

Solutions

This report provides examples of practice that HEIs might draw on to address some of the identified challenges.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 1: Summary of key project findings</th>
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Overview of approaches

AMR is a core feature of quality assurance and enhancement at all Scottish HEIs. Examples of HEIs using AMR to inform enhancement are given below:

**University of Stirling**

Embedding employability: the annual programme monitoring process has demonstrated the variety of ways that faculties have been seeking to embed employability within their curriculum and enables faculties to learn from each other's successes.

**University of Edinburgh**

In their School annual quality report for 2015-16, the Vet School identified assessment and feedback as an area for further development and a 10-point action plan for 2016-17 was outlined in the 'actions planned' section of the report. Some of the activity carried on from previous years, but new initiatives were also identified. In their report for 2016-17, in the 'what has worked well throughout the year' section, the School reported that NSS satisfaction with assessment and feedback had risen significantly.

The typical AMR process is detailed in figure 1. The majority of HEIs have standardised templates for each level of AMR and common reporting deadlines for all provision. More flexible (devolved) arrangements are in place for submission and engagement with reports at some larger HEIs. Programme-level reports are often due in the Autumn to reflect the timing of data release. However, the cycle of reporting across all levels, including disseminating outcomes, can extend over the full academic year. Report templates at all levels typically include an action plan, progress against which is reviewed in the following cycle.

![Figure 1: Annual Monitoring Process (typical stages)](image-url)
The relationship between AMR and other processes

The majority of HEIs report a relationship (direct or indirect) between AMR and other institutional activities, such as Strategic, Operational and Outcome Agreement Planning. Some HEIs identify a linear process through which AMR feeds directly into Operational, Strategic and Outcome Agreement Planning. As part of an iterative cycle of reflection, Strategies, Operational Plans and Outcome Agreements also serve as important reference points to inform AMR. The involvement of senior staff with a remit for learning and teaching in Strategic, Operational and Outcome Agreement planning provides an important link between processes, as these staff (often at Dean and/or Vice-Principal level) also have ownership of AMR within their Schools (or equivalent). Committee and reporting structures are useful in bringing AMR outcomes to the attention of the academic and governing bodies. The annual report on ILR to the SFC is cited as an important mechanism for raising awareness of the outcomes from AMR at a strategic level. Other summary reports from AMR serve a similar purpose. Around a third of HEIs report that alignment of planning and reporting processes is an area for possible future development to make best use of data, avoid duplication, and facilitate the flow of information between the governing body and HEI.

Datasets: content

Figure 2 captures the key sources that inform programme-level AMR. Many of these sources are considered also at higher levels. Sometimes a separate dataset is provided for levels above programme AMR, for example student numbers, progression, National Student Survey (NSS) results. However, for other datasets, it is more usual for matters simply to be reported upwards through the programme report. This scaffolded approach is identified as a particular strength in one questionnaire response (Abertay University), as it reduces duplication and provides for more focused reporting at all levels. Further examples of steps taken across the sector to improve engagement with datasets through process design are included throughout this report.

Where datasets are not considered through AMR, they are typically subject to evaluation for overall planning purposes. This applies perhaps most frequently for admissions data, but also progression and retention data as set out later in this report.
Figure 2: Key data sources that inform programme-level AMR

Commonly used datasets at programme level - routinely used to inform programme AMR at (almost) all HEIs.

- NSS Internal Survey Module evaluation
- Internal approval and review reports; PSRB reports
- Overall Programme performance; Honours classification; PGT distinction or merit
- External Examiner reports
- Progression and retention data
- Admissions data (volume and prior qualifications)
- Performance by level and/or module
- DLHE
- PTES, ISB and PRES participating HEIs only
- Employer, Industry and service user feedback
- Programme Committee minutes
- Appeals, complaints, discipline and Fitness to Practise data
- Benchmarked data
- Student-led Teaching Award (SLTA) data
- Attendance monitoring data

Less commonly used datasets at programme level - may be considered at School or institution level AMR, or outside AMR

Less commonly used datasets at programme level - may be considered for ILR or other purposes)

Examples of other datasets identified by individual HEIs

Other important reference points include but are not limited to: ELIR outcomes; subject benchmarks; Enhancement Themes; various other external reference points; institutional strategies and policies; discipline specific engagement and CPD; staff knowledge of the student population
Progression and retention data

Some HEIs report that progression and retention data is considered primarily outside AMR. For example, at the University of St Andrews the Academic Monitoring Group has primary oversight; Edinburgh Napier University has established a Student Retention and Outcomes Steering Group; and the University of Aberdeen has in place a cross-institutional Retention Taskforce, which leads on data analysis and initiatives to support progression and retention. This approach appears to reflect the growing importance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on an institutional level and their application for multiple reporting purposes (internal and external).

One questionnaire respondent offers the following insight into the relationship between AMR and other mechanisms:

> Progression and retention initiatives come through our University Committee for Learning and Teaching and not AMR. Themes that come out of the AMR process have always been identified through other monitoring activities (such as surveys) and are already being progressed...No new themes are identified through AMR, which is assurance that routine monitoring activities are successful.

Practical considerations that influence engagement with progression and retention data through AMR are also identified for a few HEIs. An example of this is provided in one questionnaire response:

> Our degree programmes are so flexible that the QA annual monitoring processes would not lend themselves to looking at retention/progression data. This has to be done at an institutional level and disseminated to Schools as global, cross university figures.”

Definitions

The challenges of defining progression and retention are well documented. The majority of HEIs have developed internal definitions for progression and retention to reflect the institutional context and student population. These are used instead of (or in addition to) the narrower Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) definition of non-continuation, that is, the proportion of full-time/part-time students who do not continue beyond their first year. Examples of practice in tailoring definitions to allow for more meaningful consideration are provided below. Particular challenges arise for staff delivering both further education (FE) and higher education (HE), for example at the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), as different measures are in place for these two sectors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of the Highlands and Islands</th>
<th>The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland</th>
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<tr>
<td>We use an internal non-continuation across all years of a programme plus a full time first year indicator which is very close to the HESA performance indicator. Due to factors relating to our curriculum portfolio and programme structures and the non-linear learner journeys of a significant proportion of our student population, we do not use a separate progression indicator.</td>
<td>We review HESA data but mostly review our own as this provides a finer level of detail. We analyse on-time completions and investigate all students who did not complete on time to identify trends. Last year we began analysing completions within plus 2 years as we recognise more students taking a year or two of suspension (as allowed by our regulations) due to health or personal circumstances.</td>
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Breakdown by characteristics

Figure 3 shows the use of progression and retention AMR data by student characteristics. As explained elsewhere in the report, particular challenges can arise at this level of analysis. One questionnaire respondent explains: ‘We currently don’t report on these protected characteristics routinely. In some cases, numbers are very small, which means it is difficult to draw inferences from the data. We need to balance the need to monitor against wider data protection concerns. We should, however, review whether we include analysis by specific groups regularly.’

Figure 3: The use of progression and retention AMR data by student characteristic

Qualitative data

Progression and retention data for AMR also includes qualitative information. Some HEIs use data from withdrawal interviews and/or reports (leavers’ forms). However, the limitations of this type of data are noted, as it can be difficult to discern the actual reason for withdrawal, which is often given as ‘personal reasons’ or similar. Beyond these data sources, which are highly specific to progression and retention, HEIs reflect on themes emerging through the wider qualitative evidence base, for example free text survey comments, committee minutes, and external examiner feedback. The University of Edinburgh reports the planned use of sentiment
analysis to improve the analysis of qualitative data gathered through survey channels. Staff also draw on qualitative evidence from informal sources, for example feedback from colleagues and their own knowledge of student circumstances.

It is clear from the stakeholder conversations that qualitative data can offer significant insight into the factors affecting progression and retention. This is in line with the observation in a recent report (Gilmour and Cannell 2019) that more emphasis could be placed on qualitative data to support retention and progression interventions. The importance of Programme Leaders’ ‘intuition and knowledge’ of their own programmes as complementary to the more usual and formal evidence base is recognised in an Enhancement Themes ‘Think Piece’ produced as part of a series of papers within the Collaborative Cluster on Enhancing Programme Leadership (Haddow 2018).5

Examples of using progression and retention data to inform enhancement through AMR are given below.

**Abertay University**

A 2017-18 School Annual Report found that retention rates had actively improved due to the implementation of a student retention initiative that had arisen from the recommendations of the previous year’s report. However, in capturing learner analytics data for the Programme Annual Report, it identified that the withdrawal rate remained consistent for the Term 2 re-sits for some programmes, which was against the overall upward trend. In response, the School and Student Services team prioritised this area to monitor engagement and put support in place for students identified as at risk.

A School investigated a disappointing average pass rate for one Division, which was comparatively low at the main diet in the previous year (against the University average) but recovered after the re-sit diet. However, in the programme-level analysis of the data in 2017-18, it was found that there were areas of both over-performance and under-performance. This was reflected upon in the Divisional Annual Reports and measures were proposed to support teaching staff and improve student performance within the underperforming areas.

**Queen Margaret University**

Progression and retention data considered through AMR in 2017-18 highlighted issues related to student performance on modules contributing to the BA (Hons) Business Management. In response, the programme team introduced mid-module feedback opportunities to identify potential issues rather than waiting until the end point through module evaluations. Additionally, Peer-Assisted Learning was introduced for some of the more challenging modules. The data relating to student performance at module level was useful to inform this, as it allowed the team to see how students performed as a cohort in comparison with other modules they were undertaking in the same semester.

Recent work on the correlation between attending PALS (Peer-Assisted Learning Scheme) sessions and assessment marks for one of the modules identified shows that students who attended the PALS sessions performed well in both assessments. Students

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have also provided more positive feedback about their experience of some modules following the introduction of the mid-module evaluation. While it is too early to see the overall impact on progression and retention in 2018-19, discussions with students suggest that the intervention has had an overall positive impact.

The Royal Conservatoire Scotland

A number of years ago award outcomes for the BEd were noted to be lower for students with disabilities. Through their engagement with the data and team discussion, staff identified that there might be a need for additional support. As the numbers concerned were very small, it was determined that a blanket intervention would not be appropriate or helpful. Instead, staff continued to support students on an individual basis around possible approaches that might help those with disabilities achieve their full potential. Award outcomes have improved to the point where there is no difference in outcomes for this group since the analysis of the data was undertaken. While it is difficult to link this improvement directly to AMR, the engagement with the data through that process undoubtedly heightened awareness of possible challenges and the importance of early action to support students.

Scotland's Rural College

During the 2016-17 annual dialogue meetings, the impact of poor mental health on the retention and attainment of students was discussed. This ultimately resulted in an ongoing initiative providing training for over 100 staff and students in mental health first aid and the introduction of Therapet Days at each campus. Some staff dogs are now Therapet accredited and able to provide support on a weekly basis. Further to this, SRUC and SRUCSA in partnership have accessed and embraced the SANE Black Dog campaign, which provides a confidential out of hours support line for students (and staff with concerns about students), with analytics provided to SRUC to help shape future wellbeing initiatives. This is being used to inform the SRUC Health and Wellbeing Strategy for both staff and students.

The nature of HEIs’ engagement with datasets is such that it is not necessarily possible to link improved outcomes directly to a specific intervention arising through a single process. Instead, enhancements can stem from the combined effect of multiple approaches. As one questionnaire respondent explains: ‘Any changes could be determined to be the result of an initiative put into practice the previous year(s) but in reality, changes are unlikely to be effective over such short time periods and there could have been many initiatives put in place at around the same time so evaluating the impact of each individually would be extremely difficult.’

The examples below illustrate the breadth of activity and good practice that is in progress across the sector and complements AMR in relation to using progression and retention data to support enhancement.
University of Strathclyde

The University is increasingly embedding learning analytics activity into its oversight of retention and progression. Examples include integrating learning analytics into online course design, working with programme leaders to design student engagement dashboards and developing a student assessment and feedback planning tool.

University of Aberdeen

In terms of retention and progression, we have a cross-Institutional retention task force that has representation from all Schools, Registry, Academic services, IT, Student Recruitment and Admissions. In the last year they have reviewed correspondence being sent to students who have become disengaged from their studies to be more supportive and clearer as to what students can do to address their situation. Good practice in supporting students and developing procedures for 'early interventions' has been shared between the group. The group has also championed attendance monitoring at lectures with a view to this providing an early warning of disengagement and are involved in developing a learning analytics policy to support our future use of learning analytics as a means to support disengaged students.

Progression thresholds and module reporting

Around half of questionnaire respondents state that their HEIs have progression thresholds that trigger further investigation. Thresholds are typically set as first diet module pass rates (ranging from around 80 to 90 per cent). Some HEIs also have in place minimum employability and survey satisfaction levels. Other HEIs have considered but rejected the introduction of blanket thresholds, on grounds that a single threshold would not be appropriate given the diversity of programmes and student cohorts.

Where module thresholds are in place, performance tends to be considered through module reporting requirements. However, there are also examples of module thresholds being considered at programme level. Module reports can be particularly useful where modules are shared across a number of programmes rather than contributing to a single programme. Often such reports are also shared with external examiners and assessment boards. Where module thresholds are in place, and indeed even where this is not the case, primary responsibility for responding to performance that falls below expectations rests with module or programme leaders. At some HEIs, there is a follow-up sense check, undertaken by a senior staff member, or central services, which provides the opportunity to challenge the response to the data.

Robert Gordon University

RGU uses colour coding to show, at a glance, how module performance compares with institutional thresholds. Year on Year trend data shows improvement or decline, using coloured bubbles to present the information in a way that is visually striking and offers high level insight before detailed consideration of the data is undertaken. A red cross on the dashboard denotes thresholds that have not been achieved, in which case an evaluative commentary is required within the AMR. Importantly, a red cross does not necessarily denote a significant issue with delivery or other aspect of the module under consideration. Instead, it serves as a trigger for further interrogation of the data. Actions identified
through AMR, including in response to red cross markers, are reviewed by the School Academic Board and thereafter in a meeting between the Head of School, Vice-Principal, Academic Development and Student Experience, and the Assistant Chief Academic Officer. This scrutiny process can give rise to further conversations around the data and interventions to improve attainment where an issue has been identified.

Datasets: access and evolution

Questionnaire responses suggest that datasets have not changed significantly over the past five years. However, there have been important developments in presentation and access, see figures 4 and 5.

HEIs regularly review datasets - this confirms continued fitness for purpose

Current developments: 
ONE TRUTH DATA
simplification and standardisation, but also more nuanced if required

Anticipated future developments: 
continued responsiveness to user and sector needs; enhanced comparability

Figure 4: Developments in dataset content

HEIs are increasingly using dashboards to present AMR data. Where dashboards have been established for AMR (and indeed other purposes), HEIs highlight the importance of a cross-institutional team approach during the development phase. Typically, such teams include representatives from Technical, Quality, Registry and Planning teams (or equivalent), as well as academic staff to ensure that the needs of the end user are met.

Around a third of HEIs report that their dashboards for AMR are well developed. Another third report dashboard evolution, but at an earlier stage. The remaining third do not currently use dashboard technology for AMR, but some are working towards this. Key benefits of providing data via a dashboard include: easier access to quantitative but also qualitative data, for example NSS and internal survey comments; the provision of ‘one-stop-shop’ data; the facility to tailor data; and the facility to run regular reports, including trend analyses, to support ongoing enhancement. Dashboards also facilitate comparison, including comparison of progression and retention at different levels and by student characteristics. A possible disadvantage is that it is difficult to print the data. However, this can also be a positive feature, especially where there is live data that quickly goes out of date. Permissions can restrict dashboard access to key users, but some HEIs make all data available to all staff to facilitate transparency, benchmarking and accountability.
Challenges and solutions: sharing practice

Working with datasets

The key challenges and sector aspirations for AMR data are summarised in figure 6.

Figure 6: Key challenges and sector aspirations for AMR data

The volume of data provided to staff is identified as a barrier. Most obviously, this applies for large datasets. In such cases, staff time and skills to work with the data add to the challenge of unpacking the data. However, small datasets are also problematic, in that staff may perceive the numbers to be insufficient to be useful. This is pertinent to progression and retention data, especially when broken down by student characteristics, as numbers can be very low. The provision of trend or benchmarked data (see example below) can be helpful under these circumstances to develop an understanding of the bigger picture and help place information in context.

University of Edinburgh

Colleges at Edinburgh provide benchmarked data to support Schools’ preparations for AMR. The data includes information on performance within the Schools benchmarked against the College. Benchmarking may be implemented differently in each College to suit the local context so could relate to retention and progression, but this will depend on interpretation of ‘performance’.

A further common issue is that staff do not always trust the accuracy of data. For progression and retention this might stem from a misunderstanding around the institutional definition.
There can also be instances of conflicting locally and centrally held data. The provision of a 'single truth' repository of data can help mitigate this challenge. Freezing the AMR data on an agreed date can also be beneficial, provided a clear explanation is given to data users. However, instances of mismatch cannot be completely eradicated for all datasets. This is perhaps especially true for retention reports, which rely on timely and accurate information confirming the date and reasons for withdrawal. Any delay in the provision of such information to data inputters can result in a lower number of recorded withdrawals than anticipated by the data recipient.

An example of improved presentation of data, at Robert Gordon University, is given earlier in this report. The University of St Andrews has also put in place an imaginative approach (see below) to help users engage with a large dataset. While this does not relate explicitly to progression and retention, the principle of simple colour coding is very much in line with the sector aspiration to streamline and render data more user friendly.

**University of St Andrews**

St Andrews has developed a 'tartan rug' system to categorise student feedback gathered through module evaluation. The rug shows student satisfaction for module evaluation questions benchmarked against the University mean, using a three-colour system. The colours do not necessarily point to an issue, but where satisfaction falls below the University mean, it serves as a trigger for discussion and possible intervention. The University has recently developed the rug in response to user feedback to include the number of respondents as a percentage of the module cohort. The Academic Monitoring Group considers the rug and provides feedback to the Schools. This includes areas of good practice as well as areas for investigation. Schools are required to reflect within the AMR process on their engagement with the rug.

**Staff support and guidance**

Support for staff using data emerges as a clear area for development. HEIs typically provide detailed written guidance for AMR. This can include very specific guidance on reviewing and responding to module pass rates and other measures of progression. Dashboard 'tips' on functionality can be used to particularly good effect to provide targeted guidance at the point of the user considering the data. Issues with subjectivity may inadvertently arise when reporting on data, and guidance can also help with this. For example, the University of the Highlands and Islands provides suggested definitions ('almost all' = over 90 per cent, 'few' = up to 15 per cent) to support consistent reporting on quantitative module data.

Beyond written guidance, support tends to be provided on a reactive basis. This can take the form of responses (usually from Planning or other central services) to queries about accuracy of the data and/or support for technical issues such as dashboard navigation. It appears that there is only limited support for report authors to undertake meaningful data evaluation.

A small number of HEIs do identify staff support as a strength, however. In most cases (but not all) this applies where there has been a dashboard rollout. Future ambitions suggested but not yet implemented by HEIs include talking heads videos, an online recorded dashboard demonstration and case study guidance on working with data. The latter could be especially useful to support staff understanding of progression and retention measures. On a sector level, participants in the stakeholder conversations noted that the recently published Planners'
HE Data Landscape resource is likely to become a valuable reference point for report authors.

The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

The Conservatoire has appointed a Statistical Analyst with a broad remit that includes engagement with a range of management information, survey data and league tables. The Analyst provides data for AMR, including progression and retention data. A report which accompanies this data, and which is also prepared by the Analyst, includes statistical interpretations (for example an indication of whether the data is statistically significant), as well as a qualitative summary, which highlights areas for discussion and suggests possible factors that might have had an impact on numbers within the dataset. Programme teams have the opportunity to discuss the report with the Analyst to support their engagement with AMR data. Academic staff welcome the provision of data in this format, which is user-friendly and extracts key points for follow-up through AMR. They also value the constructive challenge that arises through their dialogue with the Analyst.

The Conservatoire has a student population of around 1,200 degree students, meaning that datasets for progression and retention are invariably small, especially when broken down by student characteristics. The analysis undertaken for AMR has proved valuable when working with small numbers, as it has been possible to determine statistical significance, which gives credibility to the process and helps target activity. Importantly, the Analyst has oversight of a much broader suite of information, within which data is broken down in considerable detail. To give just one illustrative example, analysis has been undertaken by gender and musical instrument, for example female cellist. The interrogation of data to this level helps build up a rich bank of information against which staff can benchmark their own programme data and test hypotheses with support from the Analyst.

Robert Gordon University

Training sessions were held for staff users and Student Presidents at RGU following the launch of the data dashboard for AMR in 2018. These took the form of initial training, which was mandatory for staff, followed by optional drop-in sessions. In addition to the training sessions, expert data owners from professional services can provide support on an ongoing basis. Staff were encouraged to bring the AMR pro forma with them to the training sessions to aid their understanding of how the data can be used to support enhancement. The dashboard was designed for the purpose of AMR and therefore the data is presented in the sequence that commentary is required within the AMR template. This structured approach supports engagement, as staff are presented with all relevant information in a logical order. Staff provided very positive feedback on the sessions, which will be repeated this year for the benefit of staff undertaking AMR for the first time, and as a refresher for more experienced staff. An unanticipated benefit of the drop-in sessions was that these provided space and time for staff to share their practice in using data, both within and across disciplinary teams. The involvement of Student Presidents in the sessions supports their engagement with discussion at committee meetings. They are also well placed to cascade information about using data through the representative structure.

University of Dundee

Data champions have recently been appointed for most of the Schools at the University to raise awareness of the information available on, and insight to be gained from, the University data dashboards and provide support to colleagues who are using the data for AMR and other purposes. The champions have a particular remit for retention. More broadly, they are instrumental in promoting and facilitating staff engagement with the Enhancement Themes. The champions have varying prior experience of data analysis and need not be experts in all possible approaches. Meetings of the full group of champions provide an opportunity to share good practice and challenges and develop approaches across the University as a whole. Dundee also run dedicated Organisational Professional Development (OPD) workshops on using data under the auspices of the current Enhancement Theme. The impact of the workshops will be assessed as part of the University's reporting on the Enhancement Theme evaluation.

Annual monitoring as a vehicle for enhancement

Questionnaire responses show that staff do not always consider AMR to be a useful process. Reasons for this include the retrospective timing and perceived static nature of AMR as a snapshot, rather than a vehicle for ongoing development. There is also a perception that enhancement would happen without AMR, that is, that it does not obviously add value. While acknowledging these challenges, participants in the stakeholder conversations identified a number of important benefits arising from AMR, which might be less tangible. For example, AMR provides a context for quantitative data and an opportunity to triangulate data that would otherwise be considered in isolation. AMR also raises awareness of trends across a wider audience, providing a platform for debate.

Barriers to the enhancement of progression and retention through AMR arise where the data is considered elsewhere within the HEI, and/or where the numbers are considered too small to be meaningful. These factors also make it particularly difficult to evidence the impact of initiatives from year to year. Quantitative progression and retention datasets are perhaps the most obvious source of evidence for AMR. It is therefore understandable that AMR authors who do not have access to such data might not consider AMR a useful mechanism for enhancing progression and retention. However, as set out earlier in this report the qualitative data sources (to which all AMR authors have access) provide a rich evidence base. In addition to the routine qualitative datasets, some HEIs also include a ‘question of the year’ (or equivalent) within AMR. The identification of priority topics within AMR has the potential to stimulate discussion around factors affecting progression and retention. Examples include questions around support for mental health (University of St Andrews) and the Personal Tutor system (University of Edinburgh).

Dialogue meetings and dissemination events offer opportunities for enhancement-led AMR, as illustrated in the examples below. One questionnaire respondent highlights the importance of conversation to supplement written AMR as follows: ‘One of the challenges from my perspective is that the School reports are summaries of programme-level activity, which are also summaries of module-level enhancements – so the distilling process can sometimes make it challenging to see how specific interventions are being identified, prioritised and evaluated at the coal-face. I am informed by colleagues that the real value in the annual monitoring process comes from discussing and sharing practice.’ Some HEIs also produce AMR newsletters to reach a wider audience of staff and students than would otherwise be possible.
Scotland's Rural College

AMR dialogue meetings are held annually in October. The meetings are conducted by videoconference to facilitate participation from each of SRUC's six campus sites. The videoconferences are held over two days, during which there are eight cross-campus meetings, grouped by cognate subject areas. Following the dialogue meetings, a synopsis of key themes is provided to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

The meetings take the form of a peer scrutiny event. A review panel with around eight participants is established to lead discussions with participating subject areas. Topics are identified in advance and reviewers are encouraged to identify good practice as well as areas for development. Typical attendance at each of the meetings is between 15 and 20 participants. Review panel membership includes academic representation, staff from the SRUC quality and learning engagement teams, and student representation (usually the Student Association Vice President). Students from participating subject areas currently contribute indirectly through their involvement in quality processes that underpin AMR. Going forward, SRUC is considering student involvement as members of the subject area group participating in the videoconference discussions. The involvement of external reviewers is also under consideration.

The meetings provide an important structured opportunity for staff and students from the six campus sites to reflect on AMR outcomes. This ties in well with the continuous development of quality procedures more broadly as vehicles for reflection and enhancement at SRUC. Topics covered at the meetings are wide ranging and include discussion of progression and retention initiatives informed by evaluation of relevant data.

University of St Andrews

An annual dissemination event is held in October with the primary aim of promoting and sharing good practice. The Academic Monitoring Group draws up a list of around 12 potential topics for the event, based on scrutiny of School AMR submissions. Directors of Teaching subsequently vote to narrow the list to five topics. Attendance at the event includes Deans of Teaching plus one other colleague from each of St Andrews' 18 Schools. School Student Presidents are also invited to attend. The event takes the form of a series of five-minute presentations, after which the presenters facilitate group discussions. A brief report from the event is also prepared for the Learning and Teaching Committee, providing opportunity to share practice with a wider audience. Topics at the meetings are wide ranging and can relate to progression and retention initiatives. For example, there has been discussion around lecture attendance and the benefits for students of participating in timetabled learning experiences. There is good evidence of cross-School transfer of practice following dissemination events, one such enhancement being the adoption, in one School, of graduate exit interviews.
Edinburgh Napier University

Edinburgh Napier’s online staff newsletter (The Bones) included, for the first time in 2019, a summary of key themes emerging from AMR. The newsletter presents information in a format that is engaging, accessible and informative. The AMR article explains to staff how AMR submissions are used for internal and external (ELIR) purposes. Examples of good practice are identified, as well as some areas where further work might be needed. The article reflects not just on the themes emerging from AMR, but also the process. This reflection includes identification of challenges of working with AMR data. Within the article staff are strongly encouraged to continue AMR discussions through formal and informal channels, and it is emphasised to readers that the AMR process is ‘at the heart of the University’s enhancement culture’. The Bones is available to all staff and to external audiences on the University’s website, meaning that it has potential to stimulate positive engagement with AMR, including discussion around the use of data, across a wider readership than the immediate audience for reports.

At some HEIs, there are also dialogue meetings between academic staff and senior management (Vice-Principal Learning and Teaching, or equivalent). These provide an opportunity primarily for more focused discussion around any issues emerging, rather than consideration of positive outcomes, although senior management also benefit from further insight into good practice. The continuity of senior management and quality practitioner attendance at such meetings across Schools (or equivalent) can help make connections and draw out trends. Participants in the stakeholder conversations identified that such meetings are most beneficial when the approach is open and non-judgemental, which also prevents defensiveness on the part of the report author(s). The provision of meeting notes rather than structured minutes as an outcome of meetings with senior management was also identified as good practice to encourage an open and reflective discussion.

It is clear that HEIs review regularly all aspects of AMR, drawing on staff feedback, to promote an enhancement focus. Stakeholder participants noted in conversation the frequency with which AMR is reviewed, which was perceived to be more often than review of other processes. This highlights again the complexity of monitoring in general, and working with data, more specifically. Some examples of process review are given below. Other features of good practice to promote enhancement include emphasis on reporting by exception at some HEIs and streamlining of templates (sometimes with a suggested word count) to encourage a focus on key issues and practices.

Queen Margaret University

QMU introduced a new shorter AMR template in 2018. Within the template, authors are asked to identify no more than three aspects of good practice, three areas for development, and three areas to bring to the attention of University committees. The submission date was also brought forward from October to June, as programme leaders considered this to be better aligned with the planning cycle for the new academic year. There is an expectation that teams revisit and resubmit the template in October following receipt of NSS data, external examiner reports and performance indicators from Registry. In some cases, the consideration of the additional data has resulted in amendments to the June submission.
University of the West of Scotland

The University introduced online programme-level AMR in 2018. The online template takes the form of a SharePoint document, which is personalised with links to relevant data on student success, student satisfaction, student destinations and programme health. All programme leaders have access to high-level data and the option to view more detailed information, including breakdown by protected characteristics. Programme leaders also draw on module reports, which include detailed information on pass rate and progression. While these reports are helpful, it can be challenging to interpret data for larger modules that span multiple programmes. Programme leaders therefore need to be mindful of the place of each module within their curriculum, for example whether it is core or optional. An important advantage of the online system is that it is more resource efficient for data users. It also improves oversight, reporting and sharing of practice across UWS on multiple levels. Some programme leaders use the system as a repository for other data relevant to AMR, as there is the facility to upload appendices. Reports are not currently provided to students through this system. However, the technology is in place to facilitate student access.

Heriot-Watt University

At Heriot-Watt University a number of revisions were made to improve the process and increase its value (particularly for Schools). One key change was moving the deadline submission date by six months from December to June, which allows the most recent academic session to be reported upon, thus making the process less retrospective. Additionally, separate School annual discussion meetings (with School Management Teams) were replaced with a single joint dissemination event, thus allowing engagement of the wider University community (academic and professional services staff).

Scotland's Rural College

SRUC has produced a colour-coded quality calendar that supports staff engagement with AMR and other quality processes. The calendar sets out key dates across the academic year for collation, receipt and evaluation of data, including progression and retention data. It also provides information on the timing of assessment and key committee and assessment board meetings. Importantly, the calendar links to the ongoing review and implementation of programme and departmental quality enhancement plans. The plans are informed by AMR and subject to regular review at intervals of no more than three months. This approach provides a structured framework for ongoing reflection and engagement, meaning that AMR actions remain 'live' throughout the full academic year.

The calendar is provided in hard copy to all academic colleagues, meaning that it is visible across SRUC's campus sites. Academic staff also receive email reminders of key deadlines. The calendar has been well received as a useful resource to help staff meet deadlines and understand the relationship between quality processes and enhancement. Early discussions are underway to develop the format of the calendar, for example through an interactive online version.
Student engagement

The timing of AMR means that it can be difficult to include students in the development of reports. This is especially true for reports prepared over the summer (when students are not available) or early at the start of the academic session (when students are busy with induction/return to study). However, the dataset to inform AMR draws heavily on student feedback. Most obviously this means that the student voice is heard through survey analysis and other channels such as student-staff committee meetings.

Some (but not all) HEIs have in place mechanisms to facilitate more direct student contribution to the content of the report. This tends to be through input from student representatives on programme or senior-level committees. Some questionnaire respondents state that students are not directly involved in preparing the AMR submission. However, there is evidence that students at these HEIs, and across the sector, are involved in the ongoing review and implementation of actions arising from AMR. Again, this happens through the committee structure at all levels of the HEI, but also through participation in dissemination events. Examples of good practice in engaging students with AMR, including data analysis, are given below.

University of the West of Scotland

At UWS students participate in the annual institution-level Enhancement and Monitoring (EAM) Event. AMR is the main focus within the EAM, which also provides opportunity for updates on key institutional developments through a five-minute thesis approach. AMR discussions are conducted in a world-café format. Typically, the Assistant Deans move around the tables to present key highlights and challenges identified through AMR for their School. Subsequent discussion at the tables informs future enhancement. Conversations can be wide-ranging but are likely to include consideration of progression and retention. Key themes are captured in the EAM Newsletter, which is provided to all staff and students.

University of Dundee

Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA) and the University of Dundee have been working in partnership to explore the possibility of a data-sharing agreement to support evidence-based enhancement. This activity is progressing within the wider context of Dundee’s Student Partnership Agreement (SPA), which identifies the development of student welfare and pastoral support as a key priority for 2018-19. Related performance indicators within the SPA include swipe-card entry to DUSA, uptake of support and advice from DUSA, and progression and retention statistics broken down by student groups.

The agreement would provide for the sharing of selected data that is currently held separately by the University and DUSA. Under the proposals, University data would include aggregated attendance, retention, progression and attainment statistics. Data from DUSA would include results from the Student Matters Survey and Student-led Teaching Awards. The sharing of this data would enable users to triangulate information on progression and retention from an extended evidence base. The Student Matters Survey, in particular, provides a rich source of qualitative information on factors affecting the student experience, including financial and housing considerations. If adopted, the data-sharing agreement could be used to good effect within AMR. A further benefit would be increased student awareness of the AMR process and student contribution to preparing AMR reports.
Suggested future activity

The following are offered as points for institutions to consider individually, and collectively, in supporting efforts to make best use of AMR data in general, and progression and retention data, in particular.

- **Enhanced guidance to staff on working with data.** It is suggested that any such guidance should place progression and retention data within the wider context of the evidence base for AMR. However, specific considerations in respect of progression and retention should include: 1) guidance on agreeing and understanding progression and retention definitions/measures; 2) tips for interpreting large and small progression and retention datasets; 3) advice on making best use of qualitative data, that is, drawing out key themes from a wide evidence base to improve progression and retention.

- A further work stream to look at meaningful student engagement in AMR, including student involvement in generating, reviewing and interpreting progression and retention data for enhancement.

- Activities to **explore the relationship between the use of data for AMR and other purposes**, for example Outcome Agreement, Strategic and Operational Planning. This could consider progression and retention data within the broader dataset available for planning and reporting purposes.

- Activities to **further support dashboard development** and produce additional resources, which might include guidance on: 1) user-friendly presentation of progression and retention data; 2) working with the dashboard to complete the AMR template and identify interventions to enhance progression and retention. Given the varying levels of experience and aspirations across the sector, HEIs that are more advanced with dashboard development would be well placed to advise colleagues wishing to develop the use of such technology. A sector workshop could be useful, involving interested HEIs, including those HEIs that do not plan to implement dashboard technology, on grounds that much of the learning is transferable to datasets generated and published through other mechanisms.

- Identification of an appropriate opportunity (workshop or webinar, for example) to review AMR for collaborative provision. While not reported on through this project, there was a request from one HEI for information on the management of AMR at partner institutions. Scrutiny of AMR templates and guidance shows that there is a range of practice across the sector. As such, it might be useful for HEIs, especially those with a sizeable collaborative portfolio, to come together to share practice.

- Discussion around the inclusion of **PGR student data within AMR.** There were few references to the PGR experience within the questionnaire responses and arising through the conversations. It appears that the PGR experience is considered mostly outside AMR. Nevertheless, it might be interesting to explore this topic in more depth.
Appendix 1: Project method and timelines

The project was commissioned in February 2019. A Project Group was established at Queen Margaret University with expertise in managing AMR, producing and interrogating progression and retention data. Membership of that Group is given at the end of this Appendix, and thanks are extended to members for their important contributions to this piece of work.

The project timeline is given below:

The methodology comprised two main stages as follows:

- analysis of questionnaires from participating HEIs
- discussions with representatives from a selection of HEIs to explore aspects of practice in greater detail.

The above stages were informed by the wider literature on progression and retention, and (more specifically) the Outcome and Technical Reports for all Scottish HEIs from the third ELIR cycle. As part of a wider suite of ongoing QAA Scotland commissioned activity, the project was informed also by other Enhancement Theme work, including the recently published HE Data Landscape Resource, and research report (with associated discussion topics) on the use of data and evidence in retention and progression in Scottish sector higher education institutions. Further information on the two stages is provided below.

Questionnaire completion and analysis

A detailed questionnaire was sent to all Scottish HEIs (Teaching Quality Forum (TQF) contacts) on 4 March 2019 with an initial deadline of 22 March 2019 (subsequently extended to 1 April 2019). The questionnaire was developed with support from QAA Scotland to gather information on the following:

- the AMR process in general (levels of reporting, template format, roles and responsibilities, dissemination and engagement)
- the data/evidence (qualitative and quantitative) used to inform AMR with particular emphasis on progression and retention
- the evolution of data (types of data and presentation) over the past five years and expected future developments
- the use of dashboards to access data for AMR
- support for report authors to engage with data
- perceived barriers to engagement with data
- AMR as a vehicle for enhancement in relation to progression and retention

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the relationship between AMR and the Outcome Agreement and/or Strategic Planning.

Respondents were also asked to provide examples of good practice in using annual monitoring data to implement and evaluate interventions to enhance progression and retention. Respondents from 15 HEIs completed the questionnaire.

**Sector discussions**

In-depth conversations were scheduled with representatives from five participating HEIs, concluding mid-June 2019. The purpose of the discussions was to gather further information on aspects of practice that had been identified by the project lead (in partnership with QAA) as potentially useful for the sector as a whole. The HEIs participating in the discussions reflect the diversity of the Scottish sector (ancient, modern, post-1992), and the range of practices that are in place. Unfortunately, resource constraints mean that it was not been possible to engage in discussion with all HEIs identifying good practice. However, follow-up correspondence and short conversations with TQF members proved useful as an additional means of following up on the questionnaire responses.

**TQF and Theme Leaders' Group (TLG) consultation**

The Project Lead introduced the project to TQF on 6 March 2019, at which point members were invited to identify possible outputs from the project. A further conversation took place at the following TQF on 7 June 2019, at which point members were updated on progress and given a further opportunity to provide input to the resources that could be useful. On 17 June 2019, the Project Lead attended TLG where a similar very useful discussion took place.

**Reflections on the methodology**

The methodology served the primary purpose of gathering the information necessary to fulfil the project brief. However, it is clear from the stakeholder conversations and sector meetings that there are wider benefits arising from Enhancement Themes projects than the final report and resources. Many participants stated that they welcomed the opportunity, through the conversations, to reflect on their own practice and learn from sector colleagues. The visits to other HEIs also provided networking and staff development opportunities, which have important, less tangible benefits that go beyond the immediate project outputs.

**Queen Margaret University Project Group membership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Martin</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement (Project Lead)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilary Glendinning</td>
<td>Retention and Surveys Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heather Hartley</td>
<td>Retention and Surveys Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craig Warrack</td>
<td>Management Information Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Participating institutions

Thanks are extended to all participants for their important, reflective and supportive contributions to the project. It has not been possible to incorporate all good practice examples within this report. However, the broader learning from the project has been shared with QAA to inform the resources from the project and ongoing and possible future Enhancement Themes work.

Questionnaire respondents

- University of Aberdeen
- Abertay University
- University of Dundee
- University of Edinburgh
- Edinburgh Napier University
- Heriot-Watt University
- Queen Margaret University
- Robert Gordon University
- The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
- Scotland's Rural College
- University of St Andrews
- University of Stirling
- University of Strathclyde
- University of the Highlands and Islands
- University of the West of Scotland

Stakeholder conversation participants

The five HEIs listed below took part in extended conversations with the Project Team. In addition to these more structured conversations, the Project Lead benefited from the opportunity to follow up on questionnaire responses with colleagues from a number of other HEIs:

- University of Dundee
- Robert Gordon University
- Scotland's Rural College
- University of St Andrews
- University of the West of Scotland.
Appendix 3: Questionnaire template

ENHANCEMENT THEMES
PROGRESSION AND RETENTION ANNUAL MONITORING PROJECT

Questionnaire distributed to TQF main institutional contacts

This questionnaire contributes to a sector project that explores approaches to using data in Annual Monitoring at different institutional levels. The project has a particular focus on progression and retention. The project runs from February 2019 to end of June 2019, following which written outputs will be available. The exact format of the outputs is to be determined following analysis of the questionnaire responses and subsequent interviews, but the intention is that these should be useful for the sector as a whole and for individual HEIs.

I would be very grateful if you could arrange for this questionnaire to be completed (one submission per HEI) and returned to me by **Friday 22 March 2019** at the following email address: dmartin1@qmu.ac.uk

The questionnaire should take around 45-60 minutes to complete. As you will see, the majority of questions are qualitative. There is no expectation that respondents will provide lengthy answers to these (although there is no restriction on word count). If the relevant information is available in your institutional guidance, or within the reporting template(s), please just make a note to that effect, and I can extract the details separately.

If you have any questions about the questionnaire, or the project more generally, please feel free to contact me for further information.

Thank you in advance for your support with this project.

Dawn Martin, Project Lead
Assistant Secretary, Governance and Quality Enhancement, Queen Margaret University
GENERAL QUESTIONS/INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF PARTICIPATING HEI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTACT PERSON AT HEI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMAIL ADDRESS FOR CONTACT PERSON</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Can you please provide either a link to your Annual Monitoring process or a copy of your process and Annual Monitoring template(s) as email attachments?

DATASETS CONSIDERED IN ANNUAL MONITORING

2. Which of the following datasets are considered in Annual Monitoring at your HEI? Unless otherwise indicated, it will be assumed that the data is considered for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) Annual Monitoring.

Please follow the example below (shaded) to reflect the levels of Annual Monitoring that apply for your HEI and the structures that are in place, e.g. Programme/College/School. If you need more than four columns, please amend accordingly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Timeframe for evaluating trends e.g. three/five years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions data (volume) – number of applications, offers and entrants</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSS results</td>
<td>Yes (UG only)</td>
<td>Yes (UG only)</td>
<td>Yes (UG only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module evaluation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As in the example above (shaded text) Please enter levels of Annual Monitoring for your HEI as column headings in the yellow highlighted boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeframe for evaluation trends e.g. three/five years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions data (volume) – number of applications, offers and entrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions data (prior qualifications)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student performance overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student performance by level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student performance by module (unit/building block contributing to level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards data – Honours degree classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards data – exit points below Honours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards data – postgraduate differentiation (e.g. merit/distinction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression and retention data (further detailed information requested below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destinations from DLHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSS results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTES results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Student Barometer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal survey results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dataset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance monitoring data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Examiner Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-Staff Committee minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Committee minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports from PSRB or other external organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer/industry liaison feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service user feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports from validation or subject review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – please add extra rows as required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please answer the remainder of the questions on datasets with reference to all levels of Annual Monitoring in place at your HEI.

3. How has the dataset available for Annual Monitoring at your HEI evolved over the past five years? Please consider the type of data available, as well as the presentation of the data.

4. Do you anticipate changes to the dataset or the way it is presented over the coming five years? If so, please give details.

5. How do report authors access the necessary data?
   Do report authors have access to a dashboard for Annual Monitoring? yes/no (please delete as applicable).
PROGRESSION AND RETENTION DATA

6 How do you interpret/define progression and retention for the purposes of Annual Monitoring? Do you use HESA measures, institutional measures, or a combination of both?

7 Does quantitative data for Annual Monitoring include a breakdown of retention and progression for any of the following groups? Unless otherwise indicated, it will be assumed that the data is considered for undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) Annual Monitoring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Following the example in question 2 above, please enter levels of Annual Monitoring for your HEI as column headings in the yellow highlighted boxes. If you need more than four columns, please amend accordingly.</th>
<th>Timeframe for evaluating trends e.g. three/five years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fee status e.g. Home/EU RUK International</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Please specify which of these apply in the following row.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care experienced (care leavers) Caring responsibilities SIMD 20 Direct entrants (college articulation) Other – please specify</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 What qualitative data (if any) informs Annual Monitoring of retention and progression?

9 Do you have identified thresholds for retention and progression at your HEI that trigger further investigation? yes/no
DEVELOPING AND REVIEWING THE REPORT

Please provide information, as appropriate/relevant, for all levels of Annual Monitoring in place at your HEI.

10. What is the process for developing the report?

11. How are students involved in this process?

12. Do report authors receive support from Registry, Planners or other colleagues from your HEI to evaluate the evidence listed above? If so, please provide further details.

13. How do committees and other audiences, including the wider staff and student population, engage with the report?

IDENTIFYING ACTION POINTS AND IMPLEMENTING ENHANCEMENT

Please provide information, as appropriate/relevant, for all levels of Annual Monitoring in place at your HEI.

14. What is the process for identifying and recording action points/areas for enhancement?

15. What is the process for evaluating the impact of enhancement through subsequent reporting cycles?

16. How does Annual Monitoring inform the Outcome Agreement and/or Operational and/or Strategic Planning at your HEI?

CHALLENGES AND GOOD PRACTICE

Please provide information, as appropriate/relevant, for all levels of Annual Monitoring in place at your HEI.

17. What are the barriers (if any) to effective engagement with Annual Monitoring data? Please list up to three barriers.

18. Are there any features of the Annual Monitoring process at your HEI that you consider represent good practice in using data/evidence? Please list up to three examples.
19. Can you provide specific examples where the Annual Monitoring process has been used to good effect to identify, prioritise and evaluate interventions to enhance the student experience? Examples relating to progression and retention would be particularly welcome. Please list up to three examples.

OTHER INFORMATION

20. Is there anything else you would like to feed into the project at this stage that has not been addressed through the questions above?

21. What kind of output(s) from this project could be useful for your HEI?

22. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview to discuss this topic in more depth? yes/no (please delete as applicable).

The information provided here will be used to inform the student demographics, retention and attainment strand of the Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience Enhancement Theme and will be shared with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). Your personal details will be kept securely and not shared with any other party. We/QAA may contact you using the email you have specified to clarify information provided in this form. Your institution's name may be used as part of the outputs of the Enhancement Theme. Please tick here to indicate that you consent to the use of your personal data in this way.

☐ I consent to being contacted to clarify information provided in this form
☐ I consent to my institution's name being used in outputs of the Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience Enhancement Theme

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
### Appendix 4: Links to HEIs’ annual monitoring webpages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Annual monitoring web link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abertay University</td>
<td>Not currently available online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Aberdeen</td>
<td><a href="https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/annual-course-and-programme-review-6111.php">https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/annual-course-and-programme-review-6111.php</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh Napier University</td>
<td><a href="https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/dlte/quality/qualityframework/Pages/qualityframework.aspx">https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/dlte/quality/qualityframework/Pages/qualityframework.aspx</a>  (see section 2a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Edinburgh</td>
<td><a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting">https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/monitoringandreview/annual-monitoring-review-and-reporting</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow Caledonian University</td>
<td><a href="https://www.gcu.ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/thewiversity/aqd/AQPP_6_ProgrammeMonitoring.pdf">https://www.gcu.ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/thewiversity/aqd/AQPP_6_ProgrammeMonitoring.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Glasgow</td>
<td><a href="https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/qea/annualmonitoring/">https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/qea/annualmonitoring/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heriot-Watt University</td>
<td><a href="https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/annual-monitoring.htm">https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/academic-registry/quality/qa/annual-monitoring.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open University in Scotland</td>
<td>Not currently available online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Margaret University</td>
<td><a href="https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/forms-and-guidance/other-forms">https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/forms-and-guidance/other-forms</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland's Rural College</td>
<td><a href="https://www.sruc.ac.uk/downloads/file/4154/education_manual">https://www.sruc.ac.uk/downloads/file/4154/education_manual</a>  (see section B Portfolio delivery, then B3 - Monitoring and Review)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of St Andrew's</td>
<td><a href="https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/teaching/monitoring/annualmonitoring/">https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/staff/teaching/monitoring/annualmonitoring/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Strathclyde</td>
<td>Not available online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the West of Scotland</td>
<td><a href="https://www.uws.ac.uk/media/2034/regulation-4-programme-and-module-approval-monitoring-and-internal-review.pdf">https://www.uws.ac.uk/media/2034/regulation-4-programme-and-module-approval-monitoring-and-internal-review.pdf</a></td>
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### Appendix 5: Glossary of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMR</td>
<td>Annual Monitoring Reporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLHE</td>
<td>Destination of Leavers of Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELIR</td>
<td>Enhancement-led Institutional Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>Further Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILR</td>
<td>Institution-led Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISB</td>
<td>International Student Barometer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSS</td>
<td>National Student Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRES</td>
<td>Postgraduate Research Experience Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTES</td>
<td>Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSRB</td>
<td>Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QAA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFC</td>
<td>Scottish Funding Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIMD</td>
<td>Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLG</td>
<td>(Enhancement) Theme Leaders' Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQF</td>
<td>Teaching Quality Forum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>