# Institutional Review Self-Evaluation Document

**December 2012**

*Preface*

The University of Sussex Self-Evaluation Document (SED) has been prepared in support of the the QAA's University's Institutional Review scheduled for March 2013.

The document has been complied by an Editorial Group under the leadership of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC). The Group included academic and student representatives along with members of professional service staff.

Earlier drafts of the document were presented to School and University Teaching and Learning Committees, School and University Management Groups, and other senior level committees of the University, including Senate and Council. The document has been approved by the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate.

The document submitted to the QAA is currently available to all staff and students on the University's website alongside the Student Written Submission.

We have structured the SED to take account of the guidance set out in Annex 3a of the IRENI Handbook for Higher Education Providers, March 2012 and it reflects QAA guidance concerning the prominence of the evidence base in this cycle of reviews. Therefore we have sought to keep to a minimum descriptive narrative concerning the management of our quality processes, the maintenance of our academic standards, and the accuracy of our information for students and other stakeholders. However, we have added contextual information where necessary to assist Review Panel members in navigating our supporting evidence or providing the rationale for our approach on specific matters.

The document and its supporting evidence provide the basis for further discussion and exploration of our approach to the management of academic quality and standards during the Review visit.

The evidence is referenced in the footnotes in this document.

Our overall approach in drafting the document has been to provide a frank self-critical reflection of the University as it operates at this point in time, with supporting evidence, and to outline our strategies for maintaining and enhancing the quality of our learning and teaching and the wider student experience in an ever more challenging national and international higher education environment.

The QAA Review takes place at a point where the University has recently completed a major review of its academic portfolio and finds us in a major change phase that reflects our growing confidence as a consistently highly ranked UK university.

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**SECTION 1**

**Brief description of the institution**

### 1.1 University Mission

Our purpose remains: to deliver innovative and inspiring research, scholarship, teaching and learning that leads to positive change in individuals, organisations, and societies.

We achieve our purpose by producing graduates who are:

- able to display effective and sophisticated cognitive, analytical and problem solving, skills and are willing to engage with unfamiliar problems and articulate solutions
- creative and able to use the knowledge they have acquired to generate, develop and realise new ideas and apply a range of creative methods
- receptive to new ideas and critiques of established wisdom, often within an interdisciplinary context
- capable of understanding the philosophical and methodological bases of research, including the ethical foundations of scholarship
- able to participate in individual and collaborative learning in innovative, adaptable and effective ways
- able to understand the interaction between members of an enterprise – including leaders – in the public and volunteering sectors
- aware of civic and social responsibilities and willing to tackle prejudice, injustice and the abuse of power in constructive and responsible ways.

In the academic year 2011-2012 the University celebrated its 50th anniversary. This was a major milestone and offered the opportunity to reflect on our 1960s origins, our successes over the past 50 years, and the challenges we are likely to face in the coming 50 years.

We have grown from 52 students in 1961 (over half of whom were women) to 12,650 FTE (over 13,000 headcount) as at December 2012.[1] In 1961 we set out to break the mould in higher education, and to redraw the map of learning: We were 'making the future'.

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[1] Report on student numbers 2012/13 , November 2012. P-004-6.

Our founders took what they wanted from traditional institutions (and deliberately avoided others) to create an innovative and adventurous curriculum, inspiring research and breakthroughs in understanding, and bold organisational structures.

In 2012 we have challenged ourselves to go back to these founding traditions, to question and challenge our view of ourselves.  Reflecting on our past, our achievements, our challenges and our failures, we find that we continue to prize the values that set us on our current path and that our purpose is as valid today at it was in 1961.

We have shown remarkable adaptability in an increasingly competitive environment and continue to be ranked among the top 1% of universities internationally.[2]  We have achieved and exceed many of the targets set in out 2009-2015 Strategic Plan[3] to the extent that we have felt it necessary to bring forward the strategic planning process to develop a new plan for 2013-18.[4]

## 1.2    Major changes since the last review

Major changes since our last review were notified in the University's submission to the QAA Mid-Cycle Review exercise. In that submission we noted the University's strategic plan of 2009 -2015 (Making the Future) which set out a revised institutional strategy and targets, including the reshaping of academic provision into twelve Schools (excluding the Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS)).

### *Changes in Organisational Structure*
In March 2008 Senate began an institutional-wide consultation concerning the University's academic structure.  The consultation was deliberately aligned with the development of our 2009-2015 Strategic Plan in which we set out our intentions for a period of sustained growth

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[2] THES World Rankings 2012
[3] Strategic Plan 2009-12: Achievements.
[4] Strategic Plan 2013-18: Campaigns and Themes (draft)

in both teaching and in research.  The consultation concluded with the creation of a new school structure and a realignment of professional services.[5]

The new structure based on 13 Schools, including the joint Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) (although the latter was not formally involved in the restructure), was implemented at the start of the 2009/10 academic session.[6]  A further adjustment was made in 2010/11 integrating the School of Informatics and the School of Engineering and Design into a single new School of Engineering and Informatics, thus reducing the number of Schools to 12.

A common governance and management structure has been established in each School,[7] comprising a Director of Teaching and Learning, Director of Doctoral Studies, Director of Research and Enterprise, and Director of Student Experience.  Generic job descriptions have been created for each directorship. Each Director chairs the relevant School-level committee and assists the Head of School in the strategic development and operational oversight of School activities through their membership of the School Management Team. Each School also operates a common administrative infrastructure to support the Head of School and each of the Director roles.

The School-level Directors are members of the relevant senior academic committees.[8]

*Changes in Senior Management Team*

Since the last Review, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) (Professor Paul Layzell moved to a new position as Principal of Royal Holloway, University of London in 2010) and two Pro Vice-Chancellors (PVCs) (Joanne Wright moved to a DVC position in Australia in 2009; Bob Allison Left to take up the VC post at Loughborough in 2012).

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[5] Proposal for Change Summary March 2010 Senate S-224-8. Engineering and Informatics March 2011 Senate S-227-4.
[6] University of Sussex: Organisational of the University 2012-13.
[7] University of Sussex School of Studies Management Structure.
[8] University of Sussex: Committee Structures: Diagram. Proposed revised Teaching and Learning Committee reporting sub-structure diagram.

In parallel with these departures the University created a new PVC post to drive the University's international strategy. Professor Chris Marlin was appointed to this position in 2009. Professor Clare Mackie was appointed in June 2010 to replace Professor Joanne Wright.

Professor Michael Davies has been appointed as the PVC (Research) and is expected to join the University in January 2013.

The University will therefore have its full complement of PVCs from early in 2013.

The DVC is now appointed by the VC on rotation from among the PVCs with Professor Mackie holding this post at present together with her teaching and learning portfolio for the 2012-13 academic session.

Each PVC provides senior academic leadership in their functional area as well as carrying line management responsibilities for a number of Heads of School, split on an arts and humanities/social science/science basis. The PVCs also lead strategic planning in their specialism and in their area of territorial responsibility.

Other changes include line management of the Librarian and the Director of Technology Enhanced Learning which have transferred to the PVC Teaching and Learning portfolio. Line management for Information and Technology Services (ITS) has moved to the Registrar and Secretary.

The Registrar and Secretary role, currently held by Mr John Duffy, continues to provide strategic leadership for professional service departments with the exception of the Director of Finance who reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor.[9] There have been a number of changes in the Directors of professional services, including the appointment of a new Academic Registrar (Sharon Jones), Director of Student Recruitment Services (Marcus Williams), Director of Student Services (Claire Powrie) and a revised Governance Office led

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[9] University of Sussex: Vice Chancellor's Executive Group Chart. Diagram

by the Academic Secretary (Owen Richards).[10]  The changes in professional services have been made to support the University's strategic objectives and to meet the demands of the new School administrative structure.

The University's deliberative structures continue to evolve to reflect organisational change and changes in the external environment.[11]  Arrangements are updated annually and published in the Organisation of the University on the Governance Office web page.

A major review of the role of Senate and its constituency was undertaken in 2008-2009 and implemented in 2009-10.  This resulted in a more streamlined and effective senior academic body.[12]

Full details of the University's organisation are published annually in the Organisation of the University.[13]

***New Structure of the Academic Year***

We reported in our Mid-Cycle briefing paper[14] that in December 2009-10 Senate had endorsed proposals to simplify the University's credit structure and to introduce a mid-year assessment period.   These changes concerned final year and postgraduate courses in the first instance with planned managed roll-out thereafter.

However, in December 2010, after extensive further consultation, Senate agreed to undertake a fundamental re-structure of the academic year and to adopt the simplified credit structure for all taught courses for implementation in 2012-13.[15]

The rationale behind this decision was the desire (on the part of staff and students) to formalise a mid-year assessment period for all taught provision in order to ensure effective

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[10] University of Sussex: Professional Services Structure.
[11] University of Sussex: Committee Structures: Diagram. See FN8.
[12] Composition of Senate from 1 August 2009  Senate S/221/3.
[13] Organisation of the University 2012-13.  See FN 6
[14] QAA mid-cycle review briefing paper June 2011 Senate S/228/18.
[15] Mid-Year Assessment and Structure of the Academic Year December 2010 Senate S/226/4. Report of the Senate Working Group on the Structure of the Academic Year Final March 2011 Senate S/227/5

management of the process and to improve the student experience.  Consultation also confirmed substantial support for a mid-year teaching-free assessment period to facilitate the introduction of a wider range of assessment methods to support student learning and to allow for more robust and equalities-compliant management of in-person assessment.  A second driver was the desire to secure marking time for faculty which would ultimately result in positive effects on turnaround times for feedback to students.  Senate also wished to move more rapidly than originally agreed to enable innovation in curriculum design, in particular the opportunity to create a more flexible and responsive curriculum in the light of changes in government funding and the changing economic climate.   A new design of the new academic year was also agreed. [16]

During 2011-12 services were adjusted and systems redesigned to accommodate the changed academic year.[17]   The University of Sussex Students' Union (USSU) Sabbatical officers were kept informed and participated in developments through their membership of senior committees. The USSU Education Officer and the USSU Welfare Officer were members of the Portfolio Review/Academic Year Structure Steering Group chaired by the PVC Teaching and Learning.  The Steering Group was responsible for overseeing the implementation of the new academic structure. Implementation was also discussed at the termly meetings between the Student Union Sabbatical Officers and the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group.[18]

The student voice was particularly influential in designing the communications campaign aimed at returning students in September 2012.  The campaign sought to ensure awareness of the earlier start date to the new term as well as changes to programmes.   A personal email was sent to all new and returning students before the start of term directing them to a video, available on the University website, specifically for their course.  Each video gave a simple brief statement using visual aids to communicate changes on the course.[19]

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[16] Review of the Academic Portfolio - Portfolio and Periodic Review February 2011 Senate S/227/13.
[17] Academic Year Calendar 2012-13 and 2014-15.
[18] Executive Liaison Group Terms of Reference and Membership.
[19] Personal email and exemplar video link issued to all new and returning students September 2012.

*Portfolio Review*

The Mid-Cycle briefing paper notified QAA that we had temporarily suspended quinquennial (periodic) subject review in 2009/10 to enable us to focus on our reorganisation, and for the period immediately following the re-structure during which a major review of our academic portfolio and academic year structure would be undertaken.[20]

The review of the academic portfolio, referred to internally as Portfolio Review, started in 2010-11 and was completed in April 2012.[21] We reported on progress in the Mid-Cycle report. In summary, the Portfolio Review Process consisted of three stages:

- **Strategic Engagement (Summer term 2010/11)**
- **Curriculum Development & Enhancement (Autumn term 2011/12)**
- **School Periodic Review (Spring term 2011/12)**

**(1) Strategic Engagement** involved half day meetings between the PVC (Teaching & Learning), the Academic Office, and the School Senior Management Team (SMT) of each school (typically comprising the Head of School, Director of Teaching & Learning, Director of Student Support, Director of Doctoral Studies and/or Director of Research & Knowledge Exchange; together with the Heads of Department or relevant discipline leads). The SMT were briefed on the three stages of the review and asked to present their vision for the School together with plans and aspirations for developing their portfolio (amendments, additions and withdrawals) to further enhance the student experience.

**(2) Curriculum Development and Enhancement** provided an opportunity for Faculty to review curriculum design and delivery in some detail in advance of the new curriculum framework and academic year structure being introduced in 2012/13. Although an informal stage with a focus on enhancement, a seven member panel was formed with a majority school membership comprising the PVC (Teaching & Learning) as Chair, Head of School, Director of Teaching and Learning, two senior Faculty from the School, Head of Academic Registry and Head of Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU). Meetings took place

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[20] QAA mid-cycle review. See FN 14.
[21] School Periodic Review web site. School Periodic Review Procedure (incorporating course approval).

over one or two days depending on the size and complexity of the portfolio under consideration. Schools were challenged to consider creatively 'designing-in' opportunities to enhance assessment and feedback, broaden student learning (via planned University-wide electives) and improve the acquisition of employability skills (through curriculum design, placements and study abroad).

Schools were invited to review the alignment of learning outcomes and assessment strategies and to reflect on the appropriateness of the assessment instruments and assessment strategies in the light of the creation of the mid-year assessment period for unseen exams.

Actions agreed during the discussions were issued to the Head of School and were used as the basis for de-briefing the Schools and assisting them with their preparations for School Periodic Review.

**(3) School Periodic Review** was the third and final stage of the portfolio review. All School portfolios were reviewed between January and April 2012. The main purpose of School Periodic Review was to assure the standards and enhance the quality of all aspects of the School's educational provision at the level of the course whilst simultaneously ensuring compliance with the new credit requirements and maximising student learning opportunities. The Review included consideration of postgraduate research student provision.

Review Panel membership included senior University staff (academic and professional services) and an equal number of external subject specialists. USSU led the selection of current elected student representatives in each of the Schools to act as Panel members.

A student intern was appointed to assist the USSU in the selection and preparation of the elected student representatives for their panel role and to select additional students as stakeholders to come before the Panel for discussion of their experience. The number of staff (internal and external) and students involved in School Periodic Reviews was:

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- 47 elected student representatives as full Panel members

- 5 USSU officers served in total with one representative on each Panel

- One of each Careers and Employment Centre (CEC), Library and ITS members of staff

- 24 internal academic assessors

- 35 external subject specialist assessors

- A further 51 student elected representatives in total met with the Panel members over lunch to represent student views.  The students were selected from undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and research students in the School under review.[22]

Following the completion of Portfolio Review we are in the process of updating our course development and approval processes to create a new Course Development and Approval Handbook[23] incorporating our revised School Periodic Review Process.[24]  The latter shall be conducted at School rather than subject level with effect from 2012-13 and shall occur on a 6-yearly cycle following HEFCE's recently published proposals for a risk-based approach to quality assurance.  Among the planned changes to both of these processes is the inclusion of current students as members of validation and review panels.  We believe that this change in procedure addresses the QAA comment made in 2008 that student views were not sufficiently to the fore in our periodic review processes.

It has been necessary to change a number of enabling policies and procedures in response to the changed academic year and course structure. In particular, we have revised our Academic Framework to support a more flexible curriculum design and realigned it with the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.  The new Framework enables single honours students to undertake professional/ industrial placements for one term or for a year or to study abroad for similar periods.

We are proactively encouraging students to experiment in their learning and have secured space in the curriculum (in scheduled timetabled slots) for free standing electives and

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[22] ibid.

[23] Course Development and Approval Procedure (under review). New Programme Stage 2 Outline Proposal form. Outline Proposal form 2011-12. Validation Overview (updated 09).

[24] School Periodic Review Procedure. See FN 21.

approved pathway electives.[25]  The electives provide opportunities for students to explore beyond their main subject boundaries.

Staff are also encouraged to test creatively and experimentally in course design by creating new modules for non-subject specialists and to create approved pathway electives enabling students to achieve a level of professionalism or proficiency in a minor subject.

Changes to the credit structure for course design required revision of the examination and assessment regulations, including the role of External Examiners.[26]

School Periodic Review highlighted the need to give further consideration to our support for doctoral students. Outcomes from School Periodic Review were considered by the Doctoral School Committee (DSC) in the 2012-13 autumn term.  School actions plans were scrutinised and the committee approved all School responses but referred back some School actions for further consideration.  The Committee identified a number of areas requiring institutional intervention.  A University action plan has been developed by the Doctoral School Committee and work commences on implementation in 2013.[27]

Portfolio Review took advantage of the decisions taken by Senate in 2010 to re-design the Sussex Language Institute.  We have established a new Sussex Centre for the Study of Language[28] and have developed a new 'language proficiency' pathway from *ab initio* to advanced level.  The study of languages is available to all single honours courses where Schools have opted into the elective scheme. A measure of the success of this new language elective scheme is that 348 new 1st year students out of some 1200 students with an elective option chose to study language elective modules in the autumn term 2012-13.

*Partnership*

The University remains cautious concerning the extent of its partnership engagement at home and overseas.  We are currently reconsidering our international strategy, in particular

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[25] University of Sussex Academic Framework 2012-13.
[26] University of Sussex Examination and Assessment Regulations 2012-13.
[27] Doctoral School Committee Minutes December 2012.
[28] Review of the Sussex Language Institute Senate S/224/11.

the identification of suitable international partners with whom we wish to collaborate. We do of course continue to have a vibrant range of staff and student exchanges particularly in our study abroad programme with a number of US institutions[29] and we maintain our community involvement through carefully selected local FE providers and others.[30] In 2009, we entered into partnership with Highbury College (Portsmouth) and in 2010 established partnerships with Croydon College and Bellerbys College (Brighton and London campuses). The process of disengagement from the University's partnership with Ravensbourne College, London, began in 2009 and has been completed.

The University entered into an agreement with Study Group in August 2006 (updated 2009) to establish an International Study Centre (ISC) based in the Mantell Building on the University of Sussex campus.[31] The ISC offers specialist preparation for both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees at the University of Sussex for international students who do not meet direct academic entry requirements to our degree programmes. The portfolio includes International Foundation Year, International Year One and Pre-Masters programmes. A new Memorandum of Agreement has also been signed with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). IDS is a separate business entity that has been located on the University campus since the mid-1960's and is therefore our longest standing partner.

### *Staff Appointments*

Over 186 new academic teaching staff have been appointed since 2008, 60 of whom were appointed in 2011-12 to meet our strategy for growth.[32] Eleven new professors are among the new starts this year, including three new heads of School: Professor Diane Mynors (Engineering and Informatics), Professor Brian Hudson (Education and Social Work), and Professor Peter Coles (Mathematical and Physical Sciences).

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[29] List of Study Abroad Partners 2012-13.
[30] University of Sussex Partner Institutions 2012-13.
[31] International Study Group MOA.
[32] Staff appointments data. New academic starters graph.

***Developing the Estate***

We have continued to develop our estate to improve the quality of our teaching and learning environment, student residences and social space for staff and for students. Overall investment in the estate since 2008 has been in the region of £210m, with further substantial investment planned over the next 2 years.  As well as continuous improvement we have also undertaken major capital investments as summarised below.

- *Fulton building* (£10m) opened in June 2010. The new building provides 3,000 square metres of teaching space across three floors, including two 160-seat lecture theatres and a mix of 26 different-sized seminar rooms.

- *The Jubilee Building* (£30m) opened in September 2012.  The building is home to the School of Business, Management and Economics and houses the largest state-of-the -art lecture theatre on campus (500 seat capacity) plus additional general teaching space.

- *Student Residences (*£46m) has been spent on the development of the Northfield Student Residences (in three phases – the final phase to be completed in the summer 2013).  This builds on the £12m development of the Swanborough residence which was completed in 2008.

- *Catering and conferences* (£10m) has been invested in developing the Bramber House catering and conference centre, which includes a number of new seminar rooms with state of the art IT infrastructure.

- *Library Refurbishment* (£7.4m) has transformed the University of Sussex Library.  Physical use the Library has increased significantly since the refurbishment with 34% more visits in 2011/12 than in 2010/11. The move to a self-service approach wherever possible and appropriate (e.g. issuing and returning books, booking of group study rooms etc.) has enabled students to take advantage of the full range of services and facilities offered by the Library during 24 hour opening in teaching periods.

Rationalisation and rearrangement of Library stock onto well lit, adequately spaced shelves, together with a review of shelving processes means that all stock is now re-shelved within 24 hours of return, improving student access to books and other learning materials.

Significant investment continues to be made in acquiring print and electronic content to support student learning and usage of these materials is growing year on year. During 2011/12, e-book downloads increased by 28% and e-journal downloads by 23% over 2010/11 figures.  These developments have been received positively by students as reflected in Library NSS scores for 2011-12 and feedback collected internally and externally.[33]  The Library refurbishment has delivered the following innovations and improvements:

- Reflective, creative and interactive study zones supporting a range of learning Styles.
- Increased number of group study rooms, bookable online, equipped with PCs and  plasma screens.
  Innovative Open Learning Space to host a range of formal and informal learning and teaching activities.
- Sussex Research Hive (a dedicated space for doctoral students and research staff).
- RFID technology, facilitating self- issue and return, fines payment and self-service reservations.
- 65% increase in provision of ITS-managed computers, including a Mac cluster. There are now 200 PCs for student use based in the Library.
- Increased power and data capacity to facilitate the use of student-owned devices (laptops, iPads, notebooks etc).
- Enhanced wifi coverage throughout the building.
- Provision of additional bespoke and off-the-shelf furniture to support contemporary learning.
- Information Hub, offering a single service point for all Library enquiries.
- Remodelled, welcoming entrance and Reception Desk.

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[33] NSS outcomes 2011-12 November 2012 TLC/23/6.

- New café and bookshop.
- Careers and Employability Centre relocated to the Library with an enhanced Service and easy access for students.

- *Connectivity*.  We invested £1.2m in IT developments last year with positive results and a similar amount will be invested in 2012-13 through the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Project led by the DVC. This investment has been made in response to feedback from our students through annual monitoring/course evaluation, School Periodic Review and in response to comments made in the National Student Survey in 2010-11 and 2011-12.

- *Planned key infrastructure developments for 2012-14.*  Planned investments over the next two years include the opening of the new refurbished Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts and the creation of a new childcare centre for use by staff and students. In addition the University revised its plans to relocate BMEC and LPS into the Jubilee Building last summer when it became clear the growth plan for these two schools did not make this a feasible proposition.  Instead, the University has committed to refurbish the Freeman Centre to accommodate the School of Law, Politics and Sociology (LPS).  As this is a major internal refurbishment rather than a rebuild enabling a 2013 relocation.

### 1.3   Key challenges the institution faces

Our current strategic plan, Making the Future 2009-2015, was framed as an ambitious plan for growth across the University. Part way through the third year of that plan many of the goals have already been achieved.

For example, we have already doubled the number of overseas students at Sussex. We have significantly improved the student experience, as measured for example by the National Student Survey. We remain firmly a top UK institution. That is a tribute to the work of all staff at Sussex.

We are now thinking about the next phase of Sussex's development. We continue to be ambitious and aspire to be a top-10 university, with world-class research and outstanding

teaching and learning. We want to operate in a sustainable manner, with our staff and students at the centre of future endeavour.

We have the opportunity to continue to grow our institution in line with and moving beyond the current strategic plan.  We have the capacity to move from 12,000 to 15,000 students by 2015-16, as overseas demand continues to grow and the new government approach to de-regulated student numbers allows universities to admit extra numbers of high-quality students.

The positive reason for embracing growth now is that additional student numbers are the main route for growing income. Growing income provides the financial head-room for us to develop the student experience, grow staffing numbers, develop exciting new areas of activity and investing in high-quality facilities. It means we are more in charge of our destiny as an institution.

The practical challenges for all of us – for academic schools and for professional services – include how we will meet the demand for teaching space, provide residential accommodation,[34] and ensure we continue to offer high-quality services.  A more fundamental starting point however is our internal conversation on what growth means for Sussex as an academic institution: our distinctiveness, size, shape and quality.

In December 2011 the Vice-Chancellor presented '10 Questions' to Academic Schools and professional service departments to foster debate within schools and across the University about developing our future.  These are summarised as follows:

- On distinctiveness, he asked about the special characteristics that will make us distinctive in an increasingly competitive environment;

- On size, he asked colleagues to explore what the student mix will look like, where the opportunities are to grow research capacity, and what other opportunities exist for income growth;

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[34] University of Sussex Estate Master Plan: Presentation to Senate November 2012.

- On shape, he said he was looking at where we might prioritise research or teaching development, and what innovative approaches we could take to teaching and learning and to research; and

- On quality, he said he wished to explore how we could enhance teaching and research quality, what new world-class research opportunities exist, and what high-quality partnerships we can create to further enhance what we do.

All colleagues were encouraged to contribute to the debate.

## 1.4    Developing our future: next steps

In the summer 2012 we presented our next set of ambitious plans and goals to Council.[35] The new Strategic Plan will cover the period 2013-18.

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[35] Update on Preparation of Strategic Plan 2013-18 November 2012 Council C/214/4.

**SECTION 2**

**How the institution has addressed the recommendations of the last Audit**

**2.1    Outcomes from the 2008 Audit and University response**

The response to our 2008 QAA Audit was submitted to the QAA in December 2008.

**2.2    Mid-Cycle Review follow-up**

The Mid-Cycle review submitted in June 2010 provided a further update on matters raised in 2008.   This is attached at  Appendix A.

Section 1 of the Self-Evaluation Document reports on further developments since June 2010, work in progress, and planned developments over the next 5 years.

**SECTION 3**

**How the institution sets and maintains the threshold standards of its academic awards**

The University of Sussex manages its academic standards and monitors the effective discharge of its degree-awarding powers using policies and procedures adopted through collective agreement between staff and representatives from the student body. All policies and procedures are brought to Senate for approval, unless authority is explicitly delegated to one of Senate's two senior committees, the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) and the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee. All policies and procedures are externally referenced using the QAA Quality Code and benchmark statements, Professional and Statutory Body (PSB) requirements and European standards where relevant. The Strategy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement, which is maintained by the Academic Office,[36] provides an overview of arrangements and easy access for internal and external stakeholders.

Where we use our degree awarding powers to confer degrees, diplomas and certificates managed in collaboration with selected partner organisations, we do so on the grounds that each partner has been subject to a thorough due diligence process which, among other things, tests their internal measures for assuring the quality and standard of our awards. We continue to ensure that partners meet our standards by undertaking rigorous course approval and annual monitoring (in the same manner as for all other University of Sussex awards) and through a (re)recognition exercise which we conduct every 5 years. Failure to meet our required standard may lead to withdrawal of our recognition.[37]

The pillars of our quality assurance and academic standards policies and procedures which set and maintain the threshold standards of our academic awards are: the Academic Framework; the Examination and Assessment Regulations; Course Development and Approval procedures; Annual Monitoring procedures (incorporating Annual Enhancement Day); External Examiner policy and procedures; and School Periodic Review.

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[36] Strategy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement 2012-13
[37] University of Sussex Partner Handbook 2012-13 (incorporating recognition procedure).

Research degree standards are governed by the policies and procedures contained in the Code of Practice for Research Degrees and the Handbook for Doctoral Researchers.[38]

All policies and procedures of the University have an identified 'parent' committee which is responsible for ensuring implementation, reviewing outcomes of application, recommending enhancements and changes, and ensuring fundamental review by the approved due date. All are openly available for reference by staff and by students on our internal web site which has been revised as part of the updating work undertaken by the recently formed Academic Registry.

The Academic Office maintains the academic policy and procedures on the Academic Office web site and ensures continued fitness-of-purpose with respect to the setting and maintenance of standards and to meet QAA and PSB expectations by advising the TLC on policy and procedure revisions as required by external developments.[39]

Sections 3.1 - 3.6 illustrate how these policies and procedures, together with other mechanisms, are used by the University to meet the QAA specific expectations in this area.

## 3.1    Each qualification is aligned with the FHEQ

The University meets this QAA expectation primarily through the use of a common Academic Framework which is aligned with the FHEQ (Chapter A1 of the Quality Code) and the Higher Education Credit Framework for England.  The Academic Framework is underpinned by well-developed and understood course change and course approval processes, reporting requirements and records management. These processes reflect the indicators of the existing Chapter of the Quality Code (B8) concerning programme monitoring and review.

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[38] Code of Practice for Research Degrees 2012-13; Handbook for Doctoral Researchers 2012-13.
[39] Academic Office web site.

Senate's decision to change the credit and academic year structures led to the re-development of the University's existing Academic Framework. The new Academic Framework applies to all taught provision offered internally and externally in partner organisations and has been aligned with the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.[40] It is a living document which the University uses to guide the design principles of new curriculum, such as the recently validated BA Philosophy, Politics and Economics, the creation of elective options and approved pathway electives.[41] The Academic Office, located in Academic Registry, ensures the application of the Framework through the relevant quality assurance procedures for course design and approval and provides advice and guidance to Directors of Teaching and Learning and Curriculum and Assessment Officers located in the Schools. The University's Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU) also provides training in this area. Academic oversight is conducted by the Quality Enhancement sub-committee of TLC.[42]

The TLC, whose membership includes all Directors of Teaching and Learning, student representatives, and selected Directors of professional services, is chaired by the PVC Teaching and Learning. It is responsible for approving changes and additions to the Framework on the recommendation of the Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee.

The TLC also ensures the appropriate application of the Academic Framework by nominating Committee members to participate in validation panels thus ensuring application of the Academic Framework at the point of course approval. The Committee also receives:

- the outcomes from all validation events, annual monitoring and periodic review, and related QA processes which evidence continued alignment of our awards with our Academic Framework; [43]
- equivalent reports on validated provision delivered in partner institutions via the Collaborative Provision Committee report to TLC; [44]

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[40] University of Sussex Academic Framework. See FN25.
[41] TLC Chair's Report November 2012; Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee November 2012 (minutes).
[42] Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee Terms of Reference and Membership.
[43] TLC November 2012: TLC/23/21 and TLC/23/22.
[44] Collaborative Provision Committee Report November 2012TLC/23/25.

- an annual report scrutinising External Examiner reports in which matters relating to the operation of the Academic Framework can be brought to the Committee's attention; and[45]

- reports from School Teaching and Learning Committees on curriculum development and related matters.  School Teaching and Learning Committees are chaired by the Director of Teaching and Learning for the School.  The TLC has authority to approve School requests for derogation from the University standard in programme design to meet PSB requirements.[46]

The remit of Validation Panels, among other things, is to ensure that all new courses are aligned with the FHEQ as well as meeting the requirements of the University's Academic Framework, subject to any TLC approved derogation.  The PVC (Teaching and Learning) (or her nominee) chairs all Validation Panels.   These arrangements apply to courses offered with collaborating partners which the Collaboration Provision Committee. Formally a sub-committee of TLC, oversees.

The Doctoral School Committee (DSC), chaired by the PVC Research, is responsible for the academic standards and quality of research awards.  It has the power to approve academic units to offer subject specific research degrees and through this process to assure alignment of research degrees and the FHEQ as well as other relevant aspects of the QAA Quality Code.  The procedure and criteria for the approval of research degree programmes in academic units is prescribed in the University's Code of Practice for Research Degrees. [47]  The Code has been updated to take account of revisions in the QAA Quality Code – Chapter B11 under the auspices of the DSC.[48]

School-level Research Degree Committees ensure implementation of University procedures relating to the admission, training and examination of research degree candidates.  The School Director of Doctoral Studies chairs the Committee.  These Committees report on a

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[45] The next report is due in March 2013.  This process was paused in 2011-12 in the light of School Periodic Review.
[46] Course Development and Approval Procedures. See FN 28.
[47] Code of Practice for Research Degrees 2012-13: section 2, page 1. See FN 38.
[48] Extract from DSC minutes May 2012.

regular basis to the University Doctoral School Committee (DSC). All Directors of Doctoral Studies, student representatives, and representatives of early career researchers are members of the DSC. The DSC has dual reporting responsibilities. It reports to TLC on research degree matters but is formally a sub-committee of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, as research degree education forms part of the University's Research Strategy.[49] Credit-rated taught components of research degree programmes are approved through an approved validation procedure under the auspices of TLC. The DSC appoints a PGR student representative to Senate.

The University Collaborative Provision Committee oversees the application of the Academic Framework to University of Sussex awards delivered through our recognised partners. Details of the University's policies and procedure governing the approval, monitoring and review of validated provision and guidance on their application in partner institutions are set out in the University's Partner Handbook.[50]

Arrangements for the awards offered jointly with the University of Brighton through the Brighton and Sussex Medical School are unchanged and continue to be managed by the Joint Approval and Review Board (JARB) and the Joint Research Degrees Approval Board (JRDAB).[51] JARB's remit and membership has recently been extended to include quality assurance oversight for the University of Sussex/University of Brighton joint MSC Automotive Engineering. JARB membership has been extended to include members of the relevant doctoral education committees of both institutions.

The University has a bespoke Course Management System (CMS) which includes systems-based internal validation checks and restricts access to named members of staff who are authorised to make changes to course content. The process for major course change is closely managed by the Academic Office. Major changes, i.e. course titles, module learning outcomes and assessment mode may only be implemented with appropriate authority

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[49] Research Strategy Update 2011 Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee R-17-01; University of Sussex Research Strategy web site.
[50] University of Sussex Partner Handbook 2012-13 (annually updated). See FN 37.
[51] Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS) joint committees: JARB Terms of Reference and Membership; JRDAB Terms of Reference and Membership.

through the Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee of TLC.  This is how the University assures that awards in delivery remain valid and that its published course information (both internal or external) is accurate.

Minor changes to existing courses are managed at School level through School Teaching and Learning Committees.  Guidance, policy and procedures for handling course changes are included in the Course Development and Approval Procedures.  This includes a clear statement on the scope and level of authority for making such changes at School and at University level.[52]  Termly reports of changes are reported to TLC through the Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee.[53]

School Periodic Review (to be conducted on a 6-yearly cycle commencing 2013 in keeping with HEFCE proposals for a Risk-Based Approach to Quality Assurance) undertakes approval and scrutiny of courses to ensure continued alignment with national and professional body standards.

The TLDU staff support course teams in the development and design of new courses, including utilising technology enhanced learning.

The TLDU provides up-to-date information and guidance, via their web site and through workshops on course development and the alignment of assessment with course learning outcomes as well as a range of other relevant training and support.[54] Good practice is disseminated through its termly journal RUSTLE and through the Rustle Blog.[55]  Clear policy and procedures are applied systematically and are overseen by TLC and DSC.  These arrangements ensure that the University's awards, wherever they are delivered, remain aligned with the QAA FHEQ and where issues arise ensures that these are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.

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[52] Course Development and Approval Procedure (under review).   See FN 23.
[53] Quality Enhancement Sub-committee Minutes November 2012.
[54] University of Sussex Teaching and Learning Development Unit web site.
[55] ibid Rustle web link.

Academic staff at the University of Sussex participate in external working groups and professional body committees and act as External Examiners and assessors at national and international institutions of higher education. These external experiences of our staff inform our provision and provide additional opportunities to benchmark at subject level and to adopt good practice developed elsewhere.

**3.2     Use of External Examiners**

The University meets the QAA's expectation concerning the use of External Examiners through an impartial appointment process, the adoption of policies and procedures to accommodate the indicators in Chapter B7 of the QAA Quality Code and a rigorous process of reporting and record management. The adoption of good practice from elsewhere in the sector is facilitated through School interaction with External Examiners and by the participation of our own staff as external advisors and examiners at other institutions in the UK and internationally.

External Examiner policy and procedures apply to all University of Sussex validated provision, including courses delivered through collaborative arrangements (thus meeting Chapter B10 indicators 21-23 and 25-28).

Reports are submitted centrally to the Academic Office (and to the Partnership Office for collaborative provision) marked formally for the attention of the PVC (Teaching and Learning). The reports are also copied to the Head of School, Director of Teaching and Learning and Course Convenor. School Teaching and Learning Committees formally respond to the External Examiners as appropriate. An action plan, included in annual monitoring, is created. External Examiners are explicitly required to confirm in their report that students recommended for an award have met the required standards.[56] A sample of the reports are also considered in detail by the PVC (Teaching and Learning) and if a matter of serious concern is reported she will take action as required. No such matters have been addressed to the University in recent years.

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[56] External Examiner Report Form.

Annual Monitoring requires module and course convenors to scrutinise External Examiner reports to assess good practice and proposals for change and to report on action through the Annual Monitoring Course Report to the School Teaching and Learning Committee. [57]

The University Handbook on the Policy and Procedures for the External Examining of Taught Courses provides details on all aspects of the External Examiner appointment process, role and responsibilities. It is updated annually and informed by QAA developments and internal review outcomes. It includes an action plan pro-forma which Schools should complete as appropriate. The School should inform the External Examiner of the response to comments made and proposals for change.[58]

The University Examination and Assessment Handbook contextualises the role of the External Examiner in relation to the operation of the School Progress and Award Board (PAB). [59]

The University has one course delivered primarily by distance learning (the International Doctor of Education) which had its first student intake in 2009.[60] The use of External Examiners in these awards is undertaken in the same manner as that for all other awards of the University and all related procedures operate in accordance with University requirements.

Undergraduate and postgraduate taught course External Examiner administration is managed at University level through the Academic Office. Receipt of the External Examiner report is logged before being dispatched to relevant staff members in Schools. Chasing of late reports is undertaken by the Academic Office.

The University Partnership Office manages the appointment of External Examiners and oversees the operation of examination boards in partner institutions. All examination

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[57] Annual Monitoring web site 2012-13.
[58] External Examiner Action Plan Template.
[59] University of Sussex Examination and Assessment Regulations (2012-13). See FN. 26.
[60] International Education Doctorate Programme Specification – web site.

boards involving collaborative provision are normally chaired by a senior academic member of staff from the University, appointed by the PVC (Teaching and Learning). Procedures are the same as for all University of Sussex awards. However, reports are considered by the Collaborative Partnership Committee which reports on compliance and matters of concern to the TLC.[61]

External Examiner administration for research degrees is managed by the dedicated research student administration team in the Student Progress and Assessment Office and is overseen by the University Research Degree Examination Board (RDEB).[62] The Board's terms of reference include scrutiny of External Examiner reports. Where matters of concern or good practice are raised by externals, the Chair of the RDEB will report the matter to the Doctoral School Committee.[63]

As noted in 3.1, the TLC oversees the University's External Examiner policy and procedures and works to ensure Schools and the University are responsive to External Examiner feedback on University practices and operations.[64] For example, we have recently revised the pass mark for postgraduate taught students to 50% on the basis of feedback from our External Examiners last year and having consulted on the matter through School Teaching and Learning Committees as part of the programme of work involving the revision of the examination and assessment regulations.[65]

All students and staff can access reports and School external examiner action plans on the Annual Monitoring web site.[66]

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[61] TLC 23/25
[62] Research Degree Examination Board Terms of Reference and membership.
[63] Research Degrees Examination Board Report December 2012 DSC 17/3; Statistical Report DSC17/3/i.
[64] Annual Monitoring web site 2012-13. See FN 57.
[65] Principles of Assessment Consultation and Response: Report to TLC/22/2 Appendix 1
[66] Annual Monitoring web site. See FN 57.

**3.3   Design, approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies is effective in ensuring that students have an opportunity to demonstrate learning outcomes of the award**

The University meets the QAA's expectation that the design, approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies is effective in ensuring that students have sufficient opportunities to demonstrate learning outcomes of the award by:

- applying a common set of policies and procedures governing examination and assessment, course design and approval;[67]

- providing induction and training for staff in examination and assessment processes;

- offering training and staff development in assessment design and alignment with learning outcomes; [68]

- using internal annual review procedures and management information to regularly report on performance;[69]

- applying the same rigour to programmes delivered by our partners as those offered on campus;[70]

- adopting a strategic approach to the selection of partners with whom we work and applying robust due diligence and recognition processes to ensure the standard of our awards are secure.[71]

- providing easy access to policy, procedures, advice and guidance on the University website.[72]

Our belief in getting things right at the start is evidenced by our programme of staff development run by the TLDU. The TLDU provides a range of training and support for staff on all aspects of design, approval, monitoring and review of assessment strategies.[73]

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[67] As noted in section 3.1.
[68] Staff Training and Development Schedule 2012-13.  See FN 54.  Examination and Assessment Regulations (planned roll-out in February 2013)
[69] Annual Monitoring web site. See FN 57. School Reports on Annual Review of PGRs October 2012  DSC 16-03.
[70] Collaborative Provision Committee Report November 2012 TLC-23-25. See FN 44.
[71] University of Sussex Partner Handbook 2012-13.  See FN 37.
[72] Academic Office website. See FN 39.  Governance Office A-Z policy and procedure listing.
[73] Staff Training and Development Schedule 2012-13.  See FN 54.

Almost 600 staff participated in specific training and development in teaching and learning during the period 2011-12.[74] The impact on staff of this particular aspect of the TLDU's work has been positive as is evidenced by workshop/training event feedback and by the number of staff receiving formal recognition such as: HEA National Teaching Fellowship Awards, University of Sussex qualifications in teaching and learning[75] and membership/fellowship of the HE Academy.[76]

Staff also receive support and guidance in peer assessment and feedback involving students looking at each other's work and assessing it against pre-agreed criteria. Comprehensive resources on the TLDU web site provide guidance for introducing peer assessment and feedback to student groups.[77]

The Sussex Principles of Assessment provide guidance to staff in assessment design, assessment load and innovative design to test stated learning outcomes.[78] Assessment loading and scheduling formed part of the deliberations of School Periodic Review panels last year and was a specific focus because of the implementation of the new academic year structure and its objective to rebalance assessment loading over the year. Review Panels also considered whether School strategies and methods of assessment were sufficiently flexible to give all students an opportunity to meet the objectives of their course of study and a number of Schools were commended in this regard. Student feedback at Periodic Review events was also positive about assessment scheduling, including the planned mid-year assessment period from 2012-13.

Over 40% of the annual unseen examination load has been timetabled into the Winter Examination period (which runs from 9th to 18th January 2013). We will be specifically asking year 2 and 3 students for feedback on this change during the Spring Term.

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[74] Teaching Learning and Development Unit Awards and activities.
[75] PGCert HE Programme Handbook 2012-14.
[76] Teaching and Learning qualifications, recognition and awards achieved 2008-2011. See FN 74.
[77] Teaching and Learning Development Unit web site - link to Peer Assessment and Feedback.
[78] Principles of Assessment Design.

The new Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook (2012-13) establishes the regulations and procedures governing the operation of Module Assessment Boards (MAB) and Progression and Award Boards (PAB).[79] This work was led by the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee of TLC.[80]

The principles governing examination and assessment as approved by Senate last academic year are clearly stated at the start of this document. Central to the principles is the University commitment that all students should have a fair and equal opportunity to undertake assessment and demonstrate achievement, including strict application of the rules across all subjects. Derogations may only be approved after due consideration by the TLC on the advice of the Academic Regulations Sub-Committee. Submissions for derogation must be in writing with proof of PSB requirements and be approved by the School Teaching and Learning Committee. Exceptionally, other pedagogical requirements must be externally evidenced.[81]

These changes are being implemented from 2012-13. They build on existing provision, which, as we reported in 2008, had been extensively mapped to meet the requirements of the revised Chapter 6 of the Code of Practice. Training for Directors of Teaching and Learning, Directors of Student Experience, professional service staff, academic advisors and chairs and deputy chairs of examination boards is currently being rolled out.[82] All External Examiners will be notified in January 2013 and provided with updated documentation.[83] External Examiner briefings are planned for the summer term in advance of the examination board meetings.

The new Examination and Assessment Regulations incorporate revised procedures for managing Mitigating Evidence Claims (MEC) in keeping with the Principles of Examination and Assessment. This includes early identification and referral to the Student Support Unit for students with on-going conditions which may be flagged under the University's disability

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[79] Examination and Assessment Regulations Handbook 2012-13. See FN 26.
[80] TLC Academic Regulations Sub-Committee: Terms of Reference and Membership.
[81] Academic Regulations Sub-Committee November 2012 minutes.
[82] In preparation.
[83] In preparation.

scheme. We anticipate that these changes will improve student access to reasonable adjustment over and above our statutory duty because temporary impairment (i.e. conditions lasting longer than three weeks) will now be channelled to appropriate services thus helping the University to improve its health and welfare services for students. [84]

Examination and Assessment systems and procedures are operated centrally through the Academic Registry, Student Progress and Assessment Office. Via Sussex Direct, each student can access their personal timetable, module assessment schedule and learning outcomes, attendance, marks for all modules, as well as booking appointments with welfare services and making on-line Mitigation Evidence Claims.[85] They can also view year summaries in graphical form which shows their individual performance against that of the cohort (maximum, minimum, mean and personal achievement) for all modules studied.[86]

The University operates a 15 working-day deadline (normally 3 weeks for the return of feedback to students on their coursework during term time).[87] We have recently approved the application of the same principle for feedback on all forms of assessment[88] and are currently exploring the most effective means of implementation, including on-line assessment and feedback. This project is managed by the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Board.[89]

Examination Boards receive a comprehensive marks array on student performance which is generated centrally. This includes statistical data on the cohort and individual student performance. [90] The Boards receive distinct appropriate sets of information to support their marks-assurance and decision-making phases of work.

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[84] Mitigating Evidence Claim (MEC) map for disability and reasonable adjustment.
[85] Screen capture of Sussex Direct – test student
[86] Screen capture from Sussex Direct – test student
[87] Policy on feedback to students on coursework.
[88] The Policy on feedback to students on coursework has been edited to reflect discussion at TLC in December 2012 and is subject to review in the light of work being undertaken by the Teaching Learning and Enhancement Board.
[89] Teaching and Learning Enhancement Board Terms of Reference and Membership
[90] Sample UG Finalist Marks Array.jpg; Sample UG Progression Array.jpg.

The Handbook for Doctoral Researchers incorporates the University's regulations for the examination of the thesis. [91] Doctoral Students have access to Sussex Direct in the same manner as their taught degree counterparts. The TLDU runs training sessions for PhD internal examiners, including how to prepare for a viva, and preparing students for a viva.

The TLC receives an annual Operational Report on Undergraduate Examinations performance .[92] Exceptionally this was not reported in 2010-11 due to the detailed work of Portfolio Review.

The student voice makes an increasingly important contribution to the course design process, including the design of assessment strategies. In recent years current students have been increasingly taking part as members of validation and review events. Student membership of review panels is now required for all events effective from 2012-13 following the success of student involvement in Periodic Review. Student involvement ensures that we 'design-in' the student feedback from current students to enhance our provision. Student views on assessment loading, timing and relevance are essential in improving our provision and the learning opportunities for our students, and was considered at all School Periodic Reviews in 2011-12.[93]

**3.4    Design, approval, monitoring and review of courses enabling standards to be set and maintained and allowing students to demonstrate the learning outcomes of the award**

The University meets the QAA's expectation (that the design, approval, monitoring and review of courses, enabling standards to be set and maintained and allowing students to demonstrate the learning outcomes of the award) by using the mechanisms outlined in 3.3 above.

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[91] Handbook for Doctoral Researchers 2012-13.
[92] Operational Report on Undergraduate Examinations 2012.
[93] School Periodic Review Reports – Commendations.

Updated processes and procedures make it clear that the TLC is the authoritative body responsible to Senate on all teaching and learning matters. Where necessary, matters are referred to Senate for ratification. However, in all cases Senate is notified of TLC decisions through its regular report to Senate.

As a consequence of Portfolio Review, all University of Sussex taught courses have been re-designed on the basis of our new Academic Framework thus ensuring alignment with the FHEQ and Subject Benchmarks. In addition, all module and course learning outcomes have been fully assessed in relation to their level and alignment including assessment strategies.[94]

The new Academic Framework provides the curriculum design principles to ensure that University of Sussex courses meet QAA expectations. We were also keen to build-in additional flexibility in terms of design and timetabling, to enable student to broaden and deepen their knowledge and skills.

The Academic Framework therefore includes the design principles for free standing electives which are offered to all students on single honours awards and delivered in protected timetabled slots. The aim is to provide flexibility and meet student needs by giving students the opportunity to settle into their first year of study before deciding to take a term of study abroad or a professional/industrial placement. This approach reflects our tradition of interdisciplinarity in course design and our efforts to produce students who change lives by locating learning beyond campus boundaries.

The revised University Examination and Assessment Regulations create a common assessment standard for undergraduate courses and for postgraduate taught courses that is less subject dependent than was previously the case at Sussex (unless prescribed by Professional and Statutory Body (PSB)requirements). We now have a more consistent set of threshold standards that will allow us to monitor and compare student performance in a more consistent manner.

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[94] Periodic Review: Outcomes report TLC November 2012 TLC/21/2.

Annual Monitoring [95] tests the continued validity of our course design and assessment strategies and their alignment with learning outcomes and is informed by External Examiner reflection on student performance and feedback from students, particularly through questionnaire surveys at the level of the module and, from 2013, at stage and course level.[96] External Examiners are explicitly requested to comment on the appropriateness of the assessments in enabling students to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes in their annual report.

However, we continue to look for ways to improve the effectiveness of our annual monitoring procedures, particularly with respect to the use of outputs that may inform our enhancement agenda. That is why we have established a Task and Finish Group to review the procedures using a risk-based approach.  The group will report in the summer term 2013 and revised procedures will be implemented in 2013-14.

Subject Periodic Review was paused in 2009-10 with the formation of the new School structure and replaced by Portfolio Review in 2011-12.  A revised School Periodic Review procedure and schedule will be implemented from 2013 and will include a more consistent use of participant feedback on the procedure to ensure continuous improvement.  The Review cycle for 2013-18 was approved by the TLC in November 2012.[97]  As noted earlier in the document, current students are now members of all review panels.  We are also considering how we might use alumni in our review processes having had very positive feedback from recent graduates who were invited to present to our 2012 Teaching and Learning Conference on their experience of moving from study to employment.  The theme for the 2012 conference was 'Celebrating Success' and included sharing good practice in teaching and learning and graduate employability.  The previous Task and Finish Group on Placements has been transformed into a standing sub-committee of TLC with an extended remit to include graduate employability and placements.[98]

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[95] Annual Monitoring Handbook (Interim) 2012-13
[96] University's Course Evaluation Questionnaire and policy – approved 2009. TLC-8-9.
[97] School Periodic Review Schedule TLC/23/10.
[98] The Sub-Committee will commence work in 2013.  The Sub-Committee will also review the current Employability Strategy.

**3.5    Subject benchmark statements and qualification statements are used effectively in course design, approval, delivery and review to inform standards of awards**

The University meets the expectation that QAA subject benchmark statements and qualification statements are used effectively in course design, approval, delivery and review to inform standards of awards by embedding the reference points in course approval and reviewing policies and procedures to take account of QAA subject benchmarks and other PSB requirements as appropriate.

New subject benchmark statements and updates issued by the QAA are reported to the TLC, and referred to School Teaching and Learning Committees, for discussion on the appropriate action to be taken by the University.  The University Collaborative Provision Committee also receives statements where they apply to partner provision and will liaise with partners on implementation as required. This process is centrally tracked and any proposals requiring amendment of regulations or guidance are brought back to the TLC.

Course validation and approval procedures and School Periodic Review require the presence of external assessors who, among other things, are invited to comment specifically on the alignment between new/existing courses and QAA subject benchmarks and PSB requirements (where appropriate).

The TLDU runs courses on module and course design which include consideration of the application of subject benchmarks in the design process.[99]

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[99] Staff Training and Development Schedule 2012-13.  See FN 54.

**SECTON 4**

**How the institution manages the quality of students' learning opportunities**

The University of Sussex is a research-intensive University. We aspire to ensure that our teaching is informed by cutting-edge research and that it takes place in a research-enriched environment. This involves ensuring that assessment and the learning development of students enables them to understand the nature of research and provides them with the opportunity to engage with cutting-edge research, to carry out independent research projects (especially at taught postgraduate level) and to feel part of a research community.

We are therefore committed to attracting and appointing scholars who are capable of excellence in teaching and in research and seek to employ those who support the core University values of teaching and learning.

Leadership in teaching and learning and in research is provided by the relevant PVC.  The PVC Teaching and Learning's portfolio comprises academic leadership for all matters related to teaching and learning, including collaborative partnerships, quality assurance and enhancement and the overall student experience in relation to all taught programmes. The PVC Research has responsibility for academic leadership relating to the academic standards of research degrees.

The School Director of Teaching and Learning and Director of Doctoral Studies provide oversight and management of student learning opportunities at School level in support of the Head of School.  The Head and School and School Directors operate under common role descriptors.[100]  A University Leadership Programme has been running since 2009 and has supported a number of academic and professional service staff to enhance their leadership and management skills.[101]

We have established three key University services to coordinate and manage a range of student-focused services aimed at maximising the learning experience of Sussex students:

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[100] Duties of the Officership roles within the School Management Team.

[101] University of Sussex Leadership Programme. Attendees 2009-2011.

*The Doctoral School* was established in 2010. It works with senior academic staff, especially Heads of School and Directors of Doctoral Studies, to ensure that the interests of our research staff early in their research careers are institutionally represented. The Doctoral School objectives include ensuring that researchers are supported in managing their careers and are able to plan for a variety of career paths; that they can disseminate their results and develop their ability to transfer and exploit knowledge; and that they develop transferable skills through embedded training within our Academic Schools and through the Doctoral School.[102] The School also promotes the distinctive interdisciplinary ethos of Sussex through the management of large cross-School doctoral training grants. The work of the Doctoral School is overseen by the Doctoral School Committee.

*The Careers and Employability Centre (CEC)* was restructured in 2011 and re-located to the ground floor of the University Library to increase its visibility and accessibility to the student body. The Centre is the co-ordinating hub for:

- The management of the University's new programme of professional/industrial placements (and work experience) which students can elect to take on a one-year or a one-term basis at undergraduate level

- The Employability Accelerator programme which delivers a menu of personal development planning e-portfolio initiative. Sussex Plus[103] which provides workshops, briefings, and skills training. Employer/alumni employability events held centrally or built into academic time-tables or the curriculum (as part of course development) alongside a wide range of careers information resources available from the CEC web site.[104] A range of resources to develop academic and study skills.[105]

- The First Generation Scholars programme offers skills training and employment advice for the University's First Generation Scholars.

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[102] Doctoral School Activity October 2012. DSC-16-02
[103] Sussex Plus web site. Sussex Plus anticipated the HEAR in fostering documentation of skills and activities in a Sussex Plus webfolio.
[104] Careers and Employability Centre web site.
[105] Study Success at Sussex (S3) web site.

- The new Startup Sussex[106] initiative to develop commercial and social entrepreneurship (in association with the University owned Sussex Innovation Centre)

- The careers-employability management and skills training services that contribute to the Doctoral School programme dedicated to researchers (PhD students, post-docs and contract researchers) and

- The collection and analysis of First Destinations Surveys for HESA and University dissemination and the web-resource which is used to disseminate each year's reporting effectively to the academic and professional services community. [107]

The Centre's services were accredited by the Matrix Quality Standards for Information, Advice and Guidance in July 2010.[108]

The work of the Centre is overseen by the TLC, through a newly established Sub-Committee on Employability and Placements.[109]

***The International and Study Abroad Office*** is a longstanding unit of the University providing and managing the University's international student exchange programme, principally at undergraduate level. It serves incoming study abroad students (exchange and visiting students) and outgoing Sussex students. Students in most subjects can apply to spend a term in second year of their three-year degree or a single year of a four-year degree as a voluntary study abroad student.

The student exchange programme is overseen by the Study Abroad Group which reports to the TLC.[110]

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[106] Startup Sussex: web site.
[107] Destinations of Sussex Leavers from the Class of 2011. Careers and Employability web site.
[108] Careers and Employability Centre Annual Review 2011-12.
[109] Employability and Placement Sub-Committee commences work in 2013..
[110] Study Abroad Group Terms of Reference and Membership.

## 4.1 Professional standards for teaching and learning are supported

Professional standards for teaching and learning are supported using a range of measures managed at School and University level.  The University recognises the importance of teaching through its Teaching Awards Scheme.

The recruitment, appointment and development of new academic staff are undertaken centrally and all senior appointment panels are chaired by the Vice-Chancellor or PVC.  All appointment and promotion criteria recognise the importance of teaching and require applicants to demonstrate engagement in teaching and curriculum design, both at application stage and at interview.

It is a mandatory requirement for new members of academic staff (on full or proportional contracts) with less than three years' full-time teaching experience to undertake and complete a two-year, part-time, Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (PGCert).  This award is aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA).[111]   Other provision aligned to the UKPSF and accredited by the HEA includes the Fellowship Pathway for more experienced staff and an Associate Pathway for our Associate Tutors and others with a more limited teaching role.[112]  Staff teaching on validated and franchised courses in partner institutions must be qualified at least to a level above that at which they are teaching.

Newly-appointed lecturers are contracted under a three-year probationary period during which they are required to demonstrate achievement against agreed performance standards (including teaching), as specified in the annual Performance Review, before confirmation in post can be granted.

The Staff Probation Panel meets at School-level to review progress and performance.  The Panel is chaired by the Head of School.  Recommendations for progress to a substantive position are approved by the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor.

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[111] PGCert HE Programme Handbook 2012-14.  See FN 75.
[112] Teaching and Learning Development Unit web site.  HEA Pathway for Associate Tutors.

Probation may be extended by a maximum period of one year.  Performance milestones are agreed at annual review.  Council receives an annual report from the Performance Committee confirm that appraisal has been undertaken for all staff categories, academic and professional.

Academic staff new to research degree supervision are expected to undertake an intensive introductory training for new supervisors. A series of academic-led seminars on aspects of supervision and examination are also provided for existing supervisors. The University's expectations for the professional development and training of supervisors are agreed in a policy statement which is monitored by the Doctoral School Committee.[113]

As a research-intensive University, Sussex makes strategic use of its research degree students as associate tutors and is committed to providing them with opportunities for skills and career development. We also believe that, in an appropriately managed context, associate tutors make a significant contribution to students' learning and to the student experience overall. The University has a long-standing Policy on Associate Tutors designed to assure the quality of their teaching and to maintain standards and it includes guidance on Good Practice in the Strategic Deployment of Associate Tutors. Associate Tutors with less than three years full-time teaching experience are required to attend the Sussex Associate Tutors Training Programme (SATTP) or equivalent training.[114]

The Annual Appraisal system was strengthened in 2011-12.  It continues to be conducted annually and is monitored by the Performance Committee of Council[115]. The scheme requires each School to have in place an appraisal policy which identifies local level arrangements for appraisers, time-tables for appraisal training and the conduct of appraisal meetings. The key outcome of the appraisal scheme involves the production of a personal action plan; staff are expected to reflect before the appraisal meeting on measures of the effectiveness of their work in relation to generic objectives which are incorporated in their personal action plans which include teaching, learning and assessment targets.

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[113] Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes 2012-13. See FN 38.
[114] Teaching and Learning Development Unit web site. Sussex Associate Tutors Training Programme (SATTP).
[115] Human Resources Report on implementation of performance review 2011-12  P/004/08.

Calls for promotion are made once per term.  Staff are self-nominating.  In the autumn term 2012-13 thirty-two academic staff were put forward for promotion to reader or professor. This is the highest number to date and is felt to be a consequence of the new improved annual staff appraisal system.

The University continues to operate Peer Observation of Teaching (PoT) and Learning across all Schools.  It is the responsibility of the School to ensure the policy is implemented.[116] School Annual Monitoring reports include comments on the application of PoT.  In 2011-12 most Schools had operated PoT.  Those who had not done so in 2011-12 were establishing new schedules for 2012-13. The Department of Law had explicitly adopted the process this year to experiment with Peer Observation of Assessment and Marking.  This was reported in their Annual Monitoring report and is an area of good practice that TLC will consider proposing for other Schools in the coming year.[117]

The University Staff Development Unit runs a range of courses each year to support academic and professional staff to improve their effectiveness.[118]  Specialist staff training and development is offered by the Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU) and the Sussex Doctoral School.[119]

The Unit also provides training and support to partner-based teaching staff to secure Membership/Fellowship of the HEA and enables individuals to undertake its Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.[120]

The Sussex Doctoral School hosts the newly-established Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Training Centre, one of a network of 21 Doctoral Training Centres (DTC) in the UK, through which the ESRC delivers support for postgraduate training. The

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[116] Peer Observation of Teaching Policy – amended February 2011.
[117] Annual Monitoring 2011-12: LPS School Report. See FN 57.
[118] Staff Develop Unit web site:  Staff Development Programme 2012-13
[119] Teaching Learning and Development Unit Development Programme 2012-13.  Doctoral Events are commissioned by the Doctoral School and delivered by the TLDU.
[120] PGCert HE Programme Handbook 2012-14. See FN 75.

Centre receives around £3.5million in funding from the ESRC. This provided up to 55 Doctoral studentships over five years from October 2011. Sussex ESRC DTC offers Advanced Research Training through short courses, most of which are offered as single day-long or two half-day workshops held on the Sussex campus.  The courses are open all doctoral, postdoctoral and practitioner researchers.

The Sussex ESRC DTC is linked to the South East ESRC DTC and the Essex ESRC DTC and Sussex staff and students can take advantage of training courses across the network.[121] It also hosted the inaugural conference for all students in their first year of ESRC funding across the new ESRC Doctoral Training Network.

CHASE (the Consortium for the Humanities and the Arts Southeast England) brings together the Courtauld Institute of Art, Goldsmiths, University of London, the Open University, and the Universities of East Anglia, Essex, Kent as well as Sussex.  The aim of the consortium is to promote excellence in research, postgraduate research training and knowledge exchange in the arts and humanities and in particular to engage with employers and develop partnerships to encourage creativity and innovation and to secure funding and support researchers in the understanding of human culture and creativity.  Events in 2012-13 include a training programme in digital humanities for doctoral students and a one-day creative writing conference.

Our Teaching and Learning Strategy, developed in 2009,[122] set out our teaching and learning values as follows:

- maintaining a broad portfolio of academic disciplines from the arts and humanities, social sciences and science;[123]
- enhancing the close relationship between teaching, scholarship and research;[124]
- attracting students of the highest calibre and from a diversity of backgrounds;[125]

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[121] ESRC DTC 2012-13 Training Programme
[122] Teaching and Learning Strategy 2009-2015. Teaching and Learning Strategy - Operational Plan 2009.
[123] New subject areas since 2008 include the establishment of the School of Business, Management and Economics and new courses in these subjects.
[124] Commendations in School Periodic Review. Establishment of the Sussex Doctoral School March 2008 Senate S-216-4.
[125] Widening Participation Annual Report 2011-12.

- producing graduates who continue to learn through life and are sought after by employers;[126] and

- delivering a student experience which will ensure that current and future students will value their time at the University of Sussex.[127]

We have achieved each of these aims and are now moving into a new phase which requires a fundamental review of our Teaching and Learning Strategy in 2013 to align with a new institutional strategy plan 2013-18.

**4.2    Learning resources are appropriate to allow students to achieve the learning outcomes of their course**

The Vice-Chancellor chairs an annual planning meeting with each School at which resources and other strategic developments, including new courses, are discussed.  Final approval of School plans and resources, including resources for new courses, is fed back to Schools in early December. [128]

New course approvals are additionally considered by the New Academic Courses Committee (NACC).  This committee provides institutional-level approval for new course to proceed to validation.  We have adopted this procedure in response to the recommendation in the 2008 QAA report.  The work of NACC is overseen by the Performance Committee.[129] Representatives are invited to attend from Schools proposing new course developments. The Committee's role is to examine the market and the resources required (human and physical) to deliver a course before approval to proceed to validation can be granted.[130] Validation Panels also consider resources, particularly library and e-learning resources on Study Direct (the University VLE).[131]  Validation Panels include members from the Library, the Study Direct Team and/or Information Services staff as well as current students.

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[126] Destination of Leavers in Higher Education Survey: 2010-11 – 2011-12. See FN 107.
[127] NSS results  2011-12.
[128] Annual Planning Round Timetable 2012-13.
[129] New Academic Courses Committee Terms of Reference and Membership.
[130] New Academic Course Approval Form
[131] Course Development and Approval Procedures. See FN 23.

The TLC receives a termly report from the Librarian marking progress against the Library Strategic Plan and on other projects.[132]  The Director of Information Services provides a similar report on IT provision and developments.  These reports include feedback from students on service provision as appropriate.[133]

Feedback from and engagement with students indicates that easy access to taught course resources is essential for a positive learning experience.  The Aspire reading list system, provided by the Library, offers a practical, intuitive method of enriching the learning experience through the provision of access to these resources.   Aspire enables us to ensure that the required resources are available to students, either in traditional print form or via electronic formats such as e-books and digitised readings. In addition, the system allows seamless access to our extensive online journal collection, exposing undergraduates to a valuable source of academic information.

The system is fully integrated with the University's VLE, placing reading lists firmly within the context of a student's modules and courses. Work with the University's e-learning team to further integrate and embed lists into VLE module sites in work on-going during 2012/13.

For academics, Aspire provides a flexible vehicle through which to present readings to their students, connecting them either directly with the individual resources or through real time links to library holdings.  Technological solutions to the creation of a reading list allows both academics and library staff to add value by seeking the best possible solution to meeting the resource requirements of growing student cohorts. We are able, for example, to prioritise the utilisation of e-books and other online content or identify readings for digitisation rather than relying solely on printed books.

During the academic year 2010/11 we embarked upon a campaign to better engage academics with the Aspire reading list system, using a variety of methods including group sessions, 1-to-1s and a large poster exhibition.  In 2011/12 we continued to engage with academics, focusing on departments where NSS Library scores had dropped and delivered

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[132] Library Strategic Plan 2009-2015.
[133] Library Report November 2012.  ITS Report November 2012 . Term-time report to TLC.

further group and 1-1 sessions. Greater engagement with reading lists through the widespread adoption of Aspire has seen an increase in the acquisition by the Library of the material needed by our students and greater utilisation of the increasing variety of online material available to us.[134]

In addition to providing access to extensive print and electronic collections, the University Library holds a number of internationally acclaimed archival, manuscript and rare book collections, mostly relating to twentieth-century literary, political and social history. Our special collections include the papers of Rudyard Kipling, the New Statesman Archive, a series of collections relating to the Bloomsbury Group and Virginia Woolf and over 60 other manuscript collections. The Mass Observation Archive contains the papers of the social research organisation of the 1930s and 40s and continues to collect new material in the present day.  These archives will be moving to innovative new premises adjacent to the campus (The Keep) in 2013. The Keep will provide students and researchers with access not only to the Special Collections of the University of Sussex, but also to the unique historical archives of East Sussex and Brighton and Hove City Councils. This state-of-the-art facility, managed jointly by the University and East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Councils, will offer significant opportunities for the enhancement of student learning and innovation in curriculum development.

The Sussex Research Hive is the Library's designated area for researchers, open to all doctoral researchers and research staff. It provides private study areas, bookable meeting rooms and space for information discussion and collaborative work.  Three Research Hive Scholars, recruited annually from the doctoral student community, support the area whilst engaging with and fostering the research community at Sussex. The Scholars offer peer to peer support and, crucially, are expected to develop their own skills in a number of areas including promotion and presentation. Additionally, they play a role in finding out and

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[134] The Library saw 54% increase in the number  new titles acquired from 2010/11 to 2011/12. Visits to Aspire increased by 57% from 2010/11 to 2011/12. The number of group sessions, 1-to-1s and events increased from 20 in 2010/11 to 90 in 2011/12. During summer 2011/12, the number of lists created by academics increased by 16%. During 2011/12 digitised readings attached to reading lists have been accessed 9291 times. 73% of these accesses are by English students. During 2011/12 360 digitised readings were added to reading lists.  So far for 2012/13, 307 readings have been added.

feeding back to the Library and the Doctoral School what users want from their research community.

Student feedback flows through a number of channels including the student voice on school-level and senior committees: student feedback in our review processes (i.e. annual module evaluation questionnaires, Annual Monitoring and School Periodic Review), and feedback through the annual NSS all inform our strategy for investment in learning resources. The Student Experience Forum considered University-level issues referred to it by the School Student Experience Groups.  The Forum's terms of reference have recently been revised to enable the USSU Education Officer to act as convenor. The Teaching and Learning Enhancement Board, established in 2012, leads on new project developments to enhance teaching and learning and the student experience.[135]

The Teaching Facilities Sub-Committee of TLC has historically met once per year but from 2013, will be meeting termly with revised terms of reference currently under consideration. It will recommend developments in the University's accommodation strategy to meet changing needs in teaching and learning and will monitor improvements on behalf of TLC. [136] Major projects will continue to be approved and implemented by Information Services Committee or the Capital Programmes Committee as appropriate. The Capital Programmes Committee is chaired by the Vice Chancellor.  It meets once per term.  Its remit is to consider large capital investment projects and routine maintenance and priorities.[137]

There has been major investment in new buildings to provide state-of-the-art teaching and learning space as noted in section 1 of this document.

Students are allocated an Academic Advisor. 'Office Hours', the term used in Sussex to refer to the availability of Academic Advisers for individual student guidance and support, are published on the student personal page in Sussex Direct, and students are able to book

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[135] Teaching and Learning Enhancement Board Terms of Reference and Membership. Priority developments are under consideration.
[136] The existing Teaching Facilities Forum is being revised to commence work under new terms of reference in 2013.
[137] Capital Programmes Committee Terms of reference and Membership 2012-13.

themselves into available slots on-line. Academic Advisors are required to timetable at least two hours per week for their assigned tutees.

The development programme delivered by the TLDU includes bespoke sessions for staff at the request of individual Schools. This is in addition to a range of training and development opportunities offered by Library staff for academic staff and to students.[138]

The TLDU also work closely with the Study Direct VLE team to support academic staff in designing and building resources and e-learning activities on the Study Direct site. Study Direct users meet regularly and provide the opportunity for staff to discover how colleagues are using e-learning to support their teaching and find out about central Study Direct developments.[139] Student feedback on the ease of use and benefit of Study Direct have been consistently positive.[140] Study Direct had a major upgrade in 2011 and enjoys continued usage across all subjects.[141]

A dedicated Student Life Centre located in the Student Services Division provides support and guidance to students on health and welfare matters that may affect them in their personal/academic life during their time at Sussex. For ease of access for students, the Centre has recently moved to a refurbished central point on campus. Centre staff work closely with School Directors of Student Experience to implement the University policy on student attendance. This requires students to notify the Director of Student Experience, through the School Office, of any absence of six days or more. Schools also monitor for other patterns of unsatisfactory attendance/engagement. Students who do not respond immediately to communications from their School are reported to the Student Life Centre staff who work to regain contact with the student and to provide support and guidance in maintaining or returning to study.

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[138] Library Report November 2012. See FN 133.
[139] ITS e-learning web site.
[140] What Students Say About Study Direct? [2009-2012].
[141] Study Direct Use 2010-2012.

The Student Support Unit is also located within Student Services and provides advice and guidance on reasonable adjustment for students with a temporary or other registered disability and is supported in this role by staff training offered by the TLDU. Inclusive learning is supported by staff training offered by the TLDU. The Student Support Unit in partnership with the TLDU have created a Study Direct site which hosts materials, advice and guidance on inclusive teaching.

The International and Study Abroad Office and the Sussex Centre for Language Studies offer a range of services to international students pre and post arrival.[142]

Potential partners undergo a rigorous risk-based due diligence and recognition procedure by the University before the partnership is formalised through a memorandum of agreement.[143] The recognition process includes consideration of the learning resources to support higher education in general. Individual course validation takes into account the specific resource requirements for the award offered in collaboration.

As well as the extensive support provided to doctoral students as outlined in section 4 and 4.1, the Doctoral School also administers the Junior Researcher Award (JRA) Scheme. The Scheme is a pioneering project which aims to develop future research leaders. It encourages talented and ambitious undergraduates to consider a career in research following graduation. The Scheme recognises academic excellence and drive by supporting our best undergraduates during the summer vacation between their second and third undergraduate years as they work alongside Sussex's top research faculty on real-life research projects. The JRA bursaries are worth up to £1,800 each.

## 4.3    Effective contribution of students to quality assurance

Over 100 student representatives were elected by their peers in 2012-13 to represent the student interest at Sussex.[144] The make-up of student representatives at School level is

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[142] International Students' Handbook 2012-13; Sussex Centre for Language Studies – English Language web site.
[143] Partner Handbook 2012-13. See FN 37.
[144] Student Reps Scheme Election Report November 2012 TLC-23-12.

determined by the school to ensure appropriate representation to meet school organisation, subject and PSB requirements.[145]

The Student Rep Scheme is co-run by the University and the University of Sussex Students' Union (USSU). Student representatives provide an essential link between students, the Union and the University.

Student representatives are Undergraduate and Postgraduate students elected by their peers to represent the views and interests of students in their subject, department or school year.

Student representatives have places on a number of central University committees as follows: Student Experience Forum; Library Consultative Group; IT Consultative Group; Doctoral School Committee; Teaching and Learning Committee; Senate; Council.  The University Collaborative Provision Committee membership is being extended to include two staff members and a two student members of a partner organisation.  One student and one staff member will be from partners offering franchised provision.  The other staff and student member will be invited from other partners.  Membership will rotate annually to ensure all partners have an opportunity to contribute to our QA discussions.

At School level all elected Student representatives are members of the School Student Experience Group and School Meetings. At least one postgraduate research student representative is in membership of the School Research Degrees Committee, and one undergraduate student representative and one postgraduate taught student representative sit on the School Teaching and Learning Committee.  The University-level Student Experience Forum brings together academic faculty, student representatives from each school, and professional services representatives to consult, monitor and share good practice on matters affecting the welfare and well-being of students.

The distribution of student representatives through School and University-level Committees assures our commitment to our students that their views inform policy

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[145] Student Rep Scheme Report to TLC May 2012.

formulation and decision-making and that they play a key role in overseeing important aspects of the University's quality assurance policy, procedures and related operations.[146]

As noted in Section 1, the decision to revise current internal review procedures to include student panel members was taken on the basis of very successful student input to School Periodic Reviews conducted in 2011-12.  From 2012-13 we also intend to include student representatives from our partners on Partner College Review and Validation Panels.  Students will be selected from the institution under review.

Module evaluation by students is conducted at the end of the delivery of each module and outcomes reported through the Annual Monitoring Process.  We are currently reviewing our on-line survey method to improve response rates.[147]  Improving student response rates in module evaluations was highlighted as a priority in School Periodic Reviews and Annual Monitoring 2012-13.

The revised Annual Enhancement Event, under the auspices of the TLC, considers the outcome of Annual Monitoring,  External Examiner reports, and NSS results to inform the enhancement agenda for the coming year and beyond.  The format is new for 2012-13 and will be reviewed annually to maintain fitness-of-purpose.[148]

There is a termly meeting between the Vice-Chancellors Executive Group and elected sabbatical officers of the Union.  This is referred to internally as the Executive Liaison Group (ELG).[149]  The Welfare and the Education Sabbatical Officers meet the Pro Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning once per month.  Similar meetings take place between USSU Officers responsible for international and research student matters and the relevant PVC.

The USSU Operations Officer meets the Registrar and Secretary regularly to consider campus-wide issues, such as sustainability and transport, and the USSU Communications Officer meets regularly with the Director of Communications.

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[146] School Committees supporting quality assurance of teaching and learning –diagram.
[147] The University recently evaluated the EYASYS system but response rates were not improved in the pilot test. The Teaching and Learning Enhancement Board will consider the matter in more
[148] Annual Enhancement Day December 2012: Outcomes.
[149] Executive Liaison Group Terms of Reference and Membership. See FN18.

USSU Sabbatical Officers are included in the membership of working parties and task and finish groups on a regular basis.

The PVC Teaching and Learning funds an annual Student Internship to work with the USSU and the Student Development Co-ordinator who is located in Academic Registry.

University policy and procedures are designed and developed after input from and consultation with student representatives.  This method of working is exemplified by our recent review of the University Examination and Assessment Regulations.[150]

The Vice-Chancellor's Forum is open to all staff and is held every term.

## 4.4    Effective use of management information to safeguard quality and Standards and to promote enhancement of student learning opportunities

University Council has established the Performance Committee[151] to oversee University's performance in delivering strategies, projects and plans which have been agreed by Council including identifying and measuring the indicators by which plans can be monitored. The Committee has agreed a range of KPIs[152] which will enable the Council to oversee the general operations of the University and the format and timing of reporting on these. For strategies, projects and plans and areas of operation, the Committee monitors the management of the main risks. The Committee also monitors the University's compliance against a range of statutory requirements.  Reporting committees to the Performance Committee include: Human Resources; Equality and Diversity; Health, Safety & Environment Committee; Scholarships, Bursaries & Awards Committee, New Academic Courses Committee, and Information Services Committee.

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[150] Academic Regulations Sub-Committee Terms of Reference and Members; Consultation Schedule. .  See FN 65.
[151] Performance Committee Terms of Reference and Membership.
[152] KPIs Report to Performance Committee October 2012.

TLC receives an annual report on Academic Appeals. [153] The 2012 report informed revisions in the University Examination and Assessment Regulations with respect to the rules on resit for honours.  TLC also receives an annual report on employability.  To date the latter has focused on the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey but will in future include data on placements and related matters as the University increases provision in this area.

Collaborative Provision Committee receives and comments on Annual Monitoring Reports and Annual Examination Board Reports received from partner institutions and requires partners to draw up action plans in response to those findings.  The Committee reports its findings and actions to TLC.  The joint Academic Management Boards allow the University and partner institutions to address management and other information where it impacts on the student experience and students' learning opportunities.

The University uses Cognos software for business information reporting.  This enables central reporting for annual monitoring (tracking retention, progression and student performance) and related review and quality assurance purposes.  The service is accessible at School level to support the provision of local management information as necessary.  The University has recently committed to the development of a Data Warehouse and has established a Business Information Group to oversee the development of this project.

The Strategic Recruitment and Admissions Committee [154] reports to Teaching and Learning Committee and is advisory to the Performance Committee.  It considers regular reports on admissions at all levels, and receives a range of analytical reports to inform decisions on entry tariffs and student number target setting in response to external and internal drivers.  The work of this Group is complemented by the Strategic Data and Performance Group chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC).[155]  This Group considers in detail NSS results,

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[153] Academic Appeals Board Report May 2012 TLC/21/14.
[154] Strategic Recruitment and Admissions Committee Terms of Reference and Membership.
[155] Strategic Data Reporting, Optimisation and Forecasting Group (SDROFG) Terms of Reference and Membership (as amended October 2012).

university rankings and other external data to inform policy development[156] and oversaw the implementation of KIS requirements.  It has recently added management of KIS to its remit.

The Governance Office oversees the planning process and provides centrally generated data sets to inform the annual planning round with the Schools. [157]

**4.5   Policies and procedures used to admit students are clear, fair, explicit and consistently applied.**

The Strategic Recruitment and Admissions Committee keeps the University Admissions Policy under review, although changes to admission policy or procedure will be considered by the TLC and reported to Senate for ratification.[158]  The OFFA Steering Group oversees the University's OFFA agreement and related admissions policy and support for widening participation applicants.  We are pleased to note that the University met its widening participation target of 840 students in 2012-13, the highest number recruited by the University to date.

Student admissions for taught programme is managed centrally by the Admissions Office.  The Office has a dedicated team managing undergraduate admissions.  The postgraduate admissions process is also managed centrally and overseen by a dedicated team using an in-house online application process which provides live data to admissions tutors.  Postgraduate research students use the same online application service.

Senior staff from the Admissions Office meet regularly with School-nominated admissions tutors (undergraduate and postgraduate) to ensure effective and fair management of the admissions cycle each year.  The Guide to Undergraduate Admissions (UCAS Applicants) provides details guidance for admissions tutors.[159]

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[156] ibid.
[157] Annual Operating Statement 2013-4 Template.
[158] Teaching and Learning Committee Terms of Reference and Membership.
[159] Guide to Undergraduate Admissions (UCAS Applicants) 2012 entry.

The centralisation of both undergraduate and postgraduate taught admissions is designed to ensure parity and improve fairness in applicant handling. The creation of admissions templates for each course has been a key enabling factor in this respect.[160]

The co-location of all taught admissions also assures that policy is systematically applied across the different levels (e.g. not permitting second deferrals; ensuring English Language rules are consistent; a uniform approach to declared criminal convictions and so on). This is particularly important in those areas of admissions which cross between UG and PG (e.g. Graduate Entry LLB, CPE, MA Social Work, which are all administered via UCAS).

The Directors of Doctoral Studies are responsible for ensuring the application and admissions processes for doctoral candidates are handled fairly and effectively. The Doctoral School Committee ensures the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes is updated annually. The Code incorporates the criteria for the admission of doctoral candidates. The University has recently undertaken a review of postgraduate research student admission processes. We are currently working to implement the review recommendations.[161]

Separate policies apply to the admission and management of the admissions procedures for students in the Brighton and Sussex Medical School overseen by the Joint Approval and Review Board (JARB) and the Joint Research Degrees Award Board (JRDAB). Senior staff from both universities sit on JARB and JRDAB ensuring that all BSMS policies and procedures are aligned with the requirements of both institutions.

Collaborative partner admission policies and procedures are approved at recognition/re-recognition and validation events and monitored by the Collaborative Provision Committee (CPC). Each collaborative partner has a senior level Steering Group which is formally a sub-committee of CPC and at which new programmes and other developments at the partner are discussed in their early stage of development, including agreeing the process for clearance of publicity and other information to applicants and students.

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[160] School of Media Film and Music admissions template – exemplar.
[161] Postgraduate Research Student Admission: Business Process Review. Report July 2012.

## 4.6    There are effective complaints and appeals procedures

The Student Complaint Procedure and the Academic Appeals Procedures are distinct policies and are published in the Student Handbook[162] and on the University web site.  The procedures apply to all students, undergraduate and postgraduate.

The application of the procedure is kept under review by the Teaching and Learning Committee which receives an annual report on Academic Appeals.[163]

There is a dedicated Academic Appeals Officer at Assistant Registrar level who is also Secretary to the Appeals Board.  The Appeals Board is a committee of Senate. The criteria and conduct of the Appeals Board is contained in the University Regulations.[164]

Advice and guidance on making an academic appeal or a student complaint is provided by the Student Life Centre and the Students' Union Advice and Representation Centre.

The University approves the complaints and appeals policies and procedures of each of its partner institutions through the (re)recognition process. Students on validated courses have the right of appeal to the University once the processes at the partner institution have been exhausted where the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome.

 We have published complaints and appeals procedures for Admissions and Fee Status.[165]

We shall be undertaking a fundamental review of our current policy and procedures governing academic appeals and student complaints concerning academic matters in 2013 to reflect the revised QAA Code of Practice Chapter B9.  This will include a review of reporting arrangements for both procedures.

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[162] University of Sussex Student Handbook 2012-13.
[163] Academic Appeals Board Report May 2012 TLC-21-14. See FN 153.
[164] Academic Appeals [extract from the University Regulations].
[165] University of Sussex Admission Appeals Complaints and Appeals Against Fee Status.

**4.7 There is an approach to career education, information, advice and guidance that is adequately quality assured**

As explained in detail in Section 4 above, the Careers and Employability Centre (CEC)[166] was accredited by the Matrix Quality Standards for Information, Advice and Guidance in July 2010. All staff offering careers advice are professionally accredited careers advisors.

The Centre offers a range of services including: Sussex Plus (a programme to assist students in marketing their skills through the use of social media and online resources) ; Start Up Sussex for students interested in starting their own business; Learning to Lead (a CEC partnership with international management consultancy, Clemorton, which offers 120 University of Sussex students a place on a fully funded leadership training programme). The course also leads to affiliate membership of the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM).

The Centre is also responsible for managing professional placements in partnership with Schools.

Employability and transferrable skills are incorporated in a range of modules and each School has developed initiatives appropriate to their subject areas[167] and the revised Academic Framework has been explicitly designed with student employment in mind. Some Schools have also established Industrial Advisory Boards, for example the School of Engineering and Informatics.

The 'Proficiency in Languages' scheme developed as part of Portfolio Review (and enabled by the new Academic Framework) provides new opportunities for Sussex students to start or extend language studies as part of their single honours degree programme to improve their employability in a global job market.

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[166] Careers and Employability Centre web site.  See FN 104.
[167] School-level employment and placement activity is supported by a CEC/School liaison structure.

**4.8    The quality of learning opportunities is managed to enable the entitlements of disabled students to be met**

The University is committed to promoting equality and diversity, providing an inclusive and supportive environment for all.[168]

The Disability Policy commits the University to ensuring that all students and staff are treated equitably and it has a long tradition of supporting students with a wide range of impairments.[169]

The University Council receives an annual report on equality and diversity and action taken by the University over the previous year.  The report covers both staff and students.[170]

As explained in Section 4.2, the Student Support Unit (SSU) offers a central service to all students in need of support and reasonable adjustments to enable them to undertake their studies at Sussex. This support begins early in the admissions process, so that reported needs are fully supported by the time the new student arrives.  SSU has also for many years hosted the Southern Regional Access Centre, so we have a great deal of expertise in this area. The Unit works in partnership with the TLDU to deliver staff development and training in the design of reasonable adjustments and ways of supporting teaching and learning for students.

The (re)recognition process of Partner institutions includes scrutiny of Partner polices relating to disability, for example their equality and diversity policies. Partners are also required to map their policy and practice against the Code of Practice / Quality Code and submit this to the University for comment.  SSU has provided training sessions to Partner institutions on disability awareness, such as supporting students with dyslexia.

**4.9    The quality of learning opportunities for international students is appropriate**

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[168] Equality and Diversity Policy; Disability Policy.
[169] ibid.
[170] Equality and Diversity Report November 2012 P-004-10.

The International and Study Abroad Office offers a range of services to international students, including induction, orientation, advice and guidance on immigration and visa matters, and dealing with the UKBA. The Careers and Employability Centre delivers workshops for  international students to support transition into part-time jobs, work experience/internships and graduate work in the UK. The Library similarly offers bespoke induction sessions for international students.

The Academic Development Support Programme offers English Language and study skills support for international students. The sessions offered include academic cultural differences, learning styles, what is meant by plagiarism, argument and critical analysis, as well as looking at English for academic purposes. Academic development workshops focus on academic and English language skills and include subjects such as note-taking, summarising and paraphrasing, structuring an essay, understanding and writing essay titles, paragraphing, referencing and writing a bibliography, introductions and conclusions and advanced language skills.

The Academic Development Support Programme is supported by personal tutorials to offer help and advice with any language or study skills.  There is also a weekly drop in service. Students are notified of this Programme at induction and can register online to participate.

Writing workshops where students submit examples of their writing in advance, then meet as a group discuss, analyse and offer advice on improvement are also offered.  The 2011-12 evaluation of the Programme is very positive.[171]

Project V, which is part funded by the CEC is a project run by the Student Union to  work with Schools to develop volunteering opportunities for students that benefit the local the community and provides opportunities for  students with skills relevant to their degree course and future career. The Project Team has also worked with the Sussex Centre for Language Studies to provide volunteering opportunities for students visiting from Hong Kong, and also works with the International Summer School on a yearly basis.[172]

The CEC Study Skills Team manage the University Student Mentor scheme.  Student mentors are second and third year undergraduates and postgraduate students who have been trained to offer advice and support to other students. There are mentors in all Schools.  We are currently reviewing the role to provide more emphasis on study skills support.

Student Study Direct pages and the Study Success at Sussex (S3) website[173] also publicise workshops and events offered by Student Mentors.

The TLDU runs staff development events on working with international students and provides a range of resources on its website.

**4.10    Support and guidance is provided to enable postgraduate research students to complete their courses and to enable staff involved in research courses to fulfil their responsibilities**

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[171] Academic Practice Workshop Feedback 2011 -2012.
[172] Project V web site.
[173] Study at Sussex (S3) website. S3 is a study skills resource for all students who are new to the University of Sussex located in the Careers and Employability Centre.  See FN 105.

As explained in Section 4, the Doctoral School is specifically designed to provide a coherent range of support and development activities for research students, supervisors, early career researchers and postdoctoral research staff. The activities are aligned to the Vitae Researcher Development Framework. Training needs analysis for doctoral students is supported by the TLDU and the Unit hosts the Vitae Unit South East Hub.[174] The School works in partnership with the TLDU and CEC in devising and delivering these services.

The Handbook for Doctoral Researchers and the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes provide details for staff and students on the University rules, regulations, annual review, supervisory role and responsibilities, examination procedures and related matters for doctoral candidates.[175] The Doctoral Researcher's Companion 2012-13 Edition brings into once place the range of advice, support, training and development on offer for doctoral candidates during their studies at Sussex.[176]

The Research Student Annual Review is managed at School level and each School provides a report to the Doctoral School Committee recording School undertakings and raising issues as appropriate.[177] Since 2008 the University has also implemented an online system for PGR supervisors to log their in-person and virtual contacts with their supervisees. Implemented under the auspices of DSC, this system is used to support the annual review process, and monitoring at both School and central levels to ensure that patterns of contact are in line with the expectations set out in the Handbook / CoP.

The University has strengthened its provision of viva preparation for finalists as recommended by the QAA Audit report (2008).[178]

**4.11 The quality of learning opportunities delivered as part of collaborative arrangements is managed effectively to enable students to achieve their awards**

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[174] Vitae website.
[175] ibid
[176] Doctoral Researcher's Companion 2012-13 Edition.
[177] School Reports on Research Student Annual Review 2012 DSC 16-03.
[178] Preparing for your viva workshop summary report 2010-12.

The University oversees the management of its collaborative provision through the Collaborative Provision Committee. Policies and procedures for managing collaborative provision are set out annually in the Partner Handbook annually[179], including information on a range of matters including Annual Monitoring, the External Examiner arrangements and the University's link tutor scheme. The University's Partnership Office manages the day-to-day relations with partner institutions.

The QAA 2008 Audit Report commended the University on the management of its provision in this area. We continue to apply our course approval, recognition procedures, annual monitoring and related quality assurance procedures to all partner provision.

The Partnership Office runs a Partner Network Day at which members of the University's academic and professional services communities gather with academic staff and management personnel from partner institutions to share good practice, strengthen relationships and explore a theme or set of themes, for example 'Enhancing the student experience through the exploitation of new technologies'.[180]

Central to the management of learning opportunities for students within collaborative arrangements are the annual Service Level Agreement signed by both parties prior to the start of the academic year, the requirement that a senior member of University academic staff chairing examination boards[181] and the University's retention of responsibility for the appointment of External Examiners and related processes.

Academic partner institution staff are invited to attend the annual Teaching and Learning Conference at the University of Sussex.

**4.12 The quality of learning opportunities delivered through flexible and distributed arrangements, including e-learning, is managed effectively**

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[179] Partner Handbook 2012-13. . See FN 37.
[180] Report of the 2012 Partner Network Day.
[181] Some exceptions are made for long-standing partnership arrangements with the agreement of the PVC Teaching and Learning.

The University does not offer courses through flexible or distributed arrangements. However, as reported in 2008, we continued to offer the Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD), the taught component of which is delivered by Sussex academic staff at an annual summer school.  Students on the course are experienced professionals.  Students are registered at Sussex, supervised by Sussex staff, and examined under Sussex research degree regulations.

**4.13  The quality of learning opportunities delivered through work-based and placement learning is effective .**

A University Handbook on quality assurance and management of professional placements is in development and will be made available to all staff, students and employers in the spring term. Work to date to draft placement agreements has involved looking externally to adopt best UK practice. The CEC will also provide an annual report on employability, including the employment of University students on internships at the University.  These matters will be taken forward by the newly formed Employability and Placement Sub-Committee.

**4.14    A document setting out the mutual expectations of the institution and its students is available**

The DVC is instigating consultation with the USSU in January 2013 to establish a University Student Charter for Senate approval in March 2013.

The Student Handbook continues to be the main document governing the relationship and mutual expectations between the University and its students.

**SECTION 5**

**Higher Education Providers produce information for their intended audience about learning opportunities that they offer is fit for purpose; accessible and trustworthy.**

**5.1    There are effective institutional mechanisms for making sure that the information about learning opportunities is fit for purpose, accessible and trustworthy.**

*Public Information* The University recognises the importance of providing accurate information about the quality and standards of its provision to applicants, students, advisors, employers, sponsors and other stakeholders.

The external website enables open access to the University's strategy, profile, policies and procedure for the management of the quality and standards of our awards.

We manage the quality and accuracy of information through the University's centrally-located Communications Division and the Student Recruitment Services (SRS) division for marketing and other publicity materials. Both divisions work closely with Schools to ensure that key messages and information about the courses offered by the Schools are accurate in marketing materials and web presence.

The Communications Division is responsible for the strategic development of the University of Sussex's external and internal communications. The Division includes the Press and Communications Office, the Publications and Branding Team and the Web Team.   The Division provides training and develop in the use of the University Web Content Management System for web editors in Schools and in Professional Services.

Professional service areas are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of their information for applicants and students and must maintain the currency and accuracy of the wider information set under their professional jurisdiction.

The Partnership Office, based in Academic Registry, works closely with recognised partners on publicity materials and other information concerning the nature of the partnership and

validated provision.  Annually, the University publishes online a Franchise Handbook for students and sends to partner institutions pamphlets on validated provision for those students on Sussex-validated courses. In addition, the Partnership Office web site includes an FAQ page for students.[182]

The Communications Division is responsible for the overall web presence of the University which is guided by the Code of Practice for Publishing Information on Electronic Networks.[183] The Web Team has authority to change any content which does not comply with the requirements of the Code or other University regulations, guidelines or policies. The Governance Office maintain a central web directory of current policy documents, as well as the University's Publication Scheme as part of our compliance with the Freedom of Information Act. We believe our efforts to ensure the accuracy and adequacy of public information as outlined meets the requirement of Indicator 1 (Part C of the QAA Quality Code)

*Prospective Students* The measures outlined above assure the quality, accuracy and accessibility of information for prospective students in so far as there is a centrally-located department with overall authority on the communications and marketing information produced by professional areas and Schools.

There is a clear and well -articulated process for developing and updating the information presented in the print prospectus for undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses, with sections signed off by all relevant academic and professional services staff and that same material is presented online and is reviewed and kept up to date during the year.
The University of Sussex Students' Union (USSU) is involved in providing feedback and comment on the prospectus each year.  The information and design of the prospectus are subject to focus group and user experience testing each year with prospective students and their advisers to ensure that content remains focussed, relevant and accessible.

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[182] Partner Handbook.  See FN37.
[183] Code of Practice for Publishing Information on Electronic Networks.

The University's online prospectuses include a range of information to help inform applicant course choice including module content for the course, core options and electives, including information on teaching, learning methods and assessment. Prospectuses include information on entry requirements (online and print) and details of how to apply.

The information presented for each course is held on a single central database, and that same information is provided to prospective students both through the prospectus and school and departmental websites.

Course specific information is drawn from the University's Course Management System, ensuring accuracy of this key information. We also meet the required standard for the publication of the KIS data set and have incorporated the information into our undergraduate prospectus to help applicants in course choice.[184]

Other relevant course specific information (for example fees, entry criteria, detail for all course modules, careers contact information) is directly associated with each course so that comprehensive and consistent information is presented in one place for each course.

Following the development of our Academic Framework we are exploring ways to improve prospectus information further to make clear the range of learning opportunities by course, including specific study abroad and placement opportunities.

Our web pages also provide information for schools in the region and for applicants about the University's Widening Participation activities and our OFFA Agreement.[185]

We believe the detailed information available on our online prospectus and in other School web sites meets the information standard required by Indicators 2 and 3 of Part C of the QAA Quality Code.

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[184] Undergraduate Prospectus 2012-13.
[185] Widening Participation at Sussex web page

***Current Students*** The external website is complemented by the internal website for staff and students, in particular the services delivered through Sussex Direct and Study Direct and information on School web sites.   We are currently undertaking a review of Sussex Direct and Study Direct to improve services to students and to staff. [186]

The Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) shall be considering the adoption of HEAR in The coming year and will be consulting on the development of the University of Sussex Student Charter.[187]

The advice and guidance website managed by the USSU and the Student Services Division advice and guidance web site are separately maintained to ensure that students are clear about the independence of the USSU service, although we make clear that University advice and guidance is offered by professionally trained, impartial staff and that confidentiality is assured where required and appropriate.

We are currently working to bring together information to recent graduates on support for career development or further study by linking resources between Careers and Employability Centre (CEC) and the Development and Alumni Relations Office.

Most Schools have opted to provide course handbooks online. We are currently reviewing the format of course handbooks to create a common standard for information provision complemented by School and course specific information to ensure consistency and accurate were necessary.

School web pages draw their information on courses and modules directly from the Course Management System for ease of reference by students to module and course content. Sussex Direct provides student access to course details, modules, assessment schedules, marks and other information drawn from the centrally managed student record system.

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[186] Sussex Direct/Study Direct Review Working Group.
[187] The DVC will establish a Student Charter Working Group in January 2013 for report in March 2013.

We believe our current arrangements meet the threshold standard required by Indicators 4 and 5 of Part C of the Quality Code and that agreement on the detail of the Student Charter will enhance our service further.

*Recent Graduates and Alumni* The Development and Alumni Relations Office maintain the University web presence for all Sussex alumni and the CEC is developing its web presence as The University invests further in this services for recent graduates.  We are currently exploring how to improve access to graduates to both sites and better representation of the services we provide.  We are currently scoping the IT requirements to introduce HEAR with a view to providing the enhanced transcript for students graduating in the academic year 2013-14.[188]

*Academic Standards and Quality* Academic Registry maintains information and resources relating to academic standards and quality.  This information is accessible internally and externally on the web site (with links to Schools and other professional service area web pages as required)[189] as we believe it is importance that staff and students, external stakeholders and peers in the sector can use out information to inform decisions and to share good practice. Hard copies of key handbooks are produced as reference copies for Schools and other professional service areas.

The Strategy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement is updated annual by the Academic Office in the light of internal and external developments.[190]  All collaborative provision is subject to formal agreement.  The Partnership Office maintains the director of all MOAs and regional partners are listed on our Partnership web pages.  The wider information set, including matters relating to compliance with the law and the University's Statutes and Regulations is managed by the Governance Office and public access is maintained through their web site. [191] They also oversee the annual publication of a more accessible guide to the Organisation of the University.[192]

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[188]  IT specification for HEAR Implementation under consideration.
[189] Academic Office web site.  See FN 39.
[190] Strategy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement 2012-13
[191] Governance Office web site.
[192] Organisation of the University 2012-13.  See FN 6.

We feel these arrangements meet the standard required by Indicator 7 of Part C of the Quality Code.

## 5.2    Institutional Response to HEFCE 2011/18

The KIS and WIS data is up-to-date and available to stakeholders.  KIS data is available at course level on the University on-line undergraduate prospectus and within School web pages. The WIS is available on professional services websites, particularly the Governance and Secretariat, Academic Registry and the Student Services web sites.  However, we consider that more can be done to better target information to some audiences, employers and graduates in particular, and for widening participation students and their advisers.[193]

## 5.3    External Examiners' reports are shared as a matter of course with student representatives

External Examiners' reports are shared as a matter of course with student representatives through School Teaching and Learning Committees and at the Annual Enhancement event.[194]

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[193] A new content management system is currently being implemented.  The Communications Team is also undertaking a review of content and positioning of the University on the web.
[194] Enhancement Event December 2012.  See FN 148.

**SECTION 6**

**How the institution enhances the quality of students learning opportunities**

**6.1    There is a strategic approach to enhancement of student learning opportunities**

The Teaching and Learning Strategy and supporting Operational Plan has been the main strategic driver to the enhancement of student learning opportunities from 2008.[195]

However, the change of PVC (Teaching and Learning) in 2010, together with the University's Strategy for Growth, and the changing economic climate have, created an environment that has taken us in a new directions as described in Section 1 of this document.

To summarise, we have fundamentally revised our curriculum and the structure of our academic year.  We consulted extensively and listened to our students, their representatives and our staff.  We made the changes we thought necessary to meet the needs of our students, employers and the communities they serve.  In doing so, we have deliberately intensified the focus in the curriculum on transferable skills and have extended the range of experiences for our students through professional placements, study abroad and volunteering opportunities relevant to and embedded into the core learning in the subject. These changes are now embedded in institutional policies and procedures and will be carefully monitored in the coming year to inform our next development phase which will include a new Teaching and Learning Strategy.  The new strategy will incorporate and specifically promote the use of technology to enhance student learning (including digital literacy) and ways of using technology to create opportunities for more face-to-face teaching events and peer-to-peer learning.

The Teaching and Learning Enhancement Board has developed an interim set of proposals for 2012-13[196] which will roll forward into the new Teaching and Learning Strategy.  These priorities were identified in School Periodic Review Outcomes at our Annual Monitoring and Enhancement Event.[197]

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[195] Teaching and Learning Strategy 2009-2015 ; Teaching and Learning Operational Plan 2009-2014 (updated)
[196] Teaching a Board: Priorities for 2012-13.  See Fn 89.
[197] Outcomes of 2012-13 Annual Enhancement Event.  See Fn 148.

**6.2    Procedures and Processes that inform decision-making on learning opportunities**

Existing strategic steps undertaken to enhance learning opportunities for our students include:

- Provision of funding from central resources for individual Schools to undertake pilot initiatives with the Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU), the Doctoral School, and the Careers and Employment Centre (CEC).

- Student Scholarships, including the JRA Scheme.

- Annual Teaching and Learning Conference and Annual Partner Network Day.

- Comprehensive programme of staff development and training in teaching and learning and in research supervision, examination and related matters for all new staff and for existing staff.

- The creation of a Doctoral School to enhance the research potential and impact of postgraduate research students including initiatives such as the Researcher Mentoring Programme, a voluntary programme in which research staff provide mentoring for doctoral students. The programme is innovative in spanning the doctoral divide between pre- and post-doctoral research careers, and in giving doctoral students the opportunity to learn from early career researchers, often in a different School or discipline. In turn, research staff benefit from an opportunity to mentor up to three doctoral students. This experience enables them to develop and build on skills and characteristics that prepare them for the possibility of supervising doctoral students in the future.

- An annual planning cycle, overseen by the Vice-Chancellor, and course approval processes that scrutinise School development and resource plans each year,  Explicit consideration is given to the needs of new and existing students and  opportunities to extend learning opportunities are fully explored.

- The CEC project Sussex Plus, aimed at undergraduates, helps students develop skills whilst at university, using their academic work, extra-curricular activities, life experience, paid and voluntary work. This project is complemented by Skills Plus, a TDLU-led initiative which helps students to articulate the skills that a degree course develops.

Skills clouds have been developed for each subject area and are linked to the personal Sussex Direct pages of each undergraduate.

- An extensive programme of work for First Generation Scholars led by the Widening Participation Team and the CEC. [198]

- The establishment of the University Data Warehouse to improve management information to inform strategic decision-making.


**7.    Institutional Theme:  Student Involvement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement.**
We continue to develop our partnership with the University of Sussex Students' Union (USSU) and our student body more generally.  We have undertaken a number of joint exercises and other initiatives since 2008, including:


- extensive consultations on the shape of the academic year and related matters
- analysing and responding to the NSS results
- developing the Student Rep Scheme, including the University of Sussex/USSU partnership agreement
- reviewing our approach to the administration of module evaluation questionnaires[199]
- revised terms of reference and operational arrangements for the Student Experience Forum
- establishment of School Boards of Study/Departmental Boards to oversee course delivery and to include student representatives
- creation of a common School Committee structure and requirements for student representation on School Committees
- relocation of the Student Mentor scheme to the Careers and Employment Centre (CEC) Study Skills Team and refocusing of the role to support study skills
- student membership of review panels, including Partner review panels
- student participation in annual monitoring and enhancement
- student-led Student Charter Group
- School Student Experience Groups established in 2010

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[198] Widening Participation First Generation Scholarship Video.

- student representation on senior level committees

- student representation on new Sub-Committees of TLC (under development)

- research student representation on School level committees, Senate and the Doctoral School Committee

- student membership of the International Advisory Board.  (The Board advises the PVC International on matters concerning international strategy and partnership development)

- student involvement in the Annual Teaching and Learning Conference.

- School specific initiatives

- student involvement  (through representation on the Library User Consultative Group, and participation in focus groups) in shaping the Library refurbishment.


Student representatives provide an essential link between students and the University and provide the basis for our learning partnership with our students.


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| **FN000** | **QAA Reviewers access to papers and minutes for major QA committees via Sussex Direct - password and user name..** |
| FN001 | Report on student numbers 2012/13, November 2012. P-004-6. |
| FN002 | THES World Rankings 2012. No document. |
| FN003 | Strategic Plan 2009-12: Achievements.  Report to Council. C -210-7 |
| FN004 | Strategic Plan 2013-18: Campaigns and Themes (draft). |
| FN005 | Proposal for Change Summary March 2010 Senate S-224-8. Engineering and Informatics March 2011 Senate S-227-4. |
| FN006 | University of Sussex: Organisation of the University 2012-13. |
| FN007 | University of Sussex: School of Studies Management Structure. Diagram |
| FN008 | University of Sussex: Committee Structures: Diagram. Proposed revised Teaching and Learning Committee reporting sub-structure diagram. |
| FN009 | University of Sussex: Vice Chancellor's Executive Group. Diagram. |
| FN010 | University of Sussex: Professional Services Structure. |
| FN011 | University of Sussex: Committee Structures: Diagram.  See FN8 |
| FN012 | Composition of Senate from 1 August 2009 S -221-3. |
| FN013 | Organisation of the University 2012-13. See FN 6. |
| FN014 | QAA mid-cycle review briefing paper June 2011 Senate S-228-18. |
| FN015 | Mid-Year Assessment and Structure of the Academic Year December 2010 Senate S-226-4; Report of the Senate Working Group on the Structure of the Academic Year Final March 2011 Senate S-227-5. |
| FN016 | Review of the Academic Portfolio - Portfolio and Periodic Review - February 2011 Senate S-227-13 |
| FN017 | Academic Year Calendar 2012-13 and 2013-14. |
| FN018 | Executive Liaison Group Terms of Reference and Membership. |
| FN019 | Personal email and exemplar video link issued to all new and returning students September 2012. |
| FN020 | QAA mid-cycle review. See FN014. |
| FN021 | School Periodic Review web site. School Periodic Review Procedure (incorporating course approval). |
| FN022 | ibid. |
| FN023 | Course Development and Approval Procedure (under review). New Programme Stage 2 Outline Proposal form. Outline Proposal form 2011-12. Validation Overview (updated 09). |
| FN024 | School Periodic Review web site.  See FN 21. |
| FN025 | University of Sussex Academic Framework 2012-13. |
| FN026 | University of Sussex Examination and Assessment Regulations 2012-13. |
| FN027 | Doctoral School Committee Minutes December 2012. |
| FN028 | Review of the Sussex Language Institute March 2012 Senate S-224-11. |
| FN029 | List of Study Abroad Partners 2012-13. |
| FN030 | University of Sussex Partner Institutions 2012-13. |
| FN031 | International Study Group MOA |
| FN032 | Staff Appointments data.  New academic starters graph. |
| FN033 | NSS outcomes 2011-12 November 2012 TLC-23-6. |
| FN034 | Estate Master Plan: Presentation to Senate November 2012. |
| FN035 | Update on Preparation of Strategic Plan 2013-18 November 2012 Council C-214-4. |

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| FN036 | Strategy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement 2012-13. |
| FN037 | University of Sussex Partner Handbook 2012-13 (incorporating recognition procedure). |
| FN038 | Code of Practice for Research Degrees 2012-13; Handbook for Doctoral Researchers 2012-13. |
| FN039 | Academic Office Web site. |
| FN040 | University of Sussex Academic Framework 2012-13. See FN 25. |
| FN041 | TLC Chair's Report November 2012; Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee November 2012 (minutes). |
| FN042 | Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee Terms of Reference and Membership |
| FN043 | TLC November 2012: TLC/23/21 and TLC/23/22. |
| FN044 | Collaborative Provision Committee Report November 2012 TLC-23-25. |
| FN045 | No document. |
| FN046 | Course Development and Approval Procedures.  See FN 23. |
| FN047 | Code of Practice for Research Degrees 2012-13: section 2, page 1.  See FN 38. |
| FN048 | Extract from DSC minutes May 2012. |
| FN049 | Research Strategy Update 2011 Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee R-17-01.  University of Sussex Research Strategy web site. |
| FN050 | University of Sussex Partner Handbook 2012-13.  See FN 37. |
| FN051 | JARB Terms of Reference and Membership; JRDAB Terms of Reference and Membership. |
| FN052 | Course Development and Approval Procedure (under review).   See FN 23. |
| FN053 | Quality Enhancement Sub-Committee November 2012 (Minutes).  See FN 41. |
| FN054 | University of Sussex Teaching and Learning Development Unit web site – with Staff Development and Training link. |
| FN055 | ibid RUSTLE web link. |
| FN056 | External Examiner Report Form |
| FN057 | Annual Monitoring web site 2011-12. |
| FN058 | External Examiner Action Plan Template. |
| FN059 | University of Sussex Examination and Assessment Regulations (2012-13).  See FN 26. |
| FN060 | International Education Doctorate Programme Specification web site. |
| FN061 | Collaborative Provision Committee Report November 2012 TLC-23-25. See FN 44. |
| FN062 | Research Degree Examination Board (RDEB) Terms of Reference and membership. |
| FN063 | Research Degrees Examination Board Report December 2012 DSC 17/3; Statistical Report DSC17/3/i. |
| FN064 | Annual Monitoring web site 2012-13. See FN 57. |
| FN065 | Final Recommendation on principles governing the University Examination and Assessment Regulations September 2012 TLC/22/2 and Appendix 1. |
| FN066 | Annual Monitoring web site. See FN 57. |
| FN067 | No document. |
| FN068 | Staff Training and Development Schedule 2012-13.  See FN 54.  Examination and Assessment Regulations (planned roll-out in February 2013) |
| FN069 | Annual Monitoring web site. See FN 57. School Reports on Annual Review of PGRs October 2012  DSC 16-03. |
| FN070 | Collaborative Provision Committee Report November 2012 TLC-23-25. See FN 44. |
| FN071 | University of Sussex Partner Handbook 2012-13.  See FN 37. |
| FN072 | Academic Office website.  See FN 39.  Governance Office A-Z policy and procedure listing. |

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| FN073 | Staff Training and Development Schedule 2012-13.  See FN 54. |
| FN074 | Teaching Learning and Development Unit Awards and activities. |
| FN075 | PGCert HE Programme Handbook 2012-14. |
| FN076 | Teaching Learning and Development Unit Awards and activities. See FN 74. |
| FN077 | Teaching and Learning Development Unit web site - link to Peer Assessment and Feedback. |
| FN078 | Principles of Assessment Design. |
| FN079 | Examination and Assessment Regulations 2012-13.  See FN  26. |
| FN080 | TLC Academic Regulations Sub-Committee: Terms of Reference and Membership. |
| FN081 | Academic  Regulations 2012-13.  See FN  26. |
| FN082 | In preparation.  No document. |
| FN083 | In preparation.  No document. |
| FN084 | Mitigating Evidence Claim (MEC) map for disability and reasonable adjustment. |
| FN085 | Sussex Direct Screen Capture - module results example. |
| FN086 | Sussex Direct Screen Capture - year summary example. |
| FN087 | Policy on feedback to students on coursework. |
| FN088 | No Document. |
| FN089 | Teaching and Learning Enhancement Board Terms of Reference and Membership. Priority Projects are under development |
| FN090 | Sample UG Finalist Marks Array.jpg;  Sample UG Progression Array.jpg. |
| FN091 | Handbook for Doctoral Researchers 2012-13.  See FN 38. |
| FN092 | Operational Report on Undergraduate Examinations 2012. |
| FN093 | School Periodic Review Reports – Commendations. See FN 21. |
| FN094 | School Periodic Review Outcomes May 2012 TLC-21-2 |
| FN095 | Annual Monitoring Handbook (Interim) 2012-13 |
| FN096 | University's Course Evaluation Questionnaire and policy – approved 2009. TLC-8-9. |
| FN097 | School Periodic Review Schedule TLC/23/10 |
| FN098 | Employability Strategy June 2009. |
| FN099 | Staff Training and Development Schedule 2012-13.  See FN 54. |
| FN100 | Duties of the Officership roles within the School Management Team |
| FN101 | University of Sussex Leadership Programme. Attendees 2009-2011 |
| FN102 | Doctoral School Activity October 2012. DSC- 16-02 |
| FN103 | Sussex Plus Web site. Sussex Plus anticipated the HEAR by fostering the documentation of skills and activities in a Sussex Plus webfolio. |
| FN104 | Careers and Employability Centre web site. |
| FN105 | Study Success at Sussex (S3) website. |
| FN106 | Startup Sussex web site. |
| FN107 | Destinations of Sussex Leavers from the Class of 2011.  Careers and Employability Centre web site. |
| FN108 | Careers and Employability Centre Annual Review 2011-12. |
| FN109 | No Documents. |
| FN110 | Study Abroad Group Terms of Reference and Membership. |
| FN111 | PGCert HE Programme Handbook 2012-14.  See FN 75. |
| FN112 | Teaching and Learning Development Unit web site.  Pathway for Associate Tutors. |
| FN113 | Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes 2012-13. See FN 38. |
| FN114 | Teaching and Learning Development Unit web site. Sussex Associate Tutors Training Programme (SATTP). |
| FN115 | Human Resources Report on implementation of performance review 2011-12 |

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| | P/004/08. |
| FN116 | Peer Observation of Teaching Policy – amended February 2011 |
| FN117 | Annual Monitoring 2011-12 web site.  LPS School Report.  See FN 57. |
| FN118 | Staff Development Programme 2012-13. |
| FN119 | Teaching Learning and Development Unit web site. Development Programme 2012-13.  Doctoral Events are commissioned by the Doctoral School and delivered by TLDU, Careers and Employment Centre and other specialists as required.  Doctoral Researcher Development web site. |
| FN120 | PGCert HE Programme Handbook 2012-14.  See FN 75. |
| FN121 | Doctoral School web site. ESRC DTC 2012-13 Training Programme. |
| FN122 | Teaching and Learning Strategy 2009-2015. Teaching and Learning Strategy - Operational Plan 2009 |
| FN123 | No Document. |
| FN124 | Commendations in School Periodic Review Reports; Proposal for the establishment of the Sussex Doctoral School March 2008 Senate  S-216-4, |
| FN125 | Widening Participation Annual Report 2011-12. |
| FN126 | Destinations of Sussex Leavers from the Class of 2011. See FN 107. |
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| FN132 | Library Strategic Plan 2009-2015. |
| FN133 | Library Report November 2012.  ITS Report November 2012. Term-time report to TLC. |
| FN134 | No Document. |
| FN135 | Teaching and Learning Enhancement Board Terms of Reference and Membership. See FN 89. |
| FN136 | No Document. |
| FN137 | Capital Programmes Committee Terms of reference and Membership 2012-13. |
| FN138 | Library Report November 2012. See FN 133. |
| FN139 | ITS e-learning web site. |
| FN140 | What Students Say About Study Direct? [2009-2012]. |
| FN141 | Use of Study Direct 2010-12. |
| FN142 | International Student s' Handbook 2012-13; Sussex Centre for Language Studies – English Language web site. |
| FN143 | Partner Handbook 2012-13.  See FN 37. |
| FN144 | Student Reps Scheme Election Report November 2012 TLC-23-12. |
| FN145 | Student Rep Scheme Report to TLC  May 2012. |
| FN146 | School Committees to support quality assurance of teaching and learning –diagram. |
| FN147 | No Document. |
| FN148 | Annual Monitoring - Enhancement Day  Event Summary Report December 2012 |
| FN149 | Executive Liaison Group Terms of Reference and Membership.  See FN 18. |
| FN150 | Academic Regulations Sub-Committee Consultation. See FN 65. |
| FN151 | Performance Committee Terms of Reference and Membership. |
| FN152 | KPIs Report to Performance Committee October 2012. |
| FN153 | Academic Appeals Board Report May 2012 TLC-21-14. |
| FN154 | Strategic Recruitment and Admissions Committee (SRAC) Terms of Reference and |

| Footnote number | Reference |
|---|---|
| | Membership. |
| FN155 | Strategic Data Reporting, Optimisation and Forecasting Group (SDROFG) Terms of Reference and Membership (as amended October 2012). |
| FN156 | ibid. |
| FN157 | Annual Operating Statement 2013-14 Template |
| FN158 | Teaching and Learning Committee Terms of Reference and Membership. |
| FN159 | Guide to Undergraduate Admissions (UCAS Applicants) 2012 entry. |
| FN160 | School of Media Film and Music admissions template – exemplar. |
| FN161 | Postgraduate Research Student Admission: Business Process Review. Report July 2012. |
| FN162 | University of Sussex Student Handbook 2012-13. |
| FN163 | Academic Appeals Board Report May 2012 TLC-21-14. See FN 153. |
| FN164 | Academic Appeals Regulations [extract from the University Regulations]. |
| FN165 | University of Sussex Admission Appeals Complaints and Appeals Against Fee Status |
| FN166 | Careers and Employability web site. See FN 104. |
| FN167 | School-level employment and placement activity is supported by a CEC/School liaison structure. |
| FN168 | Disability Policy.  Equality and Diversity Policy. |
| FN169 | ibid. |
| FN170 | Equality and Diversity Report November 2012 P - 004-10 |
| FN171 | Academic Practice Workshop Feedback 2011 -2012 |
| FN172 | Project V web site. |
| FN173 | Study at Sussex (S3) website. S3 is a study skills resource for all students who are new to the University of Sussex located in the Careers and Employability Centre. See FN 105. |
| FN174 | Vitae web site. |
| FN175 | ibid. |
| FN176 | Doctoral Researcher's Companion 2012-13 Edition. |
| FN177 | School Reports on Research Student Annual Review 2012 DSC xx/xx/x |
| FN178 | Preparing for your viva workshop summary report 2010-12. |
| FN179 | Partner Handbook 2012-13.  See FN 37. |
| FN180 | Report of the 2012 Partner Network Day |
| FN181 | No Document. |
| FN182 | Partner Handbook 2012-13.  See FN 37. |
| FN183 | Code of Practice for Publishing Information on Electronic Networks. |
| FN184 | Undergraduate Prospectus 2012-13. University web site. No Document. |
| FN185 | Widening Participation at Sussex web site. |
| FN186 | Sussex Direct/Study Direct Review Working Group (in development).  No Documents. |
| FN187 | No Document. |
| FN188 | No Document. |
| FN189 | Academic Office web site. See FN 39. |
| FN190 | Strategy for Quality Assurance and Enhancement 2012-13. See FN 36. |
| FN191 | Governance Office web site. |
| FN192 | Organisation of the University 2012-13.  See FN 6. |
| FN193 | No Document. |
| FN194 | Enhancement Event December 2012. See FN 148. |
| FN195 | Teaching and Learning Strategy 2009-2015.  Teaching and Learning Operational Plan 2009-2014 (updated) See FN 122. |

| Footnote number | Reference |
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| FN196 | Teaching and Learning Enhancement Board. See FN 89. |
| FN197 | Outcomes of 2012-13 Annual Enhancement Event. See FN 148 |
| FN198 | Widening Participation First Generation Scholarship Video. |

**Glossary**

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|---|---|
| CEC | Careers and Employability Centre |
| CPC | Collaborative Provision Committee |
| DoDS | Director of Doctoral Studies |
| DoSE | Director of Student Experience |
| DSC | Doctoral School Committee |
| DTL | Director of Teaching and Learning |
| ELG | Executive Liaison Group |
| HoD | Head of Department |
| HoS | Head of School |
| ITS | Information Services Division |
| MEC | Mitigating Evidence Claim |
| NACC | New Academic Courses Committee |
| PC | Performance Committee |
| SDROFG | Strategic Data Reporting, Optimisation and Forecasting Group |
| SEF | Student Experience Forum |
| SRAC | Strategic Recruitment and Admissions Committee |
| SRS | Student Recruitment Services |
| SSU | Student Support Unit |
| TLC | Teaching and Learning Committee |
| TLDU | Teaching and Learning Development Unit |
| TLEB | Teaching and Learning Enhancement Board |
| VCEG | Vice Chancellor's Executive Group |