**Student Engagement “what you need to do” points within the ELIR process**

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| **Early preparation and liaison with QAA Scotland**12+ months before Review |
| * [Read guidance and understand the process.](#To_do_Understand_the_process)
* [Find out who the link QAA Scotland officer is for your institution and contact them with any questions.](#To_do_Understand_the_process)

ELIR is useful for every students’ association and student officer. It is essential to familiarise yourself with the ELIR guidance to understand the process and to help best understand where your role will fit in. Do ensure to provide new officer handovers and briefing throughout the cycle. This document should be used in conjunction with the QAA Scotland ELIR 4 Handbook, published in April 2017, and the Preparing for Enhancement-led Institutional Review Guide, published in September 2017. Find out who the link QAA Scotland officer is for your institution and contact them with any questions relating to your ELIR.* [Map out key dates.](#To_do_Map_out_key_dates)

It is essential to map out all the key dates, meetings and deadlines throughout the ELIR cycle to ensure that the students’ association and officers know exactly what’s coming up. The relevant student officer for each year will support the ELIR, whether this is during the Planning or Review Visits, the preparation for the review, or the follow-up processes. Mapping out your key dates and knowing where you are in the review will determine what you will contribute to the process and what training is required, and will help you understand upcoming actions for your institution.* [Utilise existing processes and knowledge.](#To_do_Utilise_existing_processes_)

ELIR presents a significant opportunity for the students’ association to influence the student experience but it is important not to create unmanageable workloads. Look at how you can build ELIR preparation into existing activities such as course rep meetings and learning and teaching events. You can also use data and knowledge you already have through your learning and teaching representative activities, including your Student Partnership Agreement (SPA). In the early stages of an ELIR you should concentrate on identifying gaps in your understanding of the student experience, especially where these relate to emerging themes, and concentrate additional activity in these areas.* [Familiarise yourself with key strategic documents including your previous ELIR report.](#To_do_Familiarise_with_key_strategic_)

It is important to read and understand your previous ELIR report. These can be found on the QAA Scotland website and will highlight prior learning and teaching strategies, institutional priorities and what students said. It is vital to be familiar with the outcomes and how they can influence the institution’s learning and teaching strategy. It is also useful to consider how far progress has been made against your last report and where the institution could progress next. Do enquire about how your institution is acting on the outcomes of their previous ELIR. Other key documents to familiarise yourself with include the ELIR 3 Follow-up Report, your institution’s learning and teaching strategy and Outcome Agreement.* [Agree the mechanisms for students’ association involvement and support in ELIR.](#To_do_Agree_the_mechanisms_)

Each institution approaches ELIR in its own way and you may find that different groups of staff and students are engaged at each stage of the ELIR process. However, in most institutions, there will be an **ELIR steering/working group** which is responsible for preparing for the review. It is normal practice for students (usually a sabbatical officer) and a students’ association staff member to sit on this group. This group might also include the Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching, some senior academics and representatives from Quality or Registry. You should be able to identify a key contact within the institution who will liaise with the students’ association to ensure that your contribution is effective. Make contact with this person early on and maintain ongoing discussions about how you will be involved. Try to establish what the institution will be doing to support staff in engaging with ELIR. For example, will they be providing any training or briefing sessions? Discuss whether or not this support will be made available to yourself, key students’ association staff and students and whether or not you need to plan additional training.* [Consider your ELIR timeline, agree roles and responsibilities and who will be involved.](#To_do_Consider_your_ELIR_timeline)

It is vital for student officers and the students’ associations to know when the different stages of the ELIR process are occurring and to allocate adequate time and resources. It is important to bear in mind that the review process doesn’t just run over one year. All officers should know what their role in ELIR will be during their term of office. Some officers will be involved in the preparation, whereas others will be involved in the review itself or the follow-up processes. Students’ associations and officers will need to consider briefing and handovers for incoming officers throughout the process. Think about who will be involved early on. Although the main responsibility may fall within the remit of the education officer and the supporting staff member, the preparations will be most successful if there is engagement from a wide range of people in the students’ association. Particular attention should be paid to involving your executive team, school/faculty officers and course reps.* [Think about existing student engagement activities/gaps.](#To_do_Think_about_SE)

Student engagement is a significant focus of ELIR, both its effectiveness at an institutional level and engagement in the ELIR process itself. It’s useful to begin thinking about the ways that you can engage/demonstrate engagement with the wider student community, e.g. events, workshops, focus groups, social media; but remember to utilise existing processes and knowledge as well. In addition, consider how you demonstrate student engagement at a strategic level. Do you use Student Partnership Agreements or equivalent strategic plans? Are students formally included in strategic processes (including ELIR) through student committees and partnership between the students’ association and institution? Are there areas for development? Could these arrangements be improved? * [Contribute to discussion on key themes and make-up of review team.](#To_do_Contribute_to_early_dicussions_)

The contextualisation of ELIR is a particular focus of ELIR 4. It is vital that you are involved in early discussions on what the key themes might be. There is also more flexibility over the make-up of the review panel. Consider whether you feel an international reviewer or second student reviewer would be useful to the review process.  |
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| **Early preparation and Reflective Analysis (RA drafting)** Submission of a contextualised RA and Advance Information Set (AIS) – submitted 8 weeks prior to planning visitEarly feedback on RA and AIS – 2 weeks prior to planning visit |
| * [Ensure student engagement in drafting the RA.](#To_do_Ensure_student_involvement_in_RA)
* [Utilise existing ways of gathering student representatives or develop ELIR-specific methods.](#To_do_Ensure_student_involvement_in_RA)

There are a number of ways to make sure students are engaged effectively in the drafting of the Reflective Analysis. Students’ associations should work with their institutions to consider existing mechanisms to access students views in the period leading up to the drafting of the RA, e.g. are there scheduled meetings of your executive committee, student council, course rep conference or any other gathering of student representatives? Could you utilise existing groups, perhaps your Student-Staff Liaison/Consultative Committees to get student views to feed into the RA? Some institutions and students’ associations also choose to conduct specific focus groups with students to gather student opinion to input into the RA. Another way for students to inform the content of the RA is through a Student Partnership Agreement or equivalent document (see page 7). An SPA can demonstrate the nature of partnership working between the institution and the students’ association and highlight the key learning and teaching issues that are important to students. It is important that the students’ association is confident that the RA is an accurate and balanced assessment of the institutional approaches, strengths and weaknesses and overall student learning experience. It is therefore vital that you provide critical input into the drafting process – helping shape the final document.* [Ensure students recognise and endorse the content of the RA and AIS.](#To_do_Ensure_students_recognise_)

An analysis of student feedback is an essential element of the AIS, so it is vital for the students’ association and student officers to interact with this as soon as possible. In terms of content of the AIS and RA, it is also important that students recognise what the institution presents about itself as accurate to their own experience. To ensure student ownership, meaningful consultation with students must be built into the development of the documents. * [Be aware of the content of early feedback.](#To_do_Be_aware_of_the_content_)

This will give you an idea about what will be explored in the Planning Visit, so that you can prepare the officers and students who will be involved. In addition, it is useful to know the areas where the review team has requested additional information and if you can provide support for that. |
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| **Planning visit**6-8 weeks before Review Visit – 1 daySubmission of additional materials – 2 to 3 weeks before Review Visit |
| * [Get the most out of your Planning Visit, think about what works well, what could be improved.](#To_do_Get_the_most_out_of_Planning_Visit)

The Planning Visit is another opportunity to confirm whether students felt the RA and its contextualisation reflects the key themes and opinions of the student body. The review team will want to establish which topics students would like to be explored further in the Review Visit, so this is your opportunity to explore the issues that your work in preparing the RA has highlighted. You should make sure that whatever is highlighted is backed up by the evidence the students’ association has available about what is important to students. For example, you could consider: feedback from course reps; Student-Led Teaching Awards data; students’ association advice work; internal and external survey data; etc.* [Make RA, AIS and supporting evidence accessible and brief all involved.](#To_do_Ensure_RA_AIS_accessible_)

It is essential to the Planning Visit that student representatives are aware of the key issues highlighted in the RA, AIS and supporting evidence. Make sure that those involved are properly briefed and have an opportunity to reflect and ask any questions prior to the Planning Visit. * [Think about who will be involved in the Planning Visit.](#To_do_Think_about_who_at_Planning_Visit)

It’s extremely important that a variety of representatives from the student body and students’ association are present at the Planning Visit. The review team will be interested in meeting students who are broadly representative of the institution’s whole student population and who, as a group, are capable of talking on behalf of the student body as a whole. It is good practice to consider the diversity of the group in terms of mode of study, gender balance and subject balance. The students’ association can be asked to help identify the relevant students to talk to for this meeting. It would be useful to include representatives who have been involved in preparing for ELIR, those with experience of Institution-led Review or who have been involved in other institutional activity, such as members of the institutional enhancement team. You should carefully consider who the most appropriate people are and agree this with your institution, e.g. the President, VP Education, some engaged school/faculty officers, other sabbatical officers, etc. |
| **Review visit**Up to 5 days  |
| * [Get the most out of your Review Visit, be prepared and brief all involved.](#To_do_Get_the_most_out_of_Review_Visit)

Consider how you might prepare student representatives for the meetings. It is essential to the review that students are well informed about the process. For this reason, they should receive a comprehensive briefing on the process and purpose of the review and the kinds of questions the review team may want to ask them. Without providing answers to questions that they might be asked, it is also important for those involved to have access to the RA, AIS and supporting evidence and know about the key issues highlighted.* [Think about who will be involved at the Review Visit.](#To_do_Think_who_will_be_at_Rview_Visit)

At the Review Visit, the review team will ask to meet one or more groups of students, very likely a group who are not formal student reps. The review team will identify the characteristics they’d like to see to support the exploration of the themes they’ve identified as a team, e.g. undergraduates, postgraduate taught/research, part-time students, distance learners. The students’ association can be asked to help identify the relevant students to talk to for this meeting. All students invited to these meetings should be contacted as soon as possible to ensure they can participate. |
| **ELIR Judgements and Reports**Drafts sent 1 week after Review Visit. Published 16 weeks after Review Visit |
| * [Have sight of draft Outcome Reports and Technical Reports.](#To_do_Have_sight_of_draft_O_T_reports)

Find out when the institution is due to receive the draft reports and ensure you are available to comment. It is good practice for the students’ association to have sight of the draft reports and make comment where relevant. The institution has the opportunity to comment on the draft reports, to ensure they are factually accurate.* [Communicate the review outcomes to students.](#To_do_Communicating_review_outcomes_)

It is very important to ensure that students are informed about the outcomes of the ELIR. Make sure that everyone in the students’ association is kept up to date. In particular, the Outcome Report should be shared with the whole of the executive team and with school/faculty officers. You should also share this information with the students who participated in the Review Visits so they can see how their participation had an impact on the review. * [Consider how you can use findings from ELIR for future learning and teaching activities/strategy.](#To_do_Consider_how_can_use_findings_)

The outcomes of ELIR give students’ associations an excellent basis for working on developing learning and teaching activities. They should be considered in discussions moving forward, for example when agreeing updates to Student Partnership Agreements or equivalent. You should also consider how you might use the findings from ELIR with your course reps, e.g. think about how you could incorporate some outcomes of the review into course rep training, conferences and other meetings. You may want to produce a short leaflet or video outlining the ELIR findings in an accessible way that could be used at course rep training or put on the VLE and students’ association website.  |
| **Follow-up Reports**1 year after Review Visit |
| * [Engage in action planning and production of the ELIR Follow-up Report.](#To_do_Engage_in_followup_activities_)

Student representatives and the students’ association should be involved in any follow-up activity from the ELIR and in preparing the Follow-up Report. This is an opportunity for the students’ association to reflect on what has happened since the ELIR – what has gone well and what the institution could be doing better. Each institution will have working groups and committees to take forward the outcomes and recommendations from ELIR. It is essential that these groups include student representation and communicate regularly with the students’ association, to ensure student engagement in shaping enhancement priorities and the development of follow-up actions and reports. It is also recommended that a students’ association staff member attends these groups. A staff member will ensure continuity when there is student officer changeover and will support the student representative in their role. Some institutions choose to set up short-life working groups to work on specific areas for development highlighted in their ELIR. If there are lots of working groups, it is important to think about capacity and who is best placed to attend. Depending on the nature of the working group, it may be more appropriate for an executive officer, school/faculty officer or course rep to attend, rather than the sabbatical officer. * [New officer handover.](#To_do_New_officer_handover)

The outcomes of the ELIR will inform the institution’s priorities over the coming years, along with its own strategic and operational plans, so it is essential that information acquired through the review process is accurately communicated to the new officer team. The students’ association should take time to plan the process and outcomes of ELIR into their handover, so that the incoming officers can align their own priorities with the institution’s where appropriate. Make sure that new officers meet with institutional staff involved in the ELIR as part of their induction. This will ensure that relationships with relevant staff are established early on in student representatives’ terms in office. |
| **Annual Discussions**Yearly |
| * [Engage with Annual Discussions, contribute topics for consideration.](#To_do_Engage_with_the_annual_discussion)

Meaningful student engagement is integral to the Annual Discussion process and there will be an increased emphasis on this in ELIR 4. Students’ associations and student representatives will have the opportunity to contribute topics for consideration at the meeting, ensuring that discussions are relevant to student priorities and concerns. Institutions are asked to raise agenda items that the students’ association wish to discuss. Which member of staff at your institution is co-ordinating the meeting? Talk to them to make sure you’re clear about the purpose of the meeting and discuss any items that the students’ association would like to raise. One of the potential items for discussion will be how the institution works in partnership with its students to enhance the student experience, e.g. the areas of development work detailed in a Student Partnership Agreement. This is a chance to highlight what you’ve been working on and what you would like the institution to prioritise over the coming year. The meeting is also a valuable opportunity for the students’ association to establish contact with QAA Scotland and is a key date in the calendar of ongoing quality enhancement activity at the institution. |