

University of Glasgow**Academic Standards Committee – Thursday 9 April 2009****Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Update on Recommendations Arising from the Review of Modern Languages and Cultures held on 1 and 2 March 2006****Ms Jane McAllister, Clerk to the Review Panel**

This report contains further responses to recommendations arising from the Review of the School of Modern Languages and Cultures held on 1 and 2 March 2006. Further responses were requested at the meeting of ASC held on 3 October 2008. The original and subsequent responses are set out below for information and are followed by the further responses received.

Recommendation 2:

The Panel recommended that the School consider introducing some minimum requirement for academic work during the Residence Abroad to encourage students to remain engaged with their studies and to introduce a level of consistency of experience across the different activities. The School should also take a more proactive approach to maintaining contact with students while they were away to ensure that they have access to assistance should they need it; a regular email with standard text should be sufficient. [*Paragraph C.4.3*]

For the attention of: **The Head of School**

Initial Response: From the School

The recommendation that the student year abroad should involve a minimum level of academic work was welcomed in principle by the SMLC Management Committee. Nevertheless there was considerable discussion as to whether or not such work should involve assessment and, if so, for which year of study (the year abroad, or the Junior Honours year). The nature of the work to be undertaken and the need to be able to minimize the risks of plagiarism were also issues which require further thought. The matter has therefore been remitted to the SMLC Undergraduate Studies committee though it was realised that should changes to the assessment pattern be required there would need to be substantive discussion within the School at large for proposals to be put to Board of Studies. Meanwhile, each Section has taken steps to maintain contact with those of its students who are abroad, particularly by corresponding with them over work to be undertaken on return to the Junior Honours year.

Further Response from Head of School (October 2008)

In Single Honours, the Language Project completed on return from the year abroad gives the requirement for the collection of appropriate materials during the period of residence abroad (this was introduced around the time of the 2006 Review). Because of assessment patterns, it is not possible to introduce this practice for Joint Honours students (the twin-track structure of language and cultural study leaves little room for flexibility in terms of introducing further

credit-bearing elements). Each Section continues to maintain contact with students during their time abroad.

Further Response from Head of School (April 2009)

This matter was remitted to the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC), whose recommendation will be presented to a School meeting on 27 March 2009. The Committee was mindful of the significant impact that a year abroad has on students in respect of their general maturity and life experience. The Committee is therefore recommending that each student be required to produce a 500 word reflective summary piece based on a diary maintained over the period of residence abroad and focusing on the experiential learning that has been achieved over this time. The Committee is of the view that this will contribute to Personal Development Planning.

Clerks note: The Department has confirmed that the committee has met and has agreed that the proposal should be implemented as described.

Recommendation 6:

The Panel **recommended** that the Head of School consider providing all staff involved in marking (including NLAs and GTAs) with a further briefing session to update them on the recent changes to the Code of Assessment (e.g. 22-point Scale) and to refresh their knowledge of how the School wishes them to apply the Code. The School should also ensure that the most up-to-date information about the Code of Assessment is published in a consistent manner in all course handbooks. [*Paragraph C.3*]

For the attention of: **The Head of School**

Initial Response: From the School

The Management Committee agreed that there should be an annual briefing session at School level with GTAs and the University Native Language Teachers [UNLTs, formerly NLAs] and steps were taken to ensure that the current assessment scale be published in the same format in course documents. Longer term it was felt a set of SMLC-wide grade related criteria at least for language learning might be evolved based on those figuring in the current French honours course document. Undergraduate Studies Committee has been asked to consider this.

Further Response from the Head of School (October 2008):

Now that the "22 point scale" has bedded in, its application is consistent across all SMLC documentation and practice, and it is an integral part of induction for all new GTAs and UNLTs. In addition new GTAs and UNLTs attend training on the Code of Assessment through the statutory training for GTAs offered by the Learning and Teaching Centre.

The further aspiration to develop specific School-wide language-marking criteria has not yet been realised. In session 2007-08, it must be acknowledged that the working of the committees in SMLC rather lost some of its momentum. New structures have now been introduced and the matter in question is on the agenda for the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Further Response from the Head of School (April 2009):

- i) There has been some discussion around the topic of School-wide grade related criteria for language learning, but this has not been progressed to the formal publication of criteria pending two developments. First, in any such criteria there would need to be due attention to the criteria contained within the Common European Framework. Second, the question of language learning has become a University-wide issue and is to be examined by a working Group established by the Dean of Arts and involving the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Law, Business and Social Sciences, with the Language Centre also likely to be involved.

- ii) GTA training covering the Code of Assessment is conducted internally within the Department as part of the induction process for GTAs and UNLTs.