

## University of Glasgow

### Academic Standards Committee – Friday 28 May 2010

#### DPTLA and University Restructuring

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This paper provides revised recommendations concerning the implications of the University restructuring for the system for Departmental Programmes of Learning, Teaching & Assessment (DPTLA) and the way subject review should be tackled at the University.

An earlier version of the paper, endorsed by ASC, was considered at EdPSC on 5 May. The original proposals involved retention of an approach based on reviewing subjects separately, with some combining of disciplines where easily done. At EdPSC, it was decided that there was greater scope for, and benefit in, adopting an approach to subject review that involved a further combining of subjects within schools where appropriate. The following has been drafted accordingly.

#### Proposed Approach

In satisfying its own requirements and those of the Scottish Funding Council for internal review of its academic provision, the University has hitherto been able to benefit from the coincidence in all but a few cases (see below) between departmental and subject boundaries. The formation of schools that in most instances comprise several disciplines raises the question of the best fit between academic structures and the review method.

Specifically, the establishment of the new schools begs the question whether we should

- review Learning & Teaching provision grouped by school, or
- retain the current disciplinary parameters (albeit with the latter the conjunction between the subject covered and organisational boundaries is lost)

The attached note (Appendix 1) lists pros and cons staff in the Senate Office identified in switching to a school-based approach and in retaining a subject-based approach. This led to the conclusion that considerable practical factors meant that it would not be feasible to adopt a method that reviewed subjects at school level across the board, notably in schools that include multiple disciplines. However, the original paper also noted that it was disappointing that it would not be easy to adopt an approach that mirrored the new structure straightforwardly, and following further discussion at EdPSC, **it is now proposed to adopt an approach that encourages the combination of subjects for review where reasonably possible.**

Accordingly, a table (Appendix 2) is attached, showing the list of subjects currently reviewed under the DPTLA system, together with an indication of areas that might be combined in the School structure. The proposed list is informed by suggestions from Deans of Faculty at EdPSC.

If ASC and EdPSC approve the revised proposals, Senate Office will discuss this with staff in the schools and subjects concerned. From this, a revised schedule of reviews to be conducted in the remainder of the six-year cycle will be compiled. (The SFC require us to

review all taught provision at least every six years. We are presently in the second year of the second such cycle.)

Due consideration will also be given to how to proceed in areas where amalgamation would include a subject recently reviewed as well as one still to be reviewed in the current cycle. This would be likely to have implications for the Self-Evaluation Review, inter alia.

Other factors previously considered in developing the schedule of reviews for DPTLA will continue to be taken into account, such as the phasing of reviews in conjunction with reaccreditation visits by professional bodies, etc. The approach here has always been to try to be as supportive of subject areas as possible.

Senate Office will also implement any necessary amendments to the detailed procedures for subject-level review. These changes will include the scheduling of meetings with the Head of School and School L&T Committee Convener.

EdPSC also noted the absence of any mechanism, either presently or proposed, to ensure the appropriate level of overall coherence of degrees that straddled departments or schools or (in the case of the BSc) colleges. It was further noted that the embedding of the new structure could inadvertently lead to divergence in schools' approaches to provision that required to be managed appropriately. It was consequently suggested that some form of periodic review at degree programme level might be of value. (Such reviews are not in themselves required by the Funding Council.) Details of how such a review method might work will be developed by the Senate Office for consideration next session. It is likely that the relevant Board of Studies would be the locus of such exercises.

### **Name for the process**

It is proposed that the process should be renamed '**Periodic Subject Review**'.

### **Piloting & monitoring of new method**

The DPTLA process is reviewed annually. It is also recommended that the new method is kept under review. It will also be necessary to pilot reviews that combine two or more subjects previously reviewed separately.

## Institution-led Subject Review & University Restructuring: Subject-level & School-level review Pros & Cons

### Senate Office

<b>School-level Review</b>	
<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Promotes school identity and cohesion</li> <li>○ Aids dissemination of good practice</li> <li>○ Contributes to school strategy development</li> <li>○ Lower overall number of reviews may produce savings</li> <li>○ Augmented admin resource in schools will assist preparation (especially where there are few disciplines in the school)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increased volume of documentation for multidisciplinary schools – more to prepare and more to read</li> <li>○ Increased panel size in multidisciplinary schools - can reduce panel effectiveness and change balance between internal and external numbers</li> <li>○ Reviews will be longer – 3 days - or longer? – likely to be unrealistic to recruit panel members for that extent of commitment</li> <li>○ New system would require to be piloted, with consequent compression of later years of cycle</li> <li>○ Effectiveness of individual subject scrutiny may be reduced; related danger of discussion being overly devoted to one subject</li> <li>○ Heterogeneity of some schools might necessitate a variety of approaches- could be complicated to operate for all concerned</li> <li>○ May be related professional body concerns re intensiveness of scrutiny</li> <li>○ Current cycle reflects prof body review cycles</li> <li>○ Multidisciplinary reviews might involve parallel discussions and thus multiple Senate Office staff – difficult to resource &amp; would have implications for the coherence of the report</li> <li>○ Revised guideline documentation required</li> <li>○ Transitional task of creating new cycle – complex matter, where some subjects have been reviewed more recently than others</li> <li>○ Level of aggregation potentially at odds with national expectations re subject review</li> </ul>

<b>Subject-level Review</b>	
<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Familiar model – some continuity in midst of v extensive change</li> <li>○ No new cycle to construct</li> <li>○ Documentation, complexity and scale of events manageable</li> <li>○ Good fit with student involvement dimension</li> <li>○ Compatible with subject-level basis of annual monitoring of courses and programmes</li> <li>○ Fits with professional body requirements</li> <li>○ Would provide insight into progress of restructuring</li> <li>○ Senate Office resource largely in place</li> <li>○ Tried &amp; tested model; externally benchmarked and reviewed and strongly endorsed, meeting national expectations re subject-level review</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Would not contribute to promotion of new structure (albeit the cycle could be adapted to fit school compositions)</li> <li>○ Less direct contribution to dissemination of good practice across school</li> <li>○ Multiple reviews per cycle for multidisciplinary schools</li> <li>○ Fit between subject-level and school resource planning may be less direct</li> <li>○ Fit between administrative structure of schools and disciplines may be less direct than with current dept-based structure</li> </ul>

## Current and possible future combinations of subjects for review

Current position (with ref to School structure)	Possible future Reviews
<b>School of Humanities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ History</li> <li>○ Classics</li> <li>○ Archaeology</li> <li>○ Celtic &amp; Gaelic</li> <li>○ HATII</li> <li>○ Philosophy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ History</li> <li>○ Classics</li> <li>○ Archaeology</li> <li>○ Celtic &amp; Gaelic</li> <li>○ HATII</li> <li>○ Philosophy</li> </ul>
<b>School of Critical Studies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ English Language</li> <li>○ English Literature</li> <li>○ Scottish Literature</li> <li>○ Theology &amp; Religious Studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ English Language &amp; Literature &amp; Scottish Literature</li> <li>○ Theology &amp; Religious Studies</li> </ul>
<b>School of Culture &amp; Creative Arts</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Theatre, Film &amp; TV</li> <li>○ Music</li> <li>○ History of Art</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Theatre, Film &amp; TV</li> <li>○ Music</li> <li>○ History of Art</li> </ul>
<b>School of Modern Languages &amp; Cultures</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>
<b>Business School</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Economics</li> <li>○ Accounting &amp; Finance</li> <li>○ Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Economics</li> <li>○ Accounting &amp; Finance</li> <li>○ Management</li> </ul>
<b>School of Education</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Educational Studies</li> <li>○ Initial Teacher Education</li> <li>○ DACE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Educational Studies, ITE (&amp; DACE?)</li> <li>○ DACE?</li> </ul>
<b>School of Interdisciplinary &amp; Applied Studies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dumfries Campus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>
<b>School of Law</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>

<b>School of Social &amp; Political Sciences</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Central &amp; East European Studies</li> <li>○ Economic &amp; Social History</li> <li>○ Politics</li> <li>○ Sociology, Anthropology &amp; Applied Social Sciences</li> <li>○ Urban Studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Central &amp; East European Studies</li> <li>○ Economic &amp; Social History</li> <li>○ Politics</li> <li>○ Sociology, Anthropology &amp; Applied Social Sciences</li> <li>○ Urban Studies</li> </ul>
<b>School of Chemistry</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>
<b>School of Computing Science</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>
<b>School of Engineering</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aerospace Engineering</li> <li>○ Civil Engineering</li> <li>○ Electronics &amp; Electrical Engineering</li> <li>○ Mechanical Engineering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>
<b>School of Geographical &amp; Earth Sciences</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>
<b>School of Mathematics &amp; Statistics</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mathematics</li> <li>○ Statistics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>
<b>School of Physics &amp; Astronomy</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>
<b>School of Psychology</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Department</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>
<b>School of Life Sciences</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Faculty of BLS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>
<b>School of Medicine</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Undergraduate Medicine</li> <li>○ Postgraduate Taught Medicine</li> <li>○ Dental School</li> <li>○ Division of Nursing &amp; Health Care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Medicine</li> <li>○ Dentistry</li> <li>○ Nursing &amp; Health Care</li> </ul>
<b>School of Veterinary Medicine</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School</li> </ul>