

## University of Glasgow

## Academic Standards Committee - Friday 27 May 2011

## Periodic Subject Review: Report of the Review of Music held on 14 February 2011

Marjory Wright, Clerk to the Review Panel

## Review Panel:

Professor Neal Juster	Vice Principal (Strategy & Resources), Convener
Professor Jeanice Brooks	University of Southampton, External Subject Specialist
Ms Christina Fundulea	Students' Representative Council
Dr Barbara Burns	School of Modern Languages and Cultures, Cognate Member
Dr Alan Owen	Senate Assessor on Court
Dr Jane MacKenzie	Learning and Teaching Centre
Mrs Marjory Wright	Senate Office, Clerk to the Panel
Miss Victoria Cadzow	Senate Office, Observer

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Following restructuring on 1 August 2011 the University's academic infrastructure consists of 4 Colleges, 19 Schools and 9 Research Institutes. The College of Arts comprises 4 Schools.
- 1.2 Formerly known as the Department of Music, Music is one of 3 subjects in the School of Culture and Creative Arts.
- 1.3 Music is located in 14 University Gardens. Its accommodation includes seminar/rehearsal rooms, practice rooms, a research room, an audio lab, a studio and 3 unsoundproofed practice rooms. Music also has 3 soundproof practice pods located in the Sir Alexander Stone Building and has access to the facilities of the Concert Hall in the nearby Gilbert Scott Building (the subject's main facility for performance, concert practice and recording) and 2 unsoundproofed studios close by, one of which has a soundproof recording booth.
- 1.4 Music's learning and teaching provision is enriched by the Music in the University initiative.
- 1.5 The last review of Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning & Assessment (DPTLA) in Music took place in March 2005. It commended the Department on the overall quality of its provision and for the upsurge in vitality since the Court Review of March 2000 and identified two areas of concern:
  - i. Funding for practical tuition;
  - ii. Practice accommodation.

The latter has not yet been resolved satisfactorily.

- 1.6 The Self Evaluation Report (SER) was prepared by Dr Nick Fells (Head of Subject) and Professor William Sweeney, with support from Mrs Diane Thomson (Subject Secretary) and input from all members of Subject staff. The SER was endorsed at a Subject Staff Meeting, circulated to Student Representatives for comment and then to all Music students via Moodle. Thereafter, an informal meeting, open to all Music students, took place to discuss the parameters of the review, followed by a special Staff-Student Liaison Committee meeting to allow early student input into the drafting process. The Review Panel **commends** Music on its inclusive approach to the preparation of the SER.
- 1.7 The Review Panel found the SER very informative and has referred to it extensively throughout this Report.
- 1.8 The Review Panel met with Dr Jeremy Huggett, Dean of Learning & Teaching for the College of Arts, Professor Nick Pearce, Head of the School of Culture and Creative Arts, Dr Nick Fells, Head of Subject, Professor William Sweeney, School Quality Officer, Professor John Butt, former Head of the Department of Music, 9 other members of academic staff, including 1 probationary member of staff, 4 support staff, 3 Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)/ hourly-paid staff, 19 undergraduate students representing all undergraduate programmes, including the BEng in Electronics with Music, and 3 postgraduate taught students. Undergraduate students were split into two groups of similar composition and each group met with half the Panel. Half of the Panel met with the probationary member staff whilst the remainder of the Panel met simultaneously with GTAs/hourly paid staff.

#### 1.9 Background Information

1.9.1 Music has a total of 15.04 staff, of which 10.04 are academic staff; from May 2011 this becomes 9 as temporary contracts end. In addition to the Head of Subject (Senior Lecturer), the academic staff complement comprises 3 Professors, 1 further Senior Lecturer, 4 Lecturers and 3 temporary Teaching Fellows.

1.9.2 In common with other Subject areas in the School there is a regular rotation of one semester's study leave in every six for each academic staff member.

1.9.3 Student numbers for Session 2010-11 are as follows:

Students	Headcount	FTE
Level 1	105	47.7
Level 2	73	34.3
Level 3	43	30.8
Honours	54	41.2
Undergraduate Total	275	154
Postgraduate Taught	17	17
Postgraduate Research*	22	22

\*(for information only - research is not covered by the Review)

1.9.4 The Review Panel considered the following range of provision offered by Music:

- Bachelor of Music (BMus)
- Master of Arts (MA)
- Certificate/Diploma/MLitt in Popular Music Studies

- Certificate/Diploma in Composition
- Certificate/Diploma in Musicology
- Certificate/Diploma in Sonic Arts

1.9.5 Music contributes to the following *joint* degree programmes offered with other Schools:

- BEng/MEng in Electronics with Music

## **2. Overall aims of the Subject's provision and how it supports the University Strategic Plan**

- 2.1 As stated in the SER, the aims of Music are to play a full part in maintaining and enhancing the University's international standing in scholarship through the quality of its teaching, research and performance, to offer higher education to individuals of all ages and social backgrounds with sufficient ability and motivation to profit from it and to continue to develop its role in the professional and cultural life of Scotland and of the United Kingdom as part of Europe, and of Glasgow and the West of Scotland in particular.
- 2.2 The SER maintains that all aspects of Music's activities respond to the challenge of the mission as stated in the University's Strategic Plan for 2010-15 and provides evidence to support this which was substantiated by the Panel's findings during the course of the review.
- 2.3 The benefits of the Subject to society and the cultural economy were clearly stated in the SER. The Review Panel noted from the SER that Music contributes cultural production to Scotland through its ensemble activity, McEwen commissions and contemporary music concerns and that it contributes important creative skills to enhance an Engineering field through the BEng with Music programme.

## **3. An Evaluation of the Student Learning Experience**

### **3.1 Aims**

- 3.1.1 The Review Panel was provided with details of the aims of Music's programmes in the SER and noted that, in all cases, they take account of the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement, the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level descriptors and the expertise of Music's staff as practitioners and researchers in the field. The aims of undergraduate programmes are clearly communicated in the Music Subject Handbook and also in a Subject advising meeting with students. The SER noted that the core aims of the 3 undergraduate programmes are closely related to one another and mutually reinforcing.
- 3.1.2 The External Subject Specialist confirmed that the BMus maps particularly clearly onto the aims described in the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement and that the MA and BEng programmes reflect these aims to a degree appropriate to the interdisciplinary remit of the courses.
- 3.1.3 Revisions were being undertaken as part of an ongoing review of programmes started in 2009.

### 3.2 *Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)*

- 3.2.1 The Review Panel learned from the SER that Music had reviewed and revised its ILOs across all courses, both to reflect the change in the University-wide system for programme information management (PIP) but also as part of an ongoing programme of review initiated in 2009. The Panel was encouraged to see the level of engagement with the varied aspects of the formulation of ILOs. The translation of generic concepts into subject-specific terms in relation to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework and the Subject Benchmark Statement had been done with care and the samples provided in the SER showed excellent attention to questions of level and progression. The Panel noted that the ILOs for individual courses were communicated to students through the link to the online Course Catalogue provided in the Music Subject Handbook.
- 3.2.2 The Review Panel learned that, following a review of the BMus and MA Music curricula, Music was currently updating its programme specifications to reflect the 2008 Subject Benchmark Statement. The Panel noted that the format in which programme ILOs were written in the previous iteration of programme specifications requires amendment and **recommends** that Music consults with the Learning & Teaching Centre when revising its programme specifications to ensure that programme ILOs are written in the appropriate format.

### 3.3 *Assessment, Feedback and Achievement*

#### **Application of the Code of Assessment**

- 3.3.1 The Review Panel noted from the SER that all assessments in Music are marked in accordance with the University's 22-point scale, the introduction of which had been welcomed as a clarification of the qualities underpinning levels of attainment.
- 3.3.2 The SER stated that, wherever possible, assessment is carried out anonymously and clear instructions on the procedures for submission are outlined in the Music Subject Handbook. The SER noted also that some forms of submission cannot be anonymised readily (e.g. performances and presentations) and that in a small Subject area anonymity of dissertations and compositions may be impossible to ensure. All work at Honours level is subject to either double-marking or moderation.

#### **Assessment methods**

- 3.3.3 The Review Panel learned from the SER and from discussions with staff that, with the exception of *Performance* course recitals which are conducted in front of a live audience together with the examiners, assessment is conducted through continuous assessment of coursework. This includes both summative and formative assessment. Students told the Panel that assessment deadlines were normally set out from the beginning and did not present any problems. When asked to name one thing that would enhance their learning experience, a number of undergraduate students said that they would like more opportunities for non-assessed work with feedback.
- 3.3.4 The SER describes the wide and appropriate range of assessment methods employed by Music. Students told the Review Panel that assessment criteria were communicated to them clearly via course documentation and Handbooks. BMus and MA students were largely satisfied with the range of assessment methods and told the Panel that these provided an appropriate structure to enable them to build their skills incrementally. They said that they were confident that they would be able to follow a particular stylistic path in written assessments as long as they were able to justify what they were doing and back it up with evidence. BEng students had had less exposure to continuous assessment in their programme and had a clearer understanding of where they stood with more traditional examinations.

### Feedback on Assessment

- 3.3.5 The SER described the wide range of feedback formats that are employed in Music and included examples of feedback/assessment forms currently used.
- 3.3.6 The Review Panel was interested in the moderated self-assessment described in the SER as using a series of focused questions to guide students through a deeper critical evaluation of both the process and product of a creative activity in which they have been engaged. This new approach, which is being used in *Composition* and in *Contemporary Music Ensemble*, has yet to be evaluated but the Panel viewed it as potentially good and appropriate practice.
- 3.3.7 The Review Panel noted from the SER and from discussions with staff and students that feedback is usually returned within four weeks of submission of a piece of work and often within three weeks or less. The students who met with the Review Panel were largely satisfied with the turnaround time for assessed work.
- 3.3.8 The summarised student feedback provided to the Review Panel indicated that students were particularly satisfied with the feedback received for the *Aesthetics & Philosophy of Music*.
- 3.3.9 The Review Panel was concerned at the low scores received by Music for Assessment and Feedback in the National Student Survey (NSS) during the past three years and had noted some alarming dips in the scores for certain questions. The SER explained the action that Music had taken to address the disappointing NSS results. This had included a review of the BMus and MA Music programmes and, this year, Music had been looking at the possibility of streamlining feedback mechanisms, using Moodle to a greater extent to expedite feedback, and making more consistent use of feedback pro-formas to improve clarity and consistency. The Panel noted that these methods had been discussed at staff meetings and that some implementation was already being undertaken.
- 3.3.10 Despite the poor scores in the 2010 NSS, most of the students who met with the Review Panel reported a positive feedback experience and said that they usually received a personalised feedback sheet which they could discuss in detail with the relevant member of staff if they wished.
- 3.3.11 The students studying for the BEng in Electronics with Music who met with the Review Panel had less experience of continuous assessment than other Music students since assessment in Engineering subjects is examination orientated. They suggested that no-one had explained to them how the award of an A grade was determined in continuous assessment and, from the feedback provided to them, they had difficulty in seeing what they would need to do for a B result to become an A. They found continuous assessment through tutorials particularly frustrating in this respect and said that their lack of understanding of why they had been given a particular grade made it difficult for them to demonstrate improvement despite the effort that they put in. The Review Panel encourages Music to explore this matter with BEng Electronics with Music students with a view to clarifying for them how grading is applied in continuous assessment.
- 3.3.12 The Review Panel explored the feedback strategy with staff and was satisfied that staff recognised that there was work to be done in relation to feedback and assessment and were addressing this. The Panel learned that, although staff encouraged students to participate in the NSS, they did not routinely discuss the NSS findings with students or explain to them what they were doing to address the issues that had been identified. The Panel **recommends** that Music routinely shares and discusses the NSS results with students in the forum of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee with a view to demonstrating its commitment to addressing student concerns, exploring what students would find useful in feedback and seeking shared solutions to any concerns identified.

### Marking policy

- 3.3.13 Music's marking policy was set out clearly in the SER. Assessments for courses below honours level were single marked. Assessments for all other courses were double marked. The *Dissertation* was double blind marked, as was *Composition* at Levels 3 and 4. The Review Panel explored with staff whether there were opportunities for lightening the marking load and learned that intermediate *Composition* had been experimenting with feedback proformas with tick box headings and space for commentary which they found helpful. The system had been introduced for the first time in Semester 1 and had yet to be evaluated with students.
- 3.3.14 Members of staff told the Review Panel that first year Music courses had a heavy marking load. A group of staff was exploring ways of addressing this and, at the same time, looking at what kinds of skills were needed and a project application on Feedback and Assessment in First Year Courses had been submitted to the Learning & Teaching Development Fund. The Panel **commends** this initiative.

### Penalties for late submission

- 3.3.15 The Review Panel noted from the SER that Music had some concerns about the change to the University's procedures for late submissions, given its emphasis on continuous assessment. The Panel explored this with the Head of Subject and the School Quality Officer who explained that they were nervous about the cultural shift required to operate the new system to avoid detriment to students. Continuous assessment meant that marks used to determine students' progression and Honours results were derived mainly from coursework rather than exams. Penalties arising from late submission of coursework could therefore impact greatly on progression and Honours results. Hitherto, to ensure fairness, no extensions were granted by Music, but late penalties were considered together at Exam Board meetings, allowing students who had entered a 'spiral' of late submission to be treated fairly across a range of courses where late penalties existed. Under the new system students would be required to negotiate extensions with individual members of staff, opening up the possibility of variation. Where work is continuously assessed, the application of a one-day late penalty might have a dramatic effect on an Honours outcome. The impact of the change in the University's procedures for late submissions had not been tested in Semester 1 since extensions had been granted as a result of inclement weather and would not therefore be known until the Semester 2 Examination Board.

### Avoidance of Plagiarism

- 3.3.16 The Review Panel had noted from the minutes of a staff meeting that there had been a number of plagiarism cases in 2010 and had noted also that, in 2008, an External Examiner had commented on the need to be more rigorous with guidance on bibliographical referencing. The undergraduate curriculum had been reviewed and revised recently and the Panel learned from staff that they explain to students about plagiarism and the avoidance of plagiarism in lectures and tutorials which keeps the message in the forefront. Students are taught writing skills in the first block of the Level 1 *Musicianship* course and writing skills are interspersed throughout the curriculum. *Musicology* and reading musicological texts provides an opportunity for students to work with the literature and to learn the skill of appraising people's work and referencing appropriately. One of the undergraduate students who met with the Panel observed that the *Listening and Repertory* course had retaught them how to write essays.

### Student Achievement

- 3.3.17 The SER cited a number of examples of student achievement which supported Music's contention that the appropriateness of its assessment methods was apparent in independent student and graduate achievement since 2009-10.

### *3.4 Curriculum Design, Development and Content*

#### **Undergraduate Curriculum**

- 3.4.1 The Review Panel noted from the SER that Music is unusual within the College of Arts in offering three undergraduate programmes, one of which is owned by the School of Engineering. The Panel also noted from the SER that the historical context for the design of the undergraduate Music curriculum was complex and that the curriculum had developed flexibly over a period of decades to deal with emerging circumstances and turnover of staff and expertise.
- 3.4.2 The SER stated that each undergraduate programme has a clear identity and resources are maximised through the provision of a number of shared courses across the three programmes. Students told the Review Panel that they valued the opportunities that this provided for meeting up with students on the different music programmes and said that there was an atmosphere of peer support.
- 3.4.3 The Review Panel learned from the SER and from discussions with staff and students that Music's undergraduate programmes have been designed to accommodate the variation in the prior disciplinary experience and knowledge of students and that some students have had extensive instrumental tuition whilst others have attained high grades in Scottish Higher music but with limited breadth or depth of musical experience.
- 3.4.4 Music's undergraduate programmes contain four common curriculum threads and the Review Panel learned that Music had adopted the terms 'Advanced', 'Higher', 'Intermediate' and 'Foundation' as a way of creating comparable levels of study within particular Music-specific sub-disciplines across the three programmes. The Head of Subject clarified prior to the Review that 'Advanced' refers to the 4<sup>th</sup> level of study in any given sub-discipline, that 'Higher' refers to the 3<sup>rd</sup> level, and 'Intermediate' and 'Foundation' refer to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> levels in a sub-discipline respectively. This allows students on all three undergraduate programmes to access a wide range of sub-disciplinary topics at a level appropriate to that particular programme. Undergraduate students told the Panel that they viewed the provision made to accommodate the variety of prior experience amongst students as one of Music's strengths.
- 3.4.5 The Review Panel noted from the SER that the BMus is the most familiar type of music programme in the UK, with all courses relating to music, although up to 20 credits per year may be taken in another subject. The BMus is comprehensive in its music provision, involving considerable practice-based elements, including a compulsory Performance component.
- 3.4.6 The Review Panel noted that the MA provides particularly attractive possibilities for interdisciplinary work and that Music's considerable participation in the BEng in Electronics with Music means that this course can work toward conquering the technology/humanities divide that continues to plague many UK courses featuring music technology. The Panel explored students' perceptions of their programmes and learned that students who did not necessarily plan to work in the music field valued the opportunity to combine music with another subject. This kept career options open and allowed students whose principal subject was not music to maintain their interest in music to a high level. Students undertaking the BEng in Electronics with Music told the Panel that their course choices in year 4 were limited if they did not have the prerequisites for entry to particular courses. They said that this had not been fully explained to them in advance and that they would have welcomed having this explained to them at the end of the previous year. BEng students also suggested that the interaction between Engineering and Music was more evident in years 3 and 4 of their curriculum and said that they would welcome greater interaction between the Subjects in the earlier stages of their curriculum.

- 3.4.7 The Review Panel learned from the SER and from discussions with staff that entry to *Performance* at levels 1 and 2 is not possible for MA students, mainly due to the demands of the MA year 1 degree programme, since basic familiarity with repertoire and general musicianship skills take precedence in the curriculum in order to provide a solid basis for subsequent Honours study in Music. Although this is made clear in the recruitment literature, students appear to expect music courses to include a substantial element of performance and the fact that MA1 and 2 students cannot obtain access to *Performance* is regularly expressed as a disappointment. The MA students in one of the groups that met with the Panel said that a number of students were disappointed at not being able to undertake *Performance* since first year can be boring for those who do not enjoy theory. The Panel explored with the MA students in one of the groups whether the lack of *Performance* is an issue for getting to meet students on the other two programmes and working in groups. They said that it was not.

### **Programme Review**

- 3.4.8 A review of the undergraduate curriculum had been ongoing since 2009. The Review Panel noted from the SER that the purpose of the review has been threefold: to translate generic concepts into discipline-specific terms, in relation to SCQF and Subject Benchmark Statement guidance, to ensure that the descriptors are appropriate to the level of the course and to ensure progression can be demonstrated where a specific sub-discipline offers courses at different levels. The Panel found the minutes of the Course Review meeting to be exemplary. They contained a comprehensive evaluation of Examination Board minutes, External Examiners' reports, student feedback and a critical self-appraisal of course operation. The minutes of Staff meetings were likewise clearly presented and showed discussion of wider University issues and policies in addition to managing in-house arrangements.

### **Employability**

- 3.4.9 The negative student response to the University's PDP course was noted in the minute of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee of 16 November 2009. It was evident to the Review Panel that students do not yet fully understand this initiative. The Panel suggests that Music makes the opportunities that the curriculum provides for PDP more explicit to students and encourages them to participate.
- 3.4.10 The Review Panel explored employability with staff and students. Staff and students were well aware of the employability issues related to music as a career. Staff explained that many musicians are self-employed and that full-time musicians are relatively rare. Staff also explained that there was no 'music industry' as such but that students achieve a rich combination of skills by studying music and through the interests that they pursue beyond their University learning which equips them well for a wide range of employment opportunities.
- 3.4.11 Undergraduate students spoke of the range of transferrable skills that they were achieving through their engagement with music both as a subject and in the community.
- 3.4.12 The Review Panel noted that Music arranged careers evenings which provided opportunities for students to meet with a range of people with disparate backgrounds, thus exposing them to a variety of career opportunities.
- 3.4.13 The Review Panel learned that Music had a strategy for 'skilling up' its students. For example the *Opera* course includes visits from singers, directors and back room people, all of whom are instructed to explain how they got to where they are, what they do and what students can expect from a career in this area. Staff saw this as a good model which helped to shape student expectations. The *Composition* workshop also presents opportunities for students to engage with professionals, as does the *Notation* course which recently included a visit from a member of staff from the BBC Library who



spoke about organisational matters. The Panel **commends** Music on its approach to employability.

- 3.4.14 The Review Panel had noted the employment information that had been gleaned from the survey of students 6 months after graduation which suggested that few students enter a music career direct from University. The Panel commented on the interesting career pathways that some of Music's graduates had subsequently entered and explored with staff whether they had a policy to gather more information at a later stage, suggesting that there could be virtue in maintaining a rapport with graduates and that it might also help Music to sell what it does to prospective students. Staff explained that they had decided not to track subsequent employment because of the immense administrative task that it would entail. However, they acknowledged that this might perhaps be possible in the future since Music was now part of a larger unit and that the advent of social networking (e.g. Facebook) might provide tools to assist tracking.

### **Work Experience Opportunities**

- 3.4.15 The Review Panel was impressed with the range of opportunities available to Music students to gain work experience. Examples cited in the SER include the Primary School outreach project on the *Composition* course, engagement by students with Music in the University concert organisation, students organising their own ensembles and extra-curricular music making activities (including for instance the Cr:acc Ensemble, a student-run contemporary experimental music ensemble, which appeared at the Edinburgh Fringe and the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival in 2009), and the new College of Arts *Employing Arts & Humanities* course. The Panel also learned from staff that Music students are responsible for two student-run online journals, *The Pulse* and *The Score*.

### **Postgraduate Taught Programmes**

- 3.4.16 The Review Panel noted that Music's postgraduate taught provision is relatively recent, having been introduced in Session 2007-08. It represents an ambitious range of programmes.
- 3.4.17 The Review Panel learned from the SER that the PGT Diploma/Certificate had originally been conceived as CPD for the local community and fulfilled several functions, including stand-alone Certificate or Diploma provision, an exit route from Masters and as a taster for research. The Head of Subject explained that the Diplomas and Certificates were designed around taught components of the Research Masters. The Certificates and Diplomas in *Composition*, *Sonic Arts* and *Musicology* are therefore offered as taught degrees. The structure is similar to an MRes programme with very little taught content, although the Panel noted that students are welcome to attend any of the other courses offered by Music. The Panel's discussion with the Diploma student confirmed that these Diplomas are predominantly research orientated. The student had known what to expect and was happy with the programme but felt slightly isolated from the rest of Music.
- 3.4.18 The Review Panel learned that the MLitt in Popular Music Studies is effectively one programme with three specialist pathways, *Popular Music Studies*, *Music Industries* and *Creative Practice*. The programme had started from a low base but student numbers were increasing. Students informed the Panel that it has a very sociological and cultural base. The first semester of teaching consists of two core courses which are delivered simultaneously to students on all three pathways. Specialist material is delivered in Semester 2. Those pursuing the general *Popular Music Studies* pathway undertake courses on the music industries and popular music politics. Those on the *Music Industries* pathway undertake a course on the music industries and a music industry placement within the local music industries. Those following the *Creative Practice* pathway undertake a course on creative practice and then produce a creative project such as a CD or performance. All students undertake a dissertation.

- 3.4.19 The Review Panel had noted that there was only one staff member with substantial expertise in the area covered by the MLitt in Popular Music Studies, who was currently on study leave, and explored with staff whether developing a programme around the expertise of one staff member was a weakness both in terms of the range of teaching styles from which ideally students should benefit and in terms of ensuring that the programme could be delivered should an emergency arise. The Panel was assured that other staff contribute to the programme and that students have a nominated supervisor for their project. Staff also assured the Panel that appropriate arrangements had been put in place to cover the MLitt Programme Director's study leave in Semester 2.
- 3.4.20 MLitt students were fully aware of the arrangements that had been made for the management of the programme and the delivery of teaching in Semester 2. When asked about the balance between taught and independent work the two MLitt students who met with the Review Panel said that the first semester had been structured and that there was more independent work in Semester 2. Both were following the *Creative Practice* pathway and were finding that they had to prompt staff for meetings this semester. They had expected staff to be more 'hands-on' in a taught degree and were a little disappointed with the lack of structure in Semester 2 for the particular pathway that they were following. The Panel **recommends** that Music reviews the information on the *Creative Practice 2* course contained in the Popular Music Studies Student Handbook, with a view to providing clearer information about the structure of the course and the parameters for interactions between the Course Tutors and students in relation to the student's project.
- 3.4.21 MLitt students had the opportunity to attend other classes if they wished and this, together with meeting their peers regularly in class, ensured that they did not feel isolated.

#### **Joint provision with the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD)**

- 3.4.22 The Review Panel learned from the SER and from staff that a new taught MMus in *Historically Informed Performance Practice* was in development. It would be taught jointly with the RSAMD and was planned to begin 2011-12. It would provide students with an 'apprenticeship' type arrangement with the award-winning Dunedin Consort, under the direction of Professor John Butt, with input from Dr David McGuinness and his ensemble Concerto Caledonia. The Panel explored this development with the Head of Subject, the Head of School and the School Quality Officer and learned that the new Masters was a unique concept and that it would be challenging for conservatoire staff to rethink how pedagogy works around performance and how to release the individual relationship between Professor and student for a workshop approach. The Panel noted that the University of Glasgow would have ownership of the first year of delivery and would be leading on the academic side, thereby ensuring that the academic standards were appropriate to postgraduate taught provision.
- 3.4.23 The Review Panel learned from the SER and from staff that initial discussions had also taken place to devise a joint undergraduate MA course with the RSAMD, combining Music studies at the University with performance studies at RSAMD. The Panel noted that Music and the School of Culture and Creative Arts had taken steps to facilitate access to University courses in Modern Languages for RSAMD students. It was anticipated that the programme would consist of one third Music at Glasgow, one third performance at RSAMD and one third in a Modern Language at Glasgow. If implemented, this development would further enhance Glasgow's position as a highly attractive place to study music.

- 3.4.24 The Review Panel learned from staff that RSAMD also had space issues and that the planned alliance was therefore unlikely to yield space benefits for the University of Glasgow.

### **3.5 Student Recruitment**

- 3.5.1 The Review Panel noted that Music was pleased to have retained its subject identity since external consumers search the web for Subjects rather than for Schools.
- 3.5.2 The Review Panel learned from the SER that the target entry to the BMus is 16 students per annum and that Music had control of recruitment to this programme. Staff informed the Panel that Music typically receives around 260 applications and that promising applicants, usually around 94 are invited to an audition and interview, where they must demonstrate practical musical performance skills equivalent to the Grade 8 standard of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), in addition to meeting the stated requirement for Scottish Higher or A-level qualifications.
- 3.5.3 The Review Panel noted from the SER and from discussions with staff that conducting BMus auditions is intensive but rewarding and requires to be organised well in advance to ensure that staff are available to conduct the block sessions of auditions which require two staff members in attendance. The Panel was advised that Music was considering specifying ABRSM Grade 8 as an entry requirement in future as a way of reducing the number of auditions offered. Staff explained that this would streamline applications in terms of what is appropriate and would guarantee musical literacy. However, it is also possible for applicants to acquire similar breadth of experience and literacy through experience in an orchestra and this information can be gleaned from the UCAS form. The Head of School explained that the main reason for rejecting students is insufficient performance standard. When asked if there was scope for taking a different approach to performance, the Head of Subject said that rethinking the performance element could potentially open the programme up to a wider range of candidates but Music would have to be careful that this did not undermine quality.
- 3.5.4 The Review Panel explored recruitment experience with undergraduate students and the feedback from BMus students suggested that auditions and interviews were a good way of demonstrating Music's commitment to its students. Glasgow was the only Scottish University that interviewed applicants to the BMus and the students who met with the Panel indicated that this had been one of the factors that had attracted them to Glasgow and their positive experience of it had influenced their decision to study here. Soft evidence also suggests that students who have been auditioned and have met the staff are more likely to accept an offer.
- 3.5.5 The Review Panel noted that there was sufficient flexibility in Music's undergraduate programmes to allow students to transfer between programmes where appropriate and that occasional transfers did take place. Transfers between the MA and BMus had a zero impact in terms of student numbers.

### **Postgraduate taught programmes**

- 3.5.6 The PGT Diplomas/Certificate courses currently attract small numbers. Staff acknowledged that it would be helpful to market these courses more widely to enable them to be delivered as taught provision. The Review Panel encourages Music to actively pursue this.

### **Opportunities for increasing international profile**

- 3.5.7 The 2008 RAE indicated that the University of Glasgow is Scotland's leading centre for musical research. The SER noted that the main strength of Music's teaching lies in its close relationship to staff research and that students' learning is shaped by scholars and practitioners of international standing, and is further enhanced by Glasgow's rich and diverse environment of musical performance. The SER also stated that Glasgow

had been awarded UNESCO City of Music status in 2008 for the vibrancy of its musical life, which could be an important factor in marketing Music's provision to international students. From discussion with PGT students, the Review Panel learned that opportunities to combine cultural studies and music at PGT level are not available in the USA. The MLitt in Popular Music Studies might therefore prove attractive to American applicants. The Panel encourages Music to explore this avenue.

3.5.8 The Review Panel learned from staff that international recruitment was gradually building. The PGT Programme Director told the Panel that he follows the progress of Music's international graduates and would be visiting Tokyo shortly.

3.5.9 The External Subject Specialist advised fellow Review Panel members that, nationally, Music attracts half as many international students as other subjects and these tend to be clustered in conservatoires. For this reason, investing in international recruitment at undergraduate level was not a priority for Music.

### *3.6 Student Progression, Retention and Support*

#### **Progression**

3.6.1 The Planning Office cohort analysis was described as covering MA (Arts)/BMus. The SER noted that it was not clear to staff whether this data included all MA students or only those taking the MA Music, however progression from year 1-2 appeared to hover around 84% and progression from year 2-3 and 3-4 appeared to have improved since 1998.

#### **Retention**

3.6.2 The commentary in the SER indicated that the BMus appears to have relatively good retention and that the BEng Electronics with Music appears also to have a satisfactory retention rate. The SER indicated that the greatest retention problem lies at the transition from MA1 to MA2 and that the drop from MA2 to MA Junior Honours might be expected, since many students who have studied music alongside two other subjects may choose to take a subject other than music at Honours level. The SER maintained that the apparent drop from MA Junior to Senior Honours can be explained by students opting at this stage to take a General degree, which can often suit students' personal circumstances. The Panel explored the high drop-out level in Music students continuing into 3<sup>rd</sup> year with undergraduate students who confirmed that the breadth of choice in the MA meant that although many students with an interest in Music take it as a subject in the early years they do not necessarily wish to pursue it to Honours level.

3.6.3 In order to gain a better understanding of matters relating to retention, the Review Panel explored the extent to which staff use the full range of grades in marking students' assignments. The Panel had noted that there were very few E-F grades and more frequent use of CR and CW. Staff explained that with continuous assessment it was extremely unusual for students who had completed the required attendance and submitted the work to achieve a less than satisfactory result. Those who performed less well at the beginning of the course either improved by the end of the course or decided that it was not for them. By contrast, students who failed to attend compulsory classes might be refused credit or have credit withheld until they had completed the requirements of the course. Where credit was withheld there were opportunities to retrieve this situation.

#### **Support**

3.6.4 The students who met with the Review Panel said that they were well supported. They found staff to be helpful and approachable and said that there was a good atmosphere in the Subject area. The Panel was pleased to note that all staff offer at least a one-

hour weekly 'surgery' for discussion of any aspect of students' studies and students said that staff were also accessible by e-mail. Some students suggested that staff's 'office hours' might be better publicised but said that this was not an issue since staff had an 'open door' policy and were ready to oblige them.

- 3.6.5 Undergraduate students told the Review Panel that they were confident that the staff took on board any issues that were brought to their attention and gave examples of where this had happened.
- 3.6.6 BMus students commented on the benefits of peer support. They found the cohesiveness that existed in tutorial groups helpful and said that they never felt lost or isolated since they could rely on each other for mutual support.
- 3.6.7 One group of students told the Review Panel that the flexibility of the MA programme was not always well explained to students by their Adviser of Studies and that some students had to go back and forth to their Adviser to ensure that they were keeping their options open. MA students suggest that when a student was clearly dedicated to music, they should be made aware that they could select more music courses. The Review Panel **recommends** that the variability in the clarity of advice to MA entrants regarding the flexibility of the MA programme is drawn to the attention of the Chief Adviser for the College of Arts so that it can be addressed in the training delivered to Advisers of Studies.

### 3.7 *The Quality of Learning Opportunities*

- 3.7.1 The Review Panel learned from the SER that the quality of learning opportunities provided through Music's programmes is greatly enhanced by the city of Glasgow's rich and diverse musical culture. The SER cites a number of examples to support this claim including:
- Students have easy access to an enormous range of live music and other art forms across a huge range of genres taking place in the city, they engage in workshop activities with visiting musicians and benefit from input direct from performing ensembles.
  - The presence of many small-scale music companies in the city facilitates MLitt Music Industries placements, where students are placed in a firm for a number of weeks, gaining unique and valuable insight into creative entrepreneurship at first hand.
  - The presence of contemporary music and performance festivals provides a public arena for composition and sonic arts work, particularly at postgraduate level.
- 3.7.2 The SER reflected on the details of the benefits available to undergraduate students undertaking various specialisms and drew attention to the annual postgraduate showcase event, *Sound Thought*, which is organised and curated by Music postgraduates and combines scholarly papers by postgraduates with performance of postgraduate compositions. The Panel **commends** this initiative. Students also benefit from the University's Music Development Officer being located in the Music building.
- 3.7.3 The undergraduate students who met with the Review Panel expressed satisfaction with the quality of their learning opportunities and their experience as students of music. Undergraduate students on all three degree programmes valued the opportunity to learn from experts in the field and appreciated the fact that staff were active in their specialist area and also committed teachers. PGT students described staff as a diverse and interesting group who work well together.
- 3.7.4 BMus students spoke of the broad scope that their curriculum provided. MA students said that Glasgow was the only place that offered music as a joint honours MA – other

institutions offered it only as a minor subject. The learning opportunities available to MA students at Glasgow were therefore ideal for students who were not convinced that they wanted to focus completely on music and there was sufficient flexibility for them to keep their options open. BEng students said that the quality of the provision at Glasgow was exceptional in that there was no other programme available that combined Electronics with Music and was taught by specialists in both subject areas.

- 3.7.5 Undergraduate students valued the opportunities for integrated learning that were provided through the courses shared across the three degree programmes and the sense of community that this engendered.
- 3.7.6 Postgraduate taught students who met with the Panel valued the opportunities provided for independent learning.

### 3.8 *Resources for Learning and Teaching*

#### **Impact of University Restructuring**

- 3.8.1 Both the Head of School and the Head of Subject were optimistic about the benefits that might accrue from being part of a larger organisational unit, both in terms of future administrative efficiencies and opportunities for collaboration on different levels. The Head of Subject told the Review Panel that restructuring had been broadly beneficial to Music. Relations with the other disciplines in the School were good and there was better administrative support for Music than ever before. The Head of Subject assured the Panel that he was confident that he could approach the Head of School to discuss resource issues should this ever be necessary.
- 3.8.2 The Review Panel was pleased to learn that the efforts of the Music teaching team had ensured that the restructuring of the University had not affected the continuity of the learning and teaching procedures and that students had been reassured of this. The quality of the student experience was enhanced by having a Subject Administrator on hand and staff emphasised that this was essential.
- 3.8.3 There had been conversations regarding organisation within the School but, in practical terms, little had yet changed since 1 August 2010. Administrative arrangements were not yet entirely clear and some staff had slight concerns about the principles of subsidiarity at College versus School level, particularly since, at this point in time, it appeared that some of the tasks required since restructuring involved an additional layer of administration or duplication of effort. It was clear to the Review Panel that the latter concern was not unique to Music or the School of Culture and Creative Arts. The Panel urges the Music staff to identify any areas in which they believe there may be duplication of effort and bring these to the attention of the Head of School who should raise the matter at College level if necessary.
- 3.8.4 *Performance* and *Sonic Arts* were described as resource intensive, requiring Subject-specific resourcing.
- 3.8.5 *Music in the University* employs a Music Development Officer and combines a professionally organised concert series with support for student music-making. The Head of School told the Review Panel that there was some uncertainty regarding the line management for *Music in the University* which had previously been in the remit of the Head of Department of Music. There was also a lack of clarity about where responsibility lies for resourcing the regular maintenance of the University-owned instruments in the Concert Hall, in particular the two Steinway concert grand pianos, and the organ. The Panel **recommends** that the University clarifies the line management for *Music in the University* and where responsibility rests for resourcing the regular maintenance of the University-owned musical equipment in the Concert Hall.

### Staff Workload

- 3.8.6 Music offers a broad range of taught provision which includes specialisms in *Historical and Cultural Musicology*, *Performance* and *Performance Studies*, *Composition*, *Sonic Arts and Music Technology* and *Popular Music Studies*. The Review Panel learned that the timetable is structured such that most staff have one busy semester and one relatively light one each year, and that courses are run in alternate years and can be deferred or brought forward as appropriate. The Panel also noted that Level 1 courses are delivered through team teaching with most staff contributing to *Musicianship* and *Listening and Repertory* courses. Most staff also contribute a Masters level research seminar and undertake supervision both of undergraduate dissertations and postgraduate research students. From time to time staff are also required to cover for colleagues who are on study leave.
- 3.8.7 The Head of Subject adopts a qualitative approach to workload, taking cognisance of the fact that some courses are relatively easy to deliver but may have a large number of students, whilst others may be complex but have fewer students. Courses are also closely aligned with staff interests. It was however acknowledged that continuous assessment, whilst desirable for a subject such as Music, carries a heavy workload.

### Probationary Staff

- 3.8.8 The Review Panel was pleased to learn that the probationary staff member had found joining Music to be very exciting. The staff member had been assigned a mentor who was always on hand and had found colleagues to be very helpful and supportive. In terms of the curriculum, the member of staff had a good balance between Levels 1 and 2 and honours and had a significant and rewarding role in the *Performance* course. Undergraduate students said that they appreciated the changes that had taken place in the *Performance* course since this staff member's arrival.
- 3.8.9 The Review Panel perceived the probationary staff member's workload to be higher than the norm, leaving little opportunity for research, and was concerned that a heavy teaching load in the first semester this year had precluded attendance at the New Lecturer and Teacher Programme. The Panel **recommends** that the School of Culture and Creative Arts ensures that the workload of probationary members of staff in the School is equitable and sufficiently realistic to ensure that they are able to attend the New Lecturer and Teacher Programme and that the objectives of the probationary period are achievable in the context of their overall remit.

### Graduate Teaching Assistants

- 3.8.10 The Review Panel learned from the SER and from staff that Music relies heavily on GTAs to supply practical music tuition to large numbers of students at levels 1 and 2 through courses such as *Musicianship* and *Musical Techniques 1* but that costs are substantially higher than budgeted for through College budget formulae. GTA costs are therefore cross-subsidised each year from the Consumables budget and by a £2000 endowment fund.
- 3.8.11 The Review Panel met with two GTAs who contribute to undergraduate teaching and one hourly-paid staff member who teaches on the MLitt in Popular Music Studies and who is co-ordinating lectures and assessment this semester whilst the Programme Convener is on study leave. All three enjoyed their teaching experience and confirmed that they had attended the training provided at the Learning & Teaching Centre in this or another University. They confirmed that they were appropriately supported by the relevant staff members and said that there was a good community feeling in Music. All three were involved in marking assessments and confirmed that their marking was either second marked or moderated. The member of hourly-paid staff said that MLitt tutorials were closely co-ordinated with lectures. His teaching was based on the achievement of course ILOs but he had flexibility in how he managed tutorials. He

routinely received feedback from the PGT Programme Director on the guest lectures that he delivered. GTAs reported that they do not receive feedback directly from Lecturers but that course feedback is available to them on Moodle. The Panel suggested to GTAs that it could be helpful for them to discuss opportunities for feedback at the School GTA Support Group which they found to be an excellent initiative. The Panel also encourages teaching staff to arrange short meetings with GTAs to give them feedback on how well they are performing and how they might do better.

- 3.8.12 GTAs told the Review Panel that staff had not observed their teaching but that they would find this helpful. They themselves had not attended any of the tutorials delivered by their peers although they provided mutual support to each other. The Panel **recommends** that consideration be given to including GTAs in Music's peer observation scheme, when it is formally implemented, with a view to helping them develop as teachers.

### **Sustainability of current provision**

- 3.8.13 The Review Panel was impressed with the broad range of provision available to students and programmes and courses were clearly well regarded. However, the Panel has concerns about the sustainability of the current provision in an economic climate where the University is likely to have to rationalise its resources. The Panel recognised that Music might be trying to accomplish too much within its limited resources and **recommends** that, in the course of the next year, both the School and the Subject give serious consideration as to how they might deploy Music's shrinking resources to best advantage to maintain and enhance the quality of the student learning experience, whilst also safeguarding staff wellbeing through a balanced and achievable workload.

### **Physical accommodation**

- 3.8.14 The SER drew attention to the inadequacy of Music's accommodation and noted that it had been acknowledged as being inappropriate at the Court Review in 2000 and that the DPTLA Review in 2005 had noted that the facilities were 'clearly on the University's agenda for considerable improvement'. The Review Panel noted that these concerns were also expressed in Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs). Accommodation concerns were explored in greater detail during the Panel's meetings with staff, students and GTAs. The Panel also noted from the SER that the Head of Subject had met with the Director of Estates & Buildings on several occasions to begin to plan some upgrading of the Concert Hall.
- 3.8.15 The Equality Act 2010 implies an expectation that the institution and/or subject area make reasonable adjustment to enable students with disabilities, including physical mobility needs, to pursue the full curriculum. The Review Panel found Music's accommodation at 14 University Gardens to be unsuitable for disabled access as are the music studios in the Gilbert Scott Building and concluded that this matter requires to be addressed (see Para 3.8.23).
- 3.8.16 Although 3 sound-proofed practice pods had been provided in the Sir Alexander Stone Building since the 2005 DPTLA Review, staff had ongoing concerns about the inadequacy of Music's accommodation in general terms when set alongside the expectations of applicants who have largely experienced high quality music facilities at school and elsewhere.
- 3.8.17 GTAs considered the lack of sound-proofing in the practice rooms at 14 University Gardens problematic for teaching and learning. They told the Review Panel that the sound penetration from the practice rooms was distracting, and particularly so for those undertaking examinations/class tests in the building whilst music performance practice was also taking place. They suggested that investment in keyboards with headphones such as those provided in the Library might be helpful.



- 3.8.18 Undergraduate students have out-of-hours access to the practice facilities in 14 University Gardens in the evening. PGT students, whose course is taught between 4.00 and 7.00 pm, told the Review Panel that the sound penetration from the multiple practice sessions taking place in the building in the evening can be very distracting. This matter was also raised in the PGT Programme AMR for Session 2009-10 and is clearly an ongoing issue that requires resolution. PGT students also commented on the additional distraction of the frequent ringing of the doorbell in the evening. They suggested that PGT teaching might be delivered elsewhere in the University since lectures do not require the use of specialist equipment. The Panel encourages Music to investigate alternative venues for the delivery of PGT teaching in the evening to eliminate the distraction to PGT learning.
- 3.8.19 The undergraduate students who met with the Review Panel were aware of the staff's concerns about Music's accommodation but did not raise any concerns about noise penetration or the quality of accommodation themselves. They told the Panel that accessing the practice facilities was not a problem as long as they were organised and booked their practice space in advance. In this respect they valued having out-of-hours access to the building since the facilities were heavily used during the daytime.
- 3.8.20 All students who met with the Review Panel expressed satisfaction with the Audio Lab and studio facilities. Engineering students found the paper booking system for the studio facilities constricting since it is not sufficiently flexible to alert them to the facilities becoming available as a result of cancelled bookings. This limits their opportunities to make maximum use of the facilities. The Panel **recommends** that Music explores the booking arrangements for studio facilities with BEng in Music with Electronics students with a view to finding a mutually satisfactory solution to concerns expressed about the limitations of the current booking system.
- 3.8.21 The lack of soundproofing in the University Concert Hall was widely viewed as a problem. Staff told the Review Panel that the sound of orchestral rehearsal leaked through to a recording studio a significant distance away and said that the sound leakage from the Concert Hall also impacts on the nearby Hunter Halls where the University conducts degree examinations.
- 3.8.22 Staff suggested that Music's accommodation might be improved by short-term measures, such as localised soundproofing, but said that they had the impression that there may be a reluctance to invest in the fabric of the building when a move to another building is envisaged in the fullness of time. The Head of School indicated that the combining of Subjects into a School should maximise the opportunities for sharing facilities and said that that he would explore potential for Music making use of the G12 facilities where appropriate.
- 3.8.23 The Review Panel toured Music's accommodation and endorses the statement in the SER that there remains a need for a long-term strategy for creating an integrated and fit-for-purpose physical environment for Music. The Panel considered what might be done to alleviate the identified problems in the short term. They did not consider the practice spaces in 14 University Gardens large enough for practice pods and speculated on the scope for practice pods in the old Hetherington Research Club at 13 University Gardens which might in turn allow the practice rooms in 14 University Gardens to be converted to small studios for editing using headphones. The Panel **recommends** that the University engages in frank discussion with the School of Culture and Creative Arts and with Music on the longer-term strategy for creating an integrated and fit-for-purpose physical environment for Music and that, alongside this, it explores solutions to the following issues which might be implemented in the shorter-term:
- The absence of disabled access to both 14 University Gardens and the studios in the Gilbert Scott Building;

- The lack of soundproofing in the 3 practice rooms located at 14 University Gardens and the resultant noise penetration which is clearly intrusive to teaching, assessment and staff research;
- The absence of soundproofing in the Concert Hall and the resultant noise penetration which intrudes into adjoining spaces including examination halls.

### **Equipment**

- 3.8.24 A full list of equipment was provided as an appendix to the SER. The Review Panel learned from the SER that Music has a substantial collection of musical instruments, including some of particular historical interest. Most are used to support student learning in performance studies, as well as supporting the various musical groups across the University community. Final year students said that they had seen a gradual improvement in the provision of instruments and that they particularly welcomed the new piano and percussion facilities.
- 3.8.25 Music has specialist computer and audio equipment which is used extensively by some courses, including *Sonic Arts*, *Composition* and *Notation*.
- 3.8.26 The Review Panel learned from the SER that funding of equipment is allocated through the College Equipment Funding Committee, for which bids are drawn up annually, and from which Music has benefited greatly, although the annual bidding cycle and relatively small sums involved make it difficult to plan to invest in equipment of substantial cost, such as for studio refurbishment or for musical instruments.

### **Library Provision**

- 3.8.27 The SER noted that some of the research collections of both primary and secondary sources in the University Library are outstanding. All groups of students who met with the Review Panel confirmed that the study space provision within 14 University Gardens itself was very good. Postgraduate taught students indicated that, from time to time, there was acute pressure on particular resources in the music section in the University Library and suggested that, in some instances, short loan arrangements would be helpful. The Panel encourages Music to explore the need for short loan provision with PGT students with a view to making any necessary arrangements to alleviate this problem.

## **4. Maintaining the Standards of Awards**

- 4.1 The Review Panel was satisfied with the effectiveness of the processes in place for maintaining the standards of awards and was pleased to note that Music had an established process for reviewing its undergraduate programmes and that it also planned to review its PGT provision.

### **Benchmark statement and other relevant external reference points**

- 4.2 The SER states that the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Music underpins the values of the whole curriculum and that key aspects of the Subject Benchmark Statement are embodied in some form in the ILOs for each course. Music maintains in the SER that its graduates consistently display the abilities listed in section 6 of the Subject Benchmark Statement through the acquisition of or demonstration of the qualities outlined in the ILOs.

### **External Examining**

- 4.3 The SER detailed the role of the External Examiners in monitoring the standards of Music's programmes and provided a clear description of the processes in place for internal examination meetings and for Examination Board meetings. The Review Panel

noted that the system in place in the former Department of Music has been retained meantime to ensure the continuity of quality during a period of significant change.

- 4.4 The Review Panel noted that External Examiner reports did not identify any significant problems with the academic standards and indicated that the degree standards match those of comparable institutions.
- 4.5 The Review Panel was satisfied with the clarification in the SER that quality control of grades resulting from undergraduate study abroad and from MLitt work placements is achieved through consultation with External Examiners, who have access to the original pieces of work.
- 4.6 The Review Panel observed that External Examiner appointments for the three undergraduate programmes started and finished at the same time and suggests that it would be beneficial to stagger these appointments, if possible, to provide a measure of overlap between old and new External Examiners.

### **Professional Accreditation**

- 4.7 The SER noted that the BEng in Music with Electronics was accredited by the Institution of Engineering and Technology and that the music component provides an integrated programme in which technological studies, through the *Sonic Arts* strand, are balanced with options in *Performance*, *Composition* or *Music History*.

### **Liaison with Potential Employers**

- 4.8 The SER stated that Music has no specific systematic procedures for eliciting the views of employers. The Review Panel recognised that Music courses generally do not map directly onto discrete career paths but was pleased to note that Music recognised that the need to obtain feedback from graduates and employers is appropriate both as a means of improving aspects of the curriculum and being able to highlight 'selling points' of the degrees.

## **5. Assuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Students' Learning Experience**

- 5.1 The SER stated that, in most respects, the student experience had improved substantially in recent years and that there is a generally positive atmosphere and a very high level of practical and intellectual engagement with the subject. This was substantiated by the Review Panel's discussion with students.
- 5.2 There was evidence that Music took Annual Monitoring seriously and sought solutions to concerns identified in Annual Monitoring with a view to enhancing the quality of students' learning experience. AMRs consistently make reference to the inadequacy of Music's accommodation and it has been frustrating for staff that the University has made minimal progress in addressing this matter.
- 5.3 The Review Panel's discussions with both undergraduate and postgraduate taught students indicated that the high profile research activity of the staff and their active engagement in their professional area resulted in leading edge teaching and an intellectually stimulating learning environment. Undergraduate students described being taught by skilled, enthusiastic lecturers as being one of the best things about their course.
- 5.4 Undergraduate students explained that they were allocated to groups following a test at the beginning of the year and said that they valued the opportunities for learning in a mixed group.

### **Student engagement with feedback processes**

- 5.5 Students assured the Panel that they were aware of who their Student Representatives were. Two of the Student Representatives who met with the Review Panel said that

they had missed the first meeting of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee as a result of not receiving e-mail notification. MLitt students had one Student Representative. This had worked well in Semester 1 but the students who met with the Panel were uncertain how it would work in Semester 2 when they no longer met regularly in class. The Review Panel encourages Music to explore with students how Student Representation mechanisms might be improved to enhance students' opportunities to contribute to the ongoing dialogue with staff. Despite these two concerns, there was strong evidence that Music's arrangements for consulting students were both inclusive and effective (see Para 1.6).

- 5.6 The Review Panel found that the minutes of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings indicated good two-way communication. Students are informed about important developments and have an open forum in which to raise questions/concerns. Responses from staff are helpful and fair and good reason is given when some requests cannot be accommodated. Students confirmed that staff are responsive when they raise concerns with them.
- 5.7 The SER stated that on-line feedback questionnaires are prepared for each course and that students are encouraged to participate. The SER also indicated that the move to on-line surveys had brought an increase in returns. The Review Panel explored the use of questionnaires with undergraduate students, who expressed a preference for paper questionnaires.

#### **The development of Graduate Attributes**

- 5.8 The SER listed the particular graduate attributes that students developed through the study of Music and noted that they reflect the spirit and content of the Subject Benchmark Statement. These include:
- integration of general intellectual skills with subject-specific skills;
  - cultivation of both verbal and musical forms of thought and communication;
  - flexibility of thought and action;
  - openness to new, personal, different or alternative thinking;
  - curiosity and the desire to explore;
  - ability and confidence to carry a creative project through to delivery.
- 5.9 Members of the Review Panel were impressed by the confidence, enthusiasm and articulacy of the students with whom they met. BMus and MA students spoke of Music providing the right structure to enable them to build their skills incrementally through the four years of their programme, including time management, critical thinking, the ability to develop and argue a case effectively and how to become an independent musician.

#### **Social interaction**

- 5.10 The sharing of core subjects enables students across the three undergraduate programmes to interact with each other on a regular basis and students spoke warmly of the peer support that learning in small groups fostered.

## 6. Summary of Perceived Strengths and Areas for Improvement in Learning and Teaching

### ***Key strengths***

- The inclusive approach to the preparation of the SER (**commended**)
- Initiation of a project to explore ways of addressing Level 1 marking load (**commended**)
- The uniqueness of Glasgow's undergraduate Music programmes
- The broad scope provided by the undergraduate music curriculum which offers a choice of 3 degree programmes for the study of Music
- The leading edge teaching and intellectually stimulating learning environment
- Helpful and approachable staff
- The good atmosphere within the Subject area
- The expertise and commitment of staff
- The setting, within the context of Glasgow's rich and varied musical culture
- The integration of students across the three undergraduate programmes
- The provision made to accommodate the variety of prior experience amongst students
- Peer support
- The wide and appropriate range of assessment methods employed
- The quality of opportunities for students to develop both general musical skills and specialist expertise
- The development of attributes in graduates that reflect the spirit and content of the Subject Benchmark Statement
- The approach to employability (**commended**)
- The range of opportunities available to Music students to gain work experience
- The opportunities for independent learning provided within PGT programmes
- The *Sound Thought* annual showcase event which combines scholarly papers by postgraduates with performance of postgraduate compositions
- The exemplary recording of Course Review minutes

### ***Areas to be improved or enhanced***

- Student understanding of PDP
- Provision of opportunities for non-assessed work and feedback
- Clarity regarding grading in continuous assessment for BEng in Electronics with Music students
- The interaction between Engineering and Music in the early stages of the BEng Electronics with Music curriculum

- Marketing of PGT programmes

## ***Conclusions and Recommendations***

### **Conclusions**

The Review Panel was impressed with the quality of Music's provision, the accomplishments of Music's staff and with the enthusiasm of both staff and students for their subject. All the students who met with the Panel were confident and articulate.

Music had adopted an exemplary approach to internal review which provided a platform for reflection and discussion between staff and students and proved to be an excellent resource to support the Panel's review of the Subject's learning, teaching and assessment. The deficiencies in the physical environment continue to be a significant matter of concern and the Panel was left in no doubt that the issues of disabled access and soundproofing require urgent attention and that it is of paramount importance for the University to engage in frank discussion with both the School of Culture and Creative Arts and with Music on the longer-term strategy for creating an integrated and fit-for-purpose learning environment.

NSS scores are disappointing and Music has some work to do both to communicate effectively to students that it is actively addressing the issues that the survey has identified and to engage students in exploring mutually satisfactory solutions to any residual issues that they may have.

The Panel was concerned that Music might be striving to do too much within its limited resources. Since much of its provision is dependent on the knowledge and expertise of individual members of staff and cannot be readily shared by the wider School, the Panel is **recommending** that in the course of the next year, both the School and the Subject give serious consideration as to how they might deploy Music's shrinking resources to best advantage to maintain and enhance the quality of the student learning experience, whilst also safeguarding staff wellbeing through a balanced and achievable workload (see Para 3.8.13).

### **Recommendations**

The recommendations interspersed in the preceding report are summarised below. It is important to note that the majority of these recommendations refer to issues identified by Music for action either prior to the Review or in the SER. The recommendations have been cross-referenced to the paragraphs in the text of the report to which they refer and are not ranked in any particular order.

#### ***Recommendation 1***

The Review Panel noted that the format in which programme ILOs were written in the previous iteration of programme specifications requires amendment and **recommends** that Music consults with the Learning & Teaching Centre when revising its programme specifications to ensure that programme ILOs are written in the appropriate format. (*Paragraph 3.2.2*)

For the attention of: **Head of Music**

#### ***Recommendation 2***

The Review Panel **recommends** that Music routinely shares and discusses the NSS results with students in the forum of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee with a view to

demonstrating its commitment to addressing student concerns, exploring what students would find useful in feedback and seeking shared solutions to any concerns identified. (Paragraph 3.3.11)

For the attention of: **Head of Music**

### *Recommendation 3*

The Review Panel **recommends** that Music reviews the information on the *Creative Practice 2* course contained in the Popular Music Studies Student Handbook, with a view to providing clearer information about the structure of the course and the parameters for interactions between the Course Tutors and students in relation to the student's project. (Paragraph 3.4.20)

For the attention of: **Head of Music**

### *Recommendation 4*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the variability in the clarity of advice to MA entrants regarding the flexibility of the MA programme is drawn to the attention of the Chief Adviser for the College of Arts so that it can be addressed in the training delivered to Advisers of Studies. (Paragraph 3.6.7)

For the attention of: **Chief Adviser for the College of Arts**

### *Recommendation 5*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the University clarifies the line management for *Music in the University* and where responsibility rests for resourcing the regular maintenance of the University-owned musical equipment in the Concert Hall. (Paragraph 3.8.5)

For the attention of: **Vice Principal and Head of the College of Arts**

### *Recommendation 6*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School of Culture & Creative Arts ensures that the workload of probationary members of staff in the School is equitable and sufficiently realistic to ensure that they are able to attend the New Lecturer and Teacher Programme and that the objectives of the probationary period are achievable in the context of their overall remit. (Paragraph 3.8.9)

For the attention of: **Head of School of Culture & Creative Arts**

### *Recommendation 7*

The Review Panel **recommends** that consideration be given to including GTAs in Music's peer observation scheme, when it is implemented, with a view to helping them develop as teachers. (Paragraph 3.8.12)

For the attention of: **Head of Music**

### *Recommendation 8*

The Review Panel recognised that Music might be trying to accomplish too much within its limited resources and **recommends** that, in the course of the next year, both the School and the Subject give serious consideration as to how they might deploy Music's shrinking resources to best advantage to maintain and enhance the quality of the student learning experience whilst also safeguarding staff wellbeing through a balanced and achievable workload. (Paragraph 3.8.13)

For the attention of: **Head of School of Culture & Creative Arts and Head of Music**

*Recommendation 9*

The Review Panel **recommends** that Music explores the booking arrangements for studio facilities with BEng in Music with Electronics students with a view to finding a mutually satisfactory solution to concerns expressed about the limitations of the current booking system. (*Paragraph 3.8.20*)

For the attention of: **Head of Music**

*Recommendation 10*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the University engages in frank discussion with the School of Culture and Creative Arts and with Music on the longer-term strategy for creating an integrated and fit-for-purpose physical environment for Music and that, alongside this, it explores solutions to the following issues, which might be implemented in the shorter-term:

- The absence of disabled access to both 14 University Gardens and the studios in the Gilbert Scott Building;
- The lack of soundproofing in the 3 practice rooms located at 14 University Gardens and the resultant noise penetration which is clearly intrusive to teaching, assessment and staff research;
- The absence of soundproofing in the Concert Hall and the resultant noise penetration which intrudes into adjoining spaces including examination halls. (*Paragraph 3.8.23*)

For the attention of: **Vice Principal Strategy & Resources**



## Appendix 1

### Full List of Programmes and additional notes

#### *Undergraduate programmes*

- Bachelor of Music (BMus)
- Master of Arts (MA) Single Honours in Music

#### *Joint Degree Programmes (Undergraduate)*

Music contributes to the following *joint* degree programmes offered with other Subjects:

- MA Joint Honours in Music and another Subject

In the current session, these Subjects include:

Anthropology  
Applied Mathematics  
Arts and Media Informatics  
Business and Management  
Celtic  
Celtic Civilisation  
Classical Civilisation  
Computing Science  
Economics  
English Language  
English Literature  
Film and Television Studies  
French  
Geography  
German  
Hispanic Studies  
History  
History of Art  
Italian  
Mathematics  
Philosophy  
Physics  
Politics  
Psychology  
Scottish History  
Scottish Literature  
Spanish  
Sociology  
Russian  
Theatre Studies  
Theology and Religious Studies

The Music aspect of joint degrees is funded at the Creative Arts & Hospitality Level

- BEng/MEng in Electronics with Music (This programme is offered by the School of Engineering and is accredited by the Institution of Engineering and Technology.)

*Postgraduate taught programmes*

- Certificate/Diploma/MLitt in Popular Music Studies with specialist pathways in Popular Music Studies, Music Industries and Creative Practice
- Certificate/Diploma in Composition
- Certificate/Diploma in Musicology
- Certificate/Diploma in Sonic Arts