University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 27 May 2011

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Responses to Recommendations Arising from the Review of the Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII), held on 26 February 2010

Ms Helen Clegg, Clerk to the Review Panel

Conclusions

The Panel was impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff and GTA groups, and with the focus on employability and practical work. With both staff and students citing it as a strength, the small size of HATII appeared to be of great benefit, allowing for a more personalised approach as well as a varied, if heavy, workload for staff. The student groups were articulate and enthusiastic, and were a credit to HATII.

HATII demonstrated a number of strengths, as well as an awareness of the areas requiring improvement. The most substantive of these are reflected in the recommendations that follow.

Recommendations

The recommendations interspersed in the preceding report are summarised below. They 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.

In light of the restructuring of the University, recommendations have been redirected to the appropriate designates. Please note that the text of the recommendations has not been updated.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Recommendation 1

The Panel **recommends** that HATII review all of its course descriptors in order to ensure they accurately and fully reflect course content *[Paragraph 3.2.3].*

For the attention of: **Heads of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**

Joint Response:

With the implementation of the Student Lifecycle Project there will be fuller course descriptions provided via PIP and the on-line course catalogue. Staff due to return from maternity leave will complete this task.

Assessment

Recommendation 2

The Panel **recommends** that HATII consider providing more detailed course and assessment information at pre-enrolment stage in order to allow students to make more informed course selections *[Paragraph 3.3.2].*

For the attention of: **Heads of Subject** and **Head of School of Humanities**

Joint Response:

The creation of the School of Humanities resulting from the restructuring of the University will help with this. The SLP will also contain information that students need at the pre-enrolment stage. School and subject level web pages are currently being updated centrally.

Recommendation 3

The Panel **recommends** that for cases where it is not possible to provide feedback within three weeks, HATII issues clear, formal guidance to all students outlining the expected turnaround time for the return of assignments and feedback. The Panel further **recommends** that HATII develop a policy for informing students when a delay to the expected feedback schedule occurs. *[Paragraph 3.3.3].*

For the attention of: **Heads of Subject** and **Head of School of Humanities**

Joint Response:

This now comes under the remit of the School of Humanities. The Head of HATII is issuing clear instruction staff about the turnaround time for the return of coursework and relevant comments.

Recommendation 4

The Panel **recommends** that further discussion takes place with the Learning & Teaching Centre in order to resolve the issue relating to the technical assessment, perhaps by front-loading the technical skills aspect of the course *[Paragraph 3.3.4].*

For the attention of: **Heads of Subject** and **Head of School of Humanities** and **Director of Learning & Teaching Centre**

Joint Response:

Further discussion has taken place with the Learning & Teaching Centre.
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Response – Director, Learning & Teaching Centre

Dr Mary McCulloch is happy to take forward discussions with HATII regarding these recommendations. Ideally this should be done in conjunction with the new code of practice concerning assessment. - technical assessment issues.

Recommendation 5

The Panel therefore **recommends** that HATII give consideration to putting processes in place to reduce the amount of student work being second marked, particularly at postgraduate level and,

in conjunction with appropriate Faculty staff and staff from the Learning and Teaching Centre, consider the options for reducing the volume of assessment HATII undertake. [*Paragraph 3.3.7].*

For the attention of: **Heads of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**
and **Director of Learning & Teaching Centre**

Joint Response

This has been addressed. There is no longer second marking, but moderation of work. Head of Subject is addressing assessment reduction by the end of session 2010-11, to be in place for session 2011-12. HATII is represented on the School Teaching & Learning Committee where such discussions take place in a broader framework.

Response – Director, Learning & Teaching Centre

Dr Mary McCulloch is happy to take forward discussions with HATII regarding these recommendations. Ideally this should be done in conjunction with the new code of practice concerning assessment - reduction in the amount of assessment second marking

Curriculum Design, Development and Content

Recommendation 6

The Panel **recommends** that consideration be given to increasing the amount of lab time available to undergraduate students, with part of this being unsupervised, although it is acknowledged that, given the existing difficulties with access to labs, this may not be viable. Consideration should also be given to altering the balance between lecture and lab sessions, so that, if appropriate, some sessions might be entirely lab based rather than a lecture followed by a practical session, *[Paragraph 3.4.6].*

For the attention of: **Heads of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**

Joint Response

Fully addressed and continuing to evolve smaller lab session with more core staff available. We have timetabled two hour lab sessions for AMI 1A & 1B with the intent that the students have supervision in the first hour and work through examples in the second hour. This enables staff to be flexible on the teaching model, varying the lecture/lab set up as required. We have also timetabled in lab drop-in sessions throughout the academic year for all levels, some of which will be staffed as appropriate. This was discussed at SSLC and agreed as a way forward.
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Student Recruitment

Recommendation 7

In order to raise awareness of the programme content, and to assist with recruitment, the Panel **recommends** that the Directors of HATII meet with colleagues in Corporate Communications and the Recruitment and International Office to discuss possible alternative degree titles for the undergraduate degree *[Paragraph 3.5.2].*

For the attention of: **Heads of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**
and **Director of Corporate Communications**
and **Director of Recruitment & International Office**

Joint Response: School/Subject

Not fully addressed but being addressed in stages. Head of School has met with the HATII teaching team.

Response: Director of Corporate Communications and: Director of Recruitment & International Office

A meeting was held with HATII on 14 April 2011. The following discussion took place:

Arts and Media Informatics is currently a UG joint honours degree although it is hoped to be offered as a single honours in the future.

European and International students are familiar with the term Informatics. Whilst it is a unique offering in the UK, people are not familiar with the term, both prospective students and employers.

The degree is less concerned with the Information Technology aspect but is really about the creation, management, dissemination, use and application of information within the arts and cultural setting/context.

We discussed varying options and all agreed to get rid of the word Informatics and replace with something more meaningful in today's context.

Students who have studied this degree tend to go into a range of careers within the creative and cultural arts industries whether that be as Media Managers, web based journalists, content managers, etc.

The recommendation from this meeting was agreed as Arts and Digital Media [Studies?] however it was agreed that further benchmarking research would be carried out as well as user testing/current and prospective student feedback.

Actions arising:

SDLR – Review other Universities naming of similar courses and provide a report to IG of outcomes.

IG – Seek feedback on any potential new names from current HATII students and prospective students at the open day – held in June.

FB – Seek feedback on any potential new names for forthcoming teacher event and feedback to IG.

IG – Put in a proposal for final name change for 2012/13 recruitment.

Recommendation 8

The Panel **recommends** that HATII give serious consideration to its long term strategy and focus so that it can continue to deliver high-quality provision in a sustainable manner. *[Paragraph 3.5.4].*

For the attention of: **Heads of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**
and **Dean (Learning & Teaching), College of Arts**

Joint Response (School/Dean))

Restructuring has provided clearer strategy as can be seen from the School Strategic plan HATII will continue to develop and teach on its successful PGT programmes. One PGT programme has been developed in accordance with the School Strategy to stand as a hub and spoke programme, across School and College subject areas. HATII will develop a single honours programme at undergraduate level in 2012-13. Workloads on these programmes have been addressed to ensure sustainability in research. This has been possible by non-research active staff having a full teaching load. HATII is aligned to the three main strands of excellence in teaching, research and internationalisation and is supported by the school structure and in particular, the PG, LT and Research areas.

The Quality of Learning Opportunities

Recommendation 9

The Panel **recommends** that consideration be given to the increased use of podcasting, in addition to scheduled classes, at all levels *[Paragraph 3.7.2]*

Joint Response:

Considered and will use when appropriate within Moodle

Recommendation 10

The Panel **recommends** that HATII consider developing contingency plans for delivering the courses currently supported by external staff to ensure the continued sustainability of their programmes *[Paragraph 3.7.4].*

Joint Response

This is on-going. There is now a closer bond with Computing Science which will assist in the event of a crisis.

In terms of subject area contingency, we have one member of staff currently working on a research degree as CPD to enable him to take a fuller role in the one area that is at most risk (CFED).

Internal teaching resources can be drawn on as appropriate, to enable teaching from Computing Science to be made available to HATII as appropriate, through the University course load/teaching procedures. In practice, this means that one lecturer works closely with HATII in terms of research and teaching and would enable sustainability for a short term crisis.

Clearly any required additional resources will only become available within a robust and achievable business plan. All postgraduate programmes within the School of Humanities are currently undergoing a review process and programme costing models are being implemented by the Head of School Administration. This review is being undertaken in conjunction with the

Head of College Finance. Budgets for external teaching resources are reviewed and agreed on an annual basis. The vocational nature of HATII PGT programmes means that an element of external teaching through practising professionals is vital to ensure continued accreditation through professional bodies.

Resources for Learning and Teaching

Recommendation 11

The Panel **recommends** that serious consideration be given to curtailing non-essential activities in order that these are not available at the expense of HATII's core teaching and research activity *[Paragraph 3.8.1].*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**

Joint Response

Restructuring has facilitated this and allows HATII to have a clearer focus.

Discussions are on-going at School and College level to address the HATII Digital Humanities Consultancy service which was resourced through Faculty (as was). This is a clear issue for the College in terms of success in grant applications. The School has a clear strategy which includes Digital Humanities as a key driver, an area of strength in HATII.

Recommendation 12

The Panel **recommends** that an appropriate level of support be provided for the probationary member of staff, in terms of his career development within the University. The Panel further **recommends** that HATII give consideration to formulating a contingency plan to ensure the continued provision of the MSc Computer Forensics and E-Discovery programme is not placed in jeopardy *[Paragraph 3.8.3].*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**

Joint Response

Head of School is currently seeking confirmation in post. Closer ties with Computing Science will facilitate, as will an emerging PhD programme

Recommendation 13

The Panel **recommends** that the Faculty provides an increased level of support not only to the Acting Director in the development of her role, but to HATII as a whole with regard to its management of academic processes. This could include mentoring by senior academic staff and the Learning & Teaching Centre, and visits to other departments to offer ideas for enhancing practice *[Paragraph 3.8.6].*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**
and **Head of College of Arts**

Joint Response (Subject/School/College):

The Head of Subject felt that the response to this lay with the Head of School of Humanities and Head of College of Arts. The Head of School and the Dean of Research in the College of Arts are addressing the relationship between HATII programmes and its embedded disciplines. This has involved meetings with HATII staff in various combinations, in each case including the Head of Subject. The Head of School has opened a dialogue with Computing Science on a mentoring issue. The Head of School has reviewed the contract status of HATII staff with colleagues. It was felt that during the current reshaping of the University, a formal exercise on staff contract types might cause more issues than it resolved. This does not rule out revisiting the issue in the medium term.

Recommendation 14

The Panel **recommends** that HATII take steps to formally include staff from outside of HATII, but who teach on its programmes, on relevant committees discussing teaching, learning and curriculum development *[Paragraph 3.8.8]*.

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**

Joint Response

This has been fully addressed.

HATII has included these external staff in all committee lists and thus they are invited to attend relevant meetings and also to provide feedback to SSLC and Exam Boards.

Recommendation 15

The Panel **recommends** that HATII initiate discussions within the Faculty of Arts, and with the Head of Estates and Buildings, with a view to resolving the issue of computer lab access. This might involve negotiating evening and weekend access, or the installation of specific pieces of software on non-HATII computers *[Paragraph 3.8.14]*.

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**
and **Head of College of Arts**
and **Director of E&B – subsequently assigned to Head of Campus Services**

Joint Response: Subject/School/College

Ongoing active discussions with Head of College Administration, Catherine Martin, and Head of School Administration, Michael Murray.

Estates & Buildings are currently in the final stages of installing a swipe card entry system for HATII students. This has been funded through the 2010/11 Minor Works budget allocation for Arts and will give 24-hour access. Head of Subject, Ann Gow, plans to restrict this to basement access for a trial period (which will aid the CFED PG students, whose labs are in the basement). Assuming the arrangement works well, 24-hour access will extend to the general HATII lab, where Dreamweaver, Photoshop etc are available on desktops.

Head of Subject has indicated that, because of the specialist software needed for the CFED programme, it is still desirable to keep CFED lab provision separate from HATII provision and

general Arts provision. An interim solution to the CFED issue, particularly because of increasing numbers of enrolled students, has been identified, in that HATII are teaching two labs in the basement, rather than one. This has necessitated moving some colleagues/ PG students elsewhere in the building. Ann Gow is also involved in more general Arts IT issues and the College has had a meeting to discuss the possibility of identifying space for a 50-seater, general computing lab for Arts, which could also have HATII-specific software (Dreamweaver, Photoshop) available. This would, in the longer term, free the main HATII lab for CFED use (as student numbers are increasing and this lab would accommodate 30) and consolidate general lab use for students in Arts. Discussions have been initiated with Steve Sutton, Deputy Director, in this regard.

Response: Campus Services

The issue was associated with the Central Services question of "who was installing and what type of access control was being used". This was in view of the general opinion being that estates were moving away from an agreed supplier. However, it appears that this has been resolved and the matter in hand "ALL ROUND" since it is almost up and running with the control of the access fobs being taken on by the department. Effectively security will only be carrying out some checks of the building out of hours as is the case in other clusters to ensure only authorised personel are within. We have not been notified officially that it is up and running.

Assuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Students' Learning Experience

Recommendation 16

The Panel **recommended** that a more formal mechanism for recording issues raised by students, and for reporting back to students any action taken, required to be implemented in order to ensure the feedback loop was complete *[Paragraph 5.4]*.

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**

Joint Response

This has been addressed through the staff/student committee.

Recommendation 17

The Panel **recommends** that the remit of the Teaching Committee be reviewed in order to ensure the inclusion of enhancement, and that minutes of the Teaching Committee are taken which reflect this discussion fully and accurately *[Paragraph 5.6]*.

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**
and **Head of School of Humanities**

Joint Response

Restructuring has allowed this as HATII is now part of the School Learning & Teaching Committee