

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 27 May 2011

**Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:
Responses to the Recommendation arising from the Review of
Department of History of Art held on 5 February 2010**

Mrs Lesley Fielding, Clerk to the Review Panel

Conclusions

The Review Panel **commends** the Department on the overall scope and quality of its provision. The students and GTAs were overall very positive about the staff and the support they received within the Department. Despite the number of recommendations, the Panel was impressed with the level of commitment displayed by staff and students.

Recommendations

The recommendations interspersed in the preceding report are summarised below. The recommendations have been cross-referenced to the paragraphs to which they refer in the text of the report. They are grouped by the areas for improvement/enhancement and are ranked in order of priority.

Note from Head of Subject Area:

Several of the recommendations below have, since the review, partly fallen within the remit of the School of Culture and Creative Arts into which History of Art was incorporated on August 1, 2010. Rather than repeat in too many places that such matters are now only partly subject to autonomous local decision making, I thought it best to say so here. Issues such as the return of marking or anonymity are in any case subject to regulation. Others, such as recruitment and Moodle, e.g., have a School dimension. Restructuring is quite recent, and with the advent of SLP, entire areas of our student provision will undergo a kind of resettling process over the next year or so.

Resources for Learning and Teaching (Staffing)*Recommendation 1:*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department undertake a review of their teaching provision across all levels of provision to establish a more even balance between research and teaching. [*paragraph 4.6.1*]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject***Response:*

I have been assembling a complete list of all lectures/courses/programmes presently taught or planned by all colleagues. On the basis of this we will identify gaps in individual provision and suggest the development of new teaching in the light of our overall provision.

Recommendation 2:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department re-examine its current marking practice with the aim of introducing widespread marking by all staff at Levels 1 and 2 [paragraph 4.6.2]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject/School**

Response from Head of School:

Agreed. The Head of Subject will make clear to all staff that marking at Levels 1 and 2 will be undertaken by all academic staff regardless of specialism, based upon an equitable workload.

Recommendation 3:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department undertake a review of the role of GTAs with the aim of providing them with increased opportunities for lecturing experience and it **further recommends** that the Faculty provide additional funding for recruiting additional GTAs to ease the work loads of academic staff. [paragraph 4.6.3]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**
Head of College of Arts

Response: Head of Subject

I think we are entitled to say that we have already been doing this to a considerable extent. It has long been our policy that PhD students should give lectures and most of them have done so. The GTAs who run our Level-1 seminar programme have been given a great deal more responsibility over the last three years, to excellent effect in terms of 1st-yr students' needs and very helpfully in terms of the GTAs' CVs. We entirely agree that increased GTA activity of this kind is desirable but we have to operate in a climate of constrained resources.

Response: Head of College

The Vice Principal and Head of College notes the above, and comments that the allocation of GTA monies is made on an agreed equitable formula across all Schools'

Recommendation 4:

The Review Panel considered that there was a need for additional administrative support. The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department utilise the forthcoming restructuring to explore opportunities for additional support with the other Departments who will form The School of Creative Arts and Culture. [paragraph 4.6.5]

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

Response from Head of School:

The new School structure has greatly improved administrative support across the School, with Subjects having a dedicated administrator as well as having an integrated senior administrator to co-ordinate both undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. A review of the administrative structure within the School will take place on 12th May to see if it is operating successfully and to identify changes where necessary.

Assessment, Feedback and Achievement

Recommendation 5:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department review their procedures for the return of student work. *[paragraph 4.2.1]*

For the attention of: **Head of School/Subject**

Response:

The review of procedures for the timely return of student work will be undertaken this year in consultation with the Head of Subject.

Recommendation 6:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department reviews their policy on anonymous marking of Honours essays to ensure that they conform to the Faculty of Art's policy on anonymous marking. *[paragraph 4.2.3]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

The majority of Honours essays come in identified by student number alone, though the presence of the signed plagiarism sheet can undermine complete anonymity, and re the final year dissertation anonymity is clearly impossible, at least for the 1st marker, who is the supervisor. However, we will introduce anonymous submission of Honours essays as from 2011-12 in line with our School colleagues.

Recommendation 7:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department should review their practice for the setting of examination and essay questions and implement official approval procedures for this process. *[paragraph 4.2.4]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

Any possible overlaps between essay titles and exam questions are looked at in the internal exam meeting which takes place before exam questions are sent to the external examiner. As an external examiner in 3 UK universities so far, I have never been sent, or expected to see, essay questions. External examiners would expect this to have been sorted out internally, as happens. We will always provide our external with this information if requested.

Recommendation 8:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department give serious consideration to identifying ways to clarify the visual test process and to ensure that all students are given adequate preparation for this test. *[paragraph 4.2.5]*

For the attention of: **Head of School/Subject**

Response:

The Head of Subject has undertaken to review the Visual Test and its procedures for this coming year to ensure that all students are given adequate time for preparation.

Student Progression, Retention and Support

Recommendation 9:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department should review the number of Honours courses in order to ensure that the areas of study outwith the research expertise of staff are not excluded. Attention should also be given to the coordination of the Honours years' courses. *[paragraph 4.4.1]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

See response to Rec.1, above. There is clearly a potential conflict here between the desire to provide as wide a range of material to the students, and to spread the teaching load more fairly amongst staff, and the idea, and the imperative, central to HE (especially at Hons level) that teaching should reflect the primary research activities of staff. I would suggest that Junior Honours offers more scope for a rather looser association between research and teaching, and we will examine the possibilities for a broader curriculum at that level on the basis of the full teaching portfolio once it is complete and in the light of the workload model.

Recommendation 10:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department consider ways and initiatives in which to increase student recruitment. *[paragraph 4.4.5]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

The Director of Recruitment and International Office

Response: Head of Subject

Over the last three years we have deliberately sought to increase recruitment at Level-1, to which end we moved the class from the Hunterian Art Gallery LT to the Graham Kerr LT in Zoology. This has enabled us to expand the class from a maximum of 135 to a maximum of 197, though these extra numbers were found in part by admitting more 2nd- & 3rd-yr students. Prior to the beginning of the current academic year we tried (unsuccessfully) to obtain the use of one of the large LTs in the Boyd Orr Building in order to permit a further expansion. Any future attempt to expand is obviously limited by venue and by our ability to accommodate larger numbers with no extra staff and with a diminished GTA budget from 2011-12. It also remains to be seen what impact the new online enrolment procedures introduced by SLP will have on our numbers. Even so, given the high ranking of this subject at Glasgow and the general strength of the discipline in Scotland, our long term wish would be to continue to recruit more students.

Response: Director of Recruitment and International Office

HoA have been proactive in developing a strategy to increase student numbers working closely with RIO. This has involved discussion around market opportunities; the development of PGT programme portfolio and activity to nurture overseas markets, such as the recent event at Nankai University in China.

New marketing materials have been produced to support promotional activities and the College based Marketing Officer is also currently reviewing web and prospectus content to improve the promotion of HoA.

To improve the conversion of applicants to registered students, fortnightly letters to all applicants have been sent from Jan 2011 onwards. Four e-conversion Arts specific emails have been issued in Jan and Feb, complimenting the core University campaign.

Conversion webchats are planned for later in the application cycle.

Resources for Learning and Teaching (other Resources)

Recommendation 11:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department standardise the use of Moodle and invest time for training. *[paragraph 4.7.3]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

The Acting Director of Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII)

Response: Head of Subject

Moodle training sessions were made available at our request to all C&CA staff in November 2010. 24 colleagues signed up for this, including those from HoA not that familiar with Moodle.

Response: Acting Director of HATII

HATII would recommend that History of Art use the resources of the Learning and Technology Unit to access workshops and guidance on Moodle.

Recommendation 12:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department explore the possibility of acquiring ARTstor as well as investigating the possibility of gaining access to the Auction House databases for student use. *[paragraph 4.7.2]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

This has already been brought up with the subject librarian and students have been encouraged to use these resources although awareness of them needs to be further raised. Opinion is divided over the usefulness of ARTstor given the vastly increased availability of images through museum and auction house websites since ARTstor was started. It is hoped to provide greater access to auction house websites once the usefulness of individual sites (from multiple auction house sites like ArtNet and Invaluable to single auction house sites like Sotheby's) has been compared and evaluated. In the meantime, access to this information is freely available via ArtInfo (<http://artsalesindex.artinfo.com/asi/search.action>) a database recommended by the National Art Library.

Recommendation 13

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department contact the Learning and Teaching Centre for further advice and for instances of Good Practice with regard to course handbooks. *[paragraph 4.7.4]*

For the attention of: **Head of School/Subject**
Faculty of Arts Representative, Academic Development Unit, Learning & Teaching Centre

Response:

This will be undertaken shortly and before the new Handbooks are prepared.

Response: Learning and Teaching Centre

Dr Mary McCulloch is happy to take forward discussions with HATII regarding these recommendations.

Recommendation 14:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the building at 7/8 University Gardens should be inspected with the purpose of refurbishment to permit disabled access. *[paragraph 4.7.1]*

For the attention of: **The Director of Estates and Buildings**
Head of Subject

Response: Director of Estates & Buildings

A survey has been completed and an exercise has commenced to identify improvements. The full options appraisal is available from Estates & Buildings.

Response: Head of Subject

A survey of the rear of 7&8 University Gardens with regard to disability access was made last year. No report/recommendations as yet.

Assuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Students' Learning Experience

Recommendation 15:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department undertake to develop PDP and Employability through all levels of provision and suggests that the Department contact the Learning & Teaching Centre for examples of Good Practice. *[paragraph 6.1.1]*

For the attention of: **Head of School**
Faculty of Arts Representative, Academic Development Unit, Learning & Teaching Centre
Director of the Careers Service

Response from Head of School:

The Subject has initiated a series of talks by former students who have pursued different career paths since graduation and the Head of Subject will contact the Learning & Teaching Centre for advice on the development of PDPs.

Response: Learning and Teaching Centre

Dr Mary McCulloch is happy to take forward discussions with HATII regarding these recommendations.

Response: Director of Careers Service

Awaited

Recommendation 16:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department hold the Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings more frequently aiming for two per semester. *[paragraph 6.1.2]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

I have consulted with past and present SSLC convenors about this. We acknowledge that this may be desirable but some practical difficulties exist, particularly in the recruitment of a sufficient body of student representatives early enough in Semester 1 to make two meetings worthwhile. Despite the efforts of staff and the SSLC convenor, it is often well into November before we have a full and confirmed cohort of representatives. We feel that improving communication mechanisms more generally to create a more continuous flow of student feedback through the semester may be a more useful and valid approach.

The Quality of Learning Opportunities

Recommendation 17:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department reassess the suspended visits to the National Galleries in Edinburgh. *[paragraph 4.5.1]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

We ceased to make the Edinburgh visit because we felt it was an unwieldy way of doing something in contact with actual works of art that could be done more effectively – and to more students – at seminar level. As part of the revamped Level-1 seminar programme this is what has happened. Of course we very strongly encourage students to visit the NGS and other collections in Edinburgh but lack of resources mean that we cannot undertake to fund this. In addition, the students undergo an Object Analysis exercise that involves on-site study of objects from a designated list drawn from these collections.

Curriculum Design, Development and Content

Recommendation 18:

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department increases the numbers of seminars and tutorials, where possible. *[paragraph 4.3.2]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject/School**

Response:

At Level-1 there is very little room to increase what is already a very full programme. In the light of the planned 10% cut in the GTA budget in 2011-12 we will have to prioritise resources as it is. At Level-2 it has always been our policy to tie the seminars in with the 4 courses which comprise the year. Provision of two seminars per course (of 7/8 lectures) already places an enormous weight of seminar teaching on the lecturers involved and it would be very difficult, given the existing structure of Level-2, to increase this. In some instances it is possible to find GTA cover, but the very nature of Level-2, which looks to be more challenging, specialised and closer to staff research, means that this is by no means always possible. There is also a resource issue, as we have always felt it vital to prioritise the Level-1 seminar programme. Level-2 is likely to undergo a full review (at subject level) in the near future and this issue will be high on the agenda. At all levels efforts are being made to address the issue through additional online support via Moodle.