

**University of Glasgow**

**Academic Standards Committee – Friday 7 October 2011**

**Periodic Subject Reviews 2010-11: Summary of Good Practice/Key Strengths**

**Ms Catherine Omand, Senate Office**

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this summary is to identify from Periodic Subject Review reports in session 2010-11 any significant themes in relation to key strengths and any good practice that may be worthy of further dissemination across the University.

It should be noted that the Reviews conducted in 2010-11 were based on Subjects/Schools and that the Review of Life Sciences review was deferred to October due to industrial action.

The following abbreviations are used to refer to particular reviews:

CEES	Central and Eastern European Studies
EEE	Electronics and Electrical Engineering
MUS	Music
PSY	Psychology

## **2. Main themes**

It is pleasing to note that a total of 49 areas of good practice/key strengths were identified from the 4 reviews out of which 25 could be considered for University-wide dissemination. Those suggested as having potential for the widest dissemination or broadest application have been highlighted in bold.

Good practice/key strengths have been summarised under three broad headings:

- Quality of Learning Opportunities
- Enhancement of the Student Learning Experience
- Student Support

Good practice/key strengths that are Subject-specific have been listed separately in Appendix 1.

### *2.1 Quality of Learning Opportunities*

#### *2.1.1 Assessment*

- **Staged assessment at Masters' level (CEES 3.3.1)**
- **Opportunities for independent learning provided within PGT programmes (MUSIC)**
- Initiation of a project to explore ways of addressing Level 1 marking load (MUSIC)

### 2.1.2 *The Design of the Curriculum and Content*

- **The exemplary design of the postgraduate curriculum, in terms of its content, coherence, flexibility, intellectual rigour and international appeal, as well as extensive range and depth of provision of language training (CEES 3.4.7)**
- Increased range of Honours level optional courses, supporting research-teaching linkages (PSY3.4.9)
- Inclusion of extensive practical and project work within courses and programmes, including an industrial project for MEng programmes, demonstrating academic and professional engagement and enhancing students' employability (EEE3.7.7)

## 2.2 *Enhancement of Student Learning Experience*

### 2.2.1 *Employability*

- External partners and international network, linking teaching and learning with wider notions of PDP and employability (CEES 3.7.3)
- **The commitment to the inclusion of extensive practical and project work within courses and programmes, including an industrial project for MEng programmes, demonstrating academic and professional engagement and enhancing students' employability (EEE3.7.7)**

### 2.2.2 *Graduate Attributes*

- The development of attributes in graduates that reflect the spirit and content of the Subject Benchmark Statement (MUSIC)
- **Initiatives enhancing the student learning experiences such as peer assisted learning and summer scholarships (PSY 5.9 & 5.11)**
- **Innovation in communication with and amongst students, evidenced on the student Portal, and excellent material on Plagiarism for Level 1 on Moodle (PSY 3.8.11)**
- The provision of rich, well-supported project opportunities for undergraduate students (EEE 3.4.7)
- 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 (MUSIC 3.7.2)

## 2.3 *Student Support*

- The positive approach of GTAs, and the School's efforts to integrate and support this group (PSY3.8.6)
- **The excellent in-house GTA training (CEES 3.6.12)**

- PGT Training – Centre for Excellence and subsequent achievements of CRCEES (CEES 3.9.4)
- The integration of students across the three undergraduate programmes (MUSIC)
- Peer Support (MUSIC)
- High quality staff/student liaison procedures (*EEE5.5*)
- The provision made to accommodate the variety of prior experience amongst students (MUSIC)

#### *2.4 Quality of students*

- The quality and enthusiasm of the students (CEES3.4.8 & 3.5.3)
- The low proportion of grades at less than D achieved by students in Levels 1 and 2 (PSY 3.3.15)

#### *2.5 Resources for Learning and Teaching*

- The SER, which the Review Panel considered to be exemplary in its honest and reflective approach, delivering a comprehensive and engaging account of the School's activities, and describing many areas of impressive innovation and good practice (PSY1.1.5)
- The exemplary recording of Course Review minutes (MUSIC)
- High quality staff/student liaison procedures (*EEE5.5*)

### **3. Summary**

The themes emerging are:

- Comprehensive consideration of the curriculum, ensuring that employability and graduate attributes are being addressed
- The quality of teaching staff
- The variety of innovative assessment being introduced to enhance the student learning experience
- Opportunities for independent learning provided within PGT courses
- Growing opportunities to take part in exchanges and work experience

### **4. Recommendation to Academic Standards Committee**

- 4.1 Academic Standards Committee is **invited to consider and confirm** whether those items of good practice/key strengths highlighted are worthy of wider dissemination across the University.
- 4.2 If considered appropriate, further information will be sought from the subject areas concerned and circulated to Heads of Subjects and Schools along with the contact details for the staff responsible. Thereafter, the information will be published on the Senate Office website and drawn to the attention of the Learning and Teaching Centre

where any potential for possible contribution to other developments can be coordinated.

- 4.3 Academic Standards Committee is also asked to **confirm** that the Senate Office should identify instances where examples of good practice noted above correspond closely to recommendations from other reviews. Senate Office will seek consent for the information obtained as per 4.2 to be forwarded directly to the Head of School/Subject where the corresponding recommendations were made.

Subject-specific examples of good practice and/or key strengths for noting

### *Assessment*

- The wide and innovative variety of assessment (CEES3.3.1)
- The wide and appropriate range of assessment methods employed (MUSIC)
- The Intended Learning Outcomes for programmes and courses, which are all laid out in the relevant programme and course specifications. Well written, appropriate, and well aligned to the assessment provision within each programme and course. Clear evidence in the SER that the School appreciates the significance of ILOs (PSY 3.2)
- The availability of exemplars of Level 4 Critical Reviews (PSY 3.3.9)

### *The Design of the Curriculum and Content*

- Extensive range of provision of language training at postgraduate level (CEES 3.4.7)
- The Subject's commitment to regular review of the undergraduate curriculum to reflect changes within the Subject area (CEES 3.4.1)
- The uniqueness of Glasgow's Undergraduate Music programmes (MUSIC)
- The broad scope provided by the undergraduate music curriculum which offers a choice of 3 degree programmes for the study of Music (MUSIC)
- The range of provision with research-led and enquiry-based teaching and learning (CEES 3.4.1 and 3.7.1)
- The emphasis given in the School's aims to: independent study, critical thinking, research skills, progression over Levels 1 – 4, employability and meeting the particular needs of the large numbers of students who came from a wide range of backgrounds. (PSY 2)

### *Employability*

- The opportunities available for students to visit, take part in exchanges and engage in fieldwork in the region of study (CEES3.4.2)
- The range of opportunities available to Music students to gain work experience (MUSIC)
- The approach to employability (MUSIC 3.4.13)

*Resources for Learning and Teaching*

- Informative and reflective annual monitoring reports at Levels 3, 4 and M. (PSY 5.5)
- The setting, within the context of Glasgow's rich and varied musical culture (MUSIC)
- The quality of opportunities for students to develop both general musical skills and specialist expertise (MUSIC)
- The leading edge teaching and intellectually stimulating learning environment (MUSIC)
- The commitment to laboratory provision (*EEE3.4.3 & 3.7.3*)
- On its inclusive approach to the preparation of the SER (MUSIC 1.6)
- The inclusive approach that had been taken to preparation for the review (*EEE1.1.3*)
- Reflective SER and strong leadership. The Review Panel was very impressed with the considered detail of the SER and the leadership provided by Professor David Smith. (CEES)
- The good atmosphere within the Subject area (MUSIC)

*Resources for Learning and Teaching (staffing)*

- Helpful and approachable staff (MUSIC)
- The expertise and commitment of staff (MUSIC)