

**University of Glasgow**

**Academic Standards Committee – Friday 4 October 2013**

**Periodic Subject Reviews 2012-13: Summary of Good Practice/Key Strengths**

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**1. Introduction**

The purpose of this summary is to identify any significant themes in relation to key strengths and any good practice arising from Periodic Subject Review reports in Session 2012-13 that may be worthy of further dissemination across the University.

Seven reviews were conducted during 2012-13 and the following abbreviations are used to refer to particular reviews:

Celtic and Gaelic	Celt
School of Modern Languages and Cultures	Mod Lang
MVLS Graduate School PGT	MVLS
Veterinary Medicine	Vet
Engineering	Eng
Politics <sup>1</sup>	Politics
Open Studies <sup>2</sup>	Open

A total of 46 areas of good practice/key strengths were identified from 6 of the above Reviews, out of which 20 had potential for University wide dissemination. Those areas identified included: Assessment (4), Staff support (4), Student Feedback (4), Curriculum Development (3), SER consultation (2), Learning Resources (1), GTA support (1) and Graduate Attributes (1).

**2. Key Strengths and Good Practice**

The table below identifies the areas good practice/key strengths identified:

<b>Area of good practice</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Curriculum	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wide range and challenging suite of courses addressing core areas plus offering flexibility in terms of specialisation and focus (Politics)</li> <li>• Flexibility and choice of courses - broad and impressive range of courses offered and the level of research-led teaching conducted by staff which allowed for diversity and flexibility within the Honours</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Endorsed through ASC Summer Powers, available for information to ASC on 4 October.

<sup>2</sup> Still to be finalised and will therefore be reviewed under Session 2013-14 reports.

		<p>programme (Celt)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approach to curriculum review: fairness and transparency across School without setting exact stipulations and restrictions on academics or students allowed the process to be smooth, valued and most importantly, effective (Mod Lang)</li> <li>• successful introduction of new programme of study (Vet)</li> <li>• preservation of breadth of provision (Mod Lang)</li> <li>• flexibility and choice, interdisciplinary aspects of curriculum (Celt)</li> <li>• student engagement in curriculum review process ensuring shared ownership and understanding of approach to teaching (Mod Lang)</li> </ul>
Learning and Teaching environment	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of a School which staff and students value and can see benefits in terms of support, interdisciplinarity, enhancement of quality and good practice and collegiality (Mod Lang)</li> <li>• level of consultation with industry through the Industrial Liaison Committee. An effective and productive forum which helped to ensure the relevance of the School's programmes and MEng projects. (Eng)</li> <li>• progress in achieving School-wide procedures (Mod Lang)</li> <li>• work undertaken in providing a supportive Gaelic environment for students (Celt)</li> </ul>
Staff	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conscientious and reflective approach of skilled and research-led teaching staff operating at maximum capacity (Politics)</li> <li>• professionalism, dedication and enthusiasm of Graduate Teaching Assistants who were committed to their students and teaching role (Politics)</li> <li>• effective use of the Teaching Office in supporting the advisory system (Engineering)</li> <li>• Professionalism, commitment and enthusiasm of Sessional teachers (Politics)</li> </ul>
Staff support	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support and mentoring arrangements to integrate probationary members to body of staff (Politics)</li> <li>• skilled and dedicated subject-level administrative staff (Politics)</li> <li>• evident commitment and hard work of staff, reflected not only in their high aspirations but in the achievements of the School and in the positive</li> </ul>

		reflections of the students (Vet)
Assessment	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interactive formative assessment making innovative use of technology (Vet)</li> <li>• diversity of assessment methods, meeting the varying needs of student ability/expectations and professional criteria in the development of transferable skills (Politics)</li> <li>• use of reflective journals to encourage students to consider the nature and quality of their communication and reflect on relationship between theory and practice, potential issues and own learning process and skills (Politics)</li> </ul>
Assessment Feedback	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high level of detailed feedback provide and introduction of feedback timetable, returning assessment work with written feedback within a week (Celt)</li> <li>• Exemplary practice of returning assessed language work with written feedback within a week (Mod Lang)</li> <li>• Examination feedback forms (Politics)</li> </ul>
Student Feedback	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feedback pro-forma and School's plan to closely monitor the feedback procedure including the level of student awareness (Eng)</li> <li>• comments from students highlighted the important role of focus groups within the School. It was clear to the Review Panel that the students felt that their views were listened to and taken into account. Staff confirmed that they valued the immediate nature of feedback from focus groups (Vet)</li> <li>• addressing the NSS feedback (Eng)</li> </ul>
Self Evaluation Report for PSR	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analytical and reflective Self Evaluation Report (SER) which demonstrated an inclusive and transparent approach to development and accurately portrayed an innovative School demonstrating self awareness and an ability to reflect on and enhance practices and provision (Mod Lang)</li> <li>• collaborative and reflective approach which delivered an honest, self-critical analysis of the Subject's activities (Politics)</li> <li>• inclusive approach to SER (MVLS)</li> </ul>
Student support	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The level of involvement of students in developing the SER and the contributions made by students who met the Team. The number of students who were willing to meet the Review Team and their</li> </ul>

		positivity indicated a School which values and supports its students (Mod Lang)
QA processes	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Streamlined annual monitoring process with a view to streamlining procedures and increasing staff engagement with the process (Eng)</li> </ul>
GTA support	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and mentoring of Graduate Teaching Assistants (Politics)</li> </ul>
Graduate attributes	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful study abroad programme (Politics)</li> </ul>
Quality of students	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive External Examiner feedback, particularly in relation to the quality of the Glasgow graduates (Eng)</li> </ul>
Recruitment	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment of highly qualified students at undergraduate level (Politics)</li> </ul>
Widening participation	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement with the widening participation (WP) agenda and in particular the number of Diploma students recruited through a variety of initiatives (Politics)</li> </ul>

### 3. Summary

It is evident from the evaluation of key strengths and good practice that the Review Panels have recognised the quality of programmes and attention given to curriculum development and the quality and dedication of staff and their development of strong relationships with students and level of support they provide despite high workloads and other pressures. There is also continuing consideration of assessment practices with a variety of innovative approaches being introduced to enhance the student learning experience. Support networks are also being established to provide support for probationary staff and GTTs.

### 4. Dissemination and tracking of good practice

As in previous years, information will be published on the Learning and Teaching Centre's web pages. Where instances of good practice have been identified that correspond directly with recommendations from another review, the Senate Office will highlight and forward these directly to the Head of School/Subject.

From Session 2013-14, a number of examples arising from PSR will be annually reviewed at the Learning and Teaching Committee, with individuals responsible for initiatives invited to give a short presentation at the Learning and Teaching Committee's Away Day so that the potential for wider implementation can be discussed, including possible contribution to other developments.

It should be noted that, although additional practices for increasing the dissemination of good practice have been introduced, the identification of a mechanism to track adoption of good practice has not been achieved. It is proposed that the Senate Office continues to seek an efficient means of tracking good practice.

## 5. Recommendation to Academic Standards Committee

Academic Standards Committee is **invited to note** the areas of good practice/key strengths identified and **to consider** whether those areas identified as having potential for wider dissemination across the University should be circulated to Heads of Subjects and Schools along with the contact details for the staff responsible.