

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 14 November 2014

**Periodic Subject Review: Updated Responses to the
Recommendations arising from the Periodic Subject Review of
School of Engineering held on 28 and 29 January 2013****Mrs Catherine Omand, Senior Academic Policy Manager****Recommendation 1**

With a view to ensuring high level of student satisfaction and thus avoiding any potential reputational issues, the Review Panel **recommends** that additional resources are identified to support the overseas developments in the short term both to address the concerns about the impact on staff workload in Glasgow and the other operational issues relating to UGS highlighted throughout the report. In addition, the Panel recommends that the Head of College be invited to clearly identify the benefits of the collaboration to the School. (Paragraph 4.8.4)

Action: Head of College**Response:**

Resourcing of the TNE programmes has been and continues to be as agreed in the Business Cases developed in collaboration with the School.

Over the last two years there has been strong investment in the School of Engineering, primarily on the back of an improving research picture and the success of its TNE programmes. Thus the School has enjoyed more leadership appointments than in the original College plan and generous dowries have been made to attract good candidates and to ensure that they are well resourced to make a positive contribution in the shortest possible time. When investment is made it is rarely possible or desirable to attribute it to a single source, the reality being that we are a broad based University intent on excelling at both research and teaching and keen to enhance our international presence.

Since the review took place there has been further growth of TNE programmes within the School with a further programme in China launched. This differs from that in Singapore in that the staff are almost exclusively Glasgow-based, flying to Chengdu to deliver their teaching. Thus we now have a complex picture where those leading on TNE spend more time in Glasgow than abroad. Realistically this will mean that more will develop their research careers here than in China. Hence the School has an opportunity to develop its Glasgow-research base by between 10 and 20 staff members, the higher number assuming that a further China programme is launched in 2015. This in turn will allow critical research mass to be realised in a larger number of areas much faster than would otherwise be possible and this is one of the School's objectives. College is working closely with the HoS on the financial and operational sides of this plan.

Whilst the above discussion shows how Glasgow-based Engineering activities benefit from TNE, the advantages of overseas hubs created by Engineers allow the School to spearhead aspects of the University internationalisation agenda. Attracting good overseas students at all

levels and developing meaningful research partnerships with leaders in SE and East Asia are both boosted by a permanent regional presence allowing time for relations to be fully developed.

Updated Response – November 2014

The College recognises that while there were clear benefits identified in the initial response to ASC in May, these may not have been clearly articulated to staff in the School. It also recognises the issues identified in the SIT Year 1 review of the Mechatronics and Mechanical Design Engineering programmes; that start-up costs and effort were not adequately supported and there could have been a more strategic approach to backfilling posts.

The success that the School of Engineering has demonstrated in leading the development of TNE in the University is fully recognised. It has impacted positively on the decisions to make investments in the School. Not all of these are directly related to the TNE activity. Overall, the success of the School and its significant potential for further growth has been a key factor in the investment in a new building on the Western Infirmary site to house the School being the top priority in the College's estate plan.

The School is ambitious to further develop its TNE activity both with SIT and UESTC. The College, in developing its budget plans in the coming months, will ensure that the lessons learned are appropriately built in to the planning for this growth and that the School is properly resourced to deliver planned growth alongside current activity. The College will work with the Head of School to communicate plans and benefits to the School.

<i>Recommendation 6</i>

With a view to increasing the level of support provided to the GTAs, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School promotes the School's GTA management structure and provides further support in the areas of marking and feedback and supporting GTAs to evaluate their teaching; as well as emphasising the GTA statutory training and GTA professional development sessions provided by the Learning and Teaching Centre to support their development. The School should also consider appointing a senior GTA to convene regular meetings of GTAs providing a forum for concerns or suggestions for enhancements to be raised. (Paragraph 4.8.8)

Action: Head of School

For the Attention of the Learning and Teaching Centre

Response:

This is an area where there has not been much progress. The major issue is that the School faces a shortage of GTAs and the number of hours that they can work. GTAs do undertake a number of courses organised by the Learning and Teaching Centre. The use, allocation and training of GTAs is a major issue that the School will address over the summer.

Updated response – November 2014

At the School's Learning and Teaching Committee, it was confirmed that the School recognised that the training of GTAs was considered very important and was organised by the Teaching Office. Changes had been made to the delivery of Engineering Maths 1, particularly with the introduction of on-line tutorials, and this had significantly reduced the number of GTAs required for the course. In turn, this had meant that other courses now had GTA support as

required. However, there were still a few courses which still required GTA support and this was yet to be resolved.

Recommendation 7

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School reviews its process for the allocation of project teams with a view to ensuring, as far as possible, diversity and balance and that the School considers introducing a structure of greater monitoring of how the teams are operating (Paragraph 4.4.5)

Action: Head of School

Response:

As the final version of the PSR report was not received before the beginning of this academic year, the School has not implemented this recommendation this academic year. This recommendation will be taken forward by the Head of Discipline for the two Integrated System Design Courses, Professor Scott Roy, for implementation next academic year.

Updated Response – November 2014

The School of Engineering Learning and Teaching Committee discussed the issue of diversity and balance within student project teams and concluded that it was not felt to be a significant issue in 2014-15. For example, the aim has been to include students from across the various disciplines within each team in ISDP 4. It was noted that as there were a greater number of students in the Aeronautical and Mechanical cohorts, it was therefore sometimes difficult to keep the balance even. The Convener of Learning and Teaching asked that this issue be raised at forthcoming staff/student committees to gauge student opinion on this and to provide evidence that the matter had been recognised and discussed with student representatives.

Recommendation 8

As no discretion is possible in relation to the duration of examinations, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School liaise with the Senate Office on any proposed changes to the duration to ensure that they comply with the regulations set down by Senate. (Paragraph 4.3.4)

Action: Head of School

Response:

Within the Senate Office guidelines for the duration of examinations in the University Calendar (Section 16.19, Page Gen.10) there is provision for an additional 30 minutes in cases where this is justified by the nature and content of the examination. The School of Engineering considers that, in many cases, the content and nature of the examinations in Engineering do justify such an extension and this provision in the University Calendar is made use of. The School therefore remains compliant with the regulations set down by Senate.

Updated response – November 2014

Regarding duration of exams, it has been agreed that some courses in Engineering should last two hours and it was confirmed that the College had been made aware of this and had given permission.

Recommendation 12

The Review Panel **recommends** that the outstanding maintenance issues in the Rankine Building be undertaken as a priority and the system of providing information on computer accessibility currently available in the reception of the Rankine Building should also be established in the James Watt Building (South). (Paragraph 4.8.9)

Action: Head of Estates and Buildings and Head of School

Response: Head of Estates and Buildings

We are currently on the case on a number of fronts:-

- Ceilings have been repainted where required throughout office and lab accommodation;
- A scheme to carry out modest improvements to corridors where required including replacing ceilings, life expired fire doors and decoration is currently being costed;
- Surveys are underway currently to review faulty and inoperable windows with proposed repairs programmed thereafter;
- Water ingress issues on basement/lower levels have been surveyed with repair needs established relating to sections of flat roofing and drainage.
- Lecture theatre seating will be replaced with reconditioned seating reclaimed from elsewhere. Redecoration and carpeting will be undertaken at the same time to improve the student learning environment.

All of the above is anticipated to be undertaken in the next 4-6 months. I'm mindful of anticipated lifespan of building and the above solutions are to facilitate a continued use of the building in its present form for a further (circa) 5 years.

Response: Head of School

The maintenance issue referred to ceilings in the Rankine Building where old light fittings had been replaced with smaller more energy efficient versions and this had left marks around all of the new fittings. E&B had painters in the building in January/February and all affected laboratory (and office) ceilings are now freshly painted over. The agreed approach for corridors was to fit new suspended ceiling grids and replace all ceiling tiles but so far only level 5 has been completed.

The computer usage display which runs in the Rankine Building is also replicated in the James Watt South Building.

Additionally, the School is actively working on a space strategy in conjunction with various stakeholders including E&B and the College of Science and Engineering. The School hopes that this strategy will be supported by the University and the space in both the Rankine Building and James Watt South Building will be improved for both research and teaching over the next 5 years.

Updated response – November 2014 – Estates and Buildings

Phase 1 of the lecture theatres (3 off) refurbishment including redecoration, new ceilings, lighting and carpeting was undertaken in September. Replacement lecture theatre seating and benching was fitted at the same time which addressed the previous concerns about broken seats and the poor quality teaching environment. The capacity was also slightly increased in each room. Phase 2 is to renew the worktops/writing tablets with a new consistent good quality

finish and to renew fabric to seating, again to ensure a good quality consistent look. This work will be done between semester 1 and semester 2.

Budget costs have been established to renew ceilings, decoration and fire doors to corridors and this work is noted in the current financial year's budget plan. The work package is being issued to tender in the next few weeks and the works is targeted to be undertaken during semester 2 as night shift/out of hours working, to minimise the impact on building users during normal working hours.

We have initial quotes regarding servicing the windows in the building. Further quotes are being sought. This work will be scheduled in the next 3-4 months.

An improved maintenance regime on the flat roof areas has reduced previous issues regarding water ingress and this is currently being monitored to establish if further work is required.

Updated response – November 2014 – Head of School

Estates and Buildings have undertaken refurbishment of lecture theatres on level-1 of the Rankine Building and some corridor ceilings have been replaced. Further plans for more extensive work in corridors have been suspended pending new budget allocation.