

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Thursday 21 May 2015

Periodic Subject Review 2014-15: Length of Self Evaluation Reports

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At the May 2014 meeting of ASC, it was agreed that the Self Evaluation Report (SER) provided by Schools/Subjects as part of the Periodic Subject Review process, was intended to be a focussed reflective analysis of the subject area and not a detailed, extensive narrative. Consequently, it was agreed that the third cycle PSR SERs should be much shorter and it was suggested that 15 to 20 pages would be appropriate and this was the guidance given to Subjects/Schools for the 2014-15 session. However, it was brought to the attention of ASC at its October meeting, that concern had been expressed that the suggested length might be too restrictive and ASC agreed to review this at the May 2015 meeting.

The following table identifies the length of SER's submitted as part of the PSR process for the period 2014-15:

Subject/School	Length of SER
Classics	54 pages
Geographical and Earth Sciences	34 pages
Urban Studies	52 pages
Chemistry	20 pages
History	30 pages
Television, Film and Theatre Studies	33 pages
Economics	80 pages
<i>Average</i>	<i>43 pages</i>

Subject areas are advised at PSR briefing sessions that the SER should be a concise reflective analysis of provision, identifying strategic approaches to learning and teaching enhancement, identifying strengths as well as areas for improvement. The Academic Development Unit of the Learning and Teaching Centre provide a 2-hour session for staff involved with composing the SER on how to write it, giving examples of good practice. The SER is considered a vital part of PSR as it provides Subject Areas an opportunity to reflect on strengths of their provision as well as areas requiring attention.

A short concise SER is ideal from the Panel's point of view; however there are many influences and factors that can require more detailed consideration (i.e. due to the complex nature of some subjects, normally at School level, accreditation requirements, etc.) and therefore there is some concern that recommending a specific length could be restrictive.

Feedback from the Academic Development Unit suggests that SER lengths of 15-20 pages will normally be too short.

ASC is asked **to consider** which of the following options should be adopted for session 2014-15:

- the recommended length should be removed from the guidelines
- the recommended length should be increased to 30-35 pages
- include the additional statement to the guidelines: “the recommended length of the SER is 15-20 pages; however it is recognised that this may be exceeded to take account of complexity of some subject areas

The revised SER guidelines stipulate what areas should be included in each section. This is provided for information as Appendix 1. It is further suggested that, at both the briefing meetings and the training sessions provided by the Academic Development Unit, it is reiterated that the SER template gives an indication of topics for inclusion rather than requiring all to be covered.

The University of Glasgow

Periodic Subject Review: Self Evaluation Report

School/Subject

Guidance notes on the preparation of the Self Evaluation Report

Periodic Subject Review (PSR) is the University's Institution-led subject review required by the Scottish Funding Council. The Self Evaluation Report (SER) is central to the PSR process. The SER should demonstrate the School/Subject's approach to enhancement and provide a sense of the student learning experience. It provides an opportunity for greater reflection on areas relevant to the School/Subject's current situation and an opportunity to reflect on strategy for future development. The SER will set the agenda for the Review visit itself.

The SER template¹ below is indicative of topics for inclusion but is not exhaustive and other areas can be included, if the School/Subject considers them relevant. The SER should approximately be 15-20 pages in length. This can be augmented by supporting data.

1. Introduction

1.1.1 This section should also include a brief outline of the process to develop the Self Evaluation Review e.g. who was involved in the process. This should include consultation with students.

2. School/Subject Context and Strategy

2.1 Key Features of the School/Subject Context and Vision

2.1.1 This section should provide a (brief) overview of the School/Subject including:

- Range of provision under review
- Staffing
- Significant changes since the last review e.g. restructuring, physical resources

2.2 Strategic approach to enhancing learning and teaching

2.2.1 This section should detail the School/Subject's overall aims and linkage with the University Learning and Teaching Strategy and College Learning and Teaching Plan.

3. Enhancing the Student Experience

3.1 Admissions, Retention and Success

3.1.1 This section should:

- Include student numbers over the review period
- Composition and key trends in student population (including alternative routes)
- Approaches to recruitment
- Retention and progression rates e.g. first year completion rates should be analysed
- Reference to Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE Survey) data²

¹ The template is based on the Enhancement Led Institutional Review (ELIR) technical report

² Details can be found at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/stats-dlhe>

3.2 *Equality and Diversity*

- 3.2.1 This section should identify how equality and diversity is supported in relation to admissions, student support and pedagogy.

3.3 *Supporting students in their learning*

- 3.3.1 Detail student support mechanisms including:
- Support for transition³ and induction
 - Specific support for International students, widening participation students, Direct Entry into Year 2, etc.
 - Role of Advisers of Studies/supervisors

3.4 *Student Engagement*

- 3.4.1 Analysis of how the School/Subject engages students in their learning.
- 3.4.2 Approaches to promoting the development of graduate attributes including employability and internationalisation. This can include reflection on the impact of the National Enhancement Theme [Graduates for the 21st Century](#).
- 3.4.3 Effectiveness of feedback mechanisms e.g. role of class representatives and effectiveness of Staff-Student Liaison Committees, use of Student Voice, role of local and institutional surveys and closure of feedback loops.

3.5 *Reflect on the effectiveness of the School/Subject's approaches to enhancing the student learning experience*

4. Enhancement in Learning and Teaching

4.1 *Learning and Teaching*

- 4.1.1 Provide an introduction to the School/Subject's approach to enhancing learning and teaching including:
- Curriculum design and development (including reflection on the impact of the National Enhancement Theme [Developing and Supporting the Curriculum](#))
 - Approach to Intended Learning Outcomes
 - Evaluation of work based learning and placement and whether these continue to meet requirements
 - Technology-Enhanced Learning and Teaching e.g. use of Moodle, Mahara, impact of the [E-Learning Strategy](#) in enhancing learning and teaching through technology

4.2 *Assessment and Feedback*

- 4.2.1 This section should outline the School/Subject's approach to, and effectiveness of, assessment and feedback including:
- Range of assessment methods
 - Engagement with the Code of Assessment and Assessment Policy
 - What/how do students receive feedback on assessed work
 - Balance of formative and summative assessment

4.3 *Approaches to identifying, disseminating and extending good practice*

³ Support for transition is the latest National Enhancement Theme

- 4.3.1 School and Subjects are encouraged to identify areas of good practice and to highlight how they disseminate and extend good practice within the School/Subject and beyond.

4.4 *Resources for Learning and Teaching*

- 4.4.1 This section may deal with topics such as staffing and physical resources.

4.5 *Engaging and Supporting Staff*

- 4.5.1 The School/Subject should seek to analyse support for staff:
- Probationer and early career development support
 - Ongoing support and development during academic career
 - Support and training for GTAs

4.6 *Reflect on the effectiveness of the School/Subject's approaches to enhancement in learning and teaching*

5. Academic Standards

5.1 *Approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards*

- 5.1.1 This section should briefly outline the approach the School/Subject takes to assure the quality of learning and teaching and the student experience. This should include consideration of:

- Course and Programme Approval
- Annual Monitoring
- External Examiners
- Student Feedback
- Subject Benchmark Statements
- Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCFQ)
- Accreditation requirements
- Other external references

5.2 *Reflect on the effectiveness of the School/Subject's arrangements for securing academic standards*

6. Collaborative Activity (where applicable)⁴

6.1 *Key Features of the School/Subject Context and Vision*

This section should briefly outline key features of any collaborative activity, range of provision and include strategic priorities.

6.2 *Enhancing the Student Experience*

This section should provide student numbers, approaches to recruitment and how students are supported including during induction, transition and how equality and diversity is supported.

6.3 *Enhancement in Learning and Teaching*

⁴ Collaborative activity can be with partners both in the UK and overseas. This includes student mobility arrangements. Information on the types of collaborative activity can be found at: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/academiccollaborations/typesofcollaboration/>

This section should provide reflection on:

- Curriculum design
- Student engagement
- Approach and effectiveness of assessment and feedback
- Resources for learning and teaching
- Engaging and supporting staff

6.4 *Academic Standards*

This section should reflect on the effectiveness of the management of collaborative activities; how academic standards are maintained and enhanced.

7. Summary of perceived strengths and areas for improvement

7.1 *Self-evaluation*

This section should be a conclusion to the self-evaluation and a guide for the Review Panel and should highlight:

- Aspects of provision that are considered to be particularly successful and or worthy of wider dissemination as examples of good/best practice, where the evidence supports this
- Areas recognised for improvement, which should be prioritised, with indications given of how they will be tackled