

## University of Glasgow

## Academic Standards Committee – Friday 30 September 2016

## Periodic Subject Reviews 2015-16: 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 good practice arising from Periodic Subject Review in Session 2015-16, some of which may be worthy of further dissemination across the University.

Eight<sup>1</sup> reviews were conducted during 2015-16, as follows:

Subject/School	Date of Review	Good practice identified
Academic Development Unit (Learning & Teaching Centre)	07 December 2015	11
Archaeology	25 February 2016	6
Dental School	17 March 2016	10
English Language	11 March 2016	5
English Literature	17 March 2016	7
School of Interdisciplinary Studies (Dumfries Campus)	22/23 March 2016	13
Scottish Literature	23 March 2016	10
School of Mathematics & Statistics	17 March 2016	13

## 2. Key Strengths and Good Practice

A total of 75 areas of good practice/key strengths were identified, out of which 23 have potential for University-wide dissemination (please see Appendix 1). Good practice was identified in the following areas<sup>2</sup>:

<b>Academic standards [3]</b>	<i>Setting, maintaining and reviewing</i>		
		Appropriate quality processes	

<sup>1</sup> Nine reviews had originally been scheduled to be undertaken in 2015-16, but a request had been made and approved by the Scottish Funding Council to postpone the Review of Accounting and Finance by one year. This was due to the Subject being accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Although many subjects undertake both PSR and Accreditation within the same year, the AACSB process makes extensive use of student input and the School did not wish for their students, in particular, student representatives, to be overloaded by involvement in both the PSR and the AACSB processes in the same period. The PSR and the AACSB are different exercises and therefore unlikely to be any positive/synergistic gain in running both in the one year, but there was a risk of the opposite.

<sup>2</sup> The areas reflect the categories used in the Self Evaluation Template.

		Course/Programme approval	
		Annual monitoring	
		External Examining	1
		Responsiveness to student feedback	
		Benchmark statements	
		Accreditation and other external references	2
		Academic governance	
		Sharing good practice	
<b>Context and Strategy [5]</b>		Range of provision	1
		Environment (strong sense of community/student focused)	3
		Changes since last review	
		Strategic approach	1
		Reflective and high quality Self Evaluation Report	
		Overall aims and linkage to University strategy	
<b>Enhancing the Student Experience [25]</b>	<i>Admissions, Retention, Success</i>	Student numbers and trends	
		Recruitment	1
		Retention and Progression	
		Leavers destination data	
	<i>Equality and Diversity</i>		2
	<i>Supporting students</i>	Support mechanisms	10
		Transition and Induction	
		International students	
		Widening participation	3
	<i>Student Engagement</i>	Graduate attributes	2
		Employability	1
		Internationalisation	2
		Feedback mechanisms	4

<b>Enhancement Learning &amp; Teaching [41]</b>	<i>Learning &amp; Teaching</i>	Curriculum design and development	6
		Approaches to ILOs	3
		Work based learning and placement	2
		Technology enhanced L&T	2
		Innovative Teaching	7
	<i>Assessment &amp; Feedback</i>	Range of/Innovative assessment methods	8
		Engagement with Assessment policy	
		What/how students receive feedback	4
	<i>Identifying/extending good practice</i>		
	<i>Resources for L&amp;T</i>	Staffing	
		Physical resources	
	<i>Engaging and supporting staff</i>	Supporting staff (including Equality and Diversity)	6
		GTA support and training	3
<b>Collaborative activity</b>			

### 3. Summary

Good practice identified covered a large number of themes; with Support mechanisms (10), Range of assessment methods (8) Innovative Teaching (7), Supporting staff (6) and Curriculum design and development (6) being the categories with the most practices identified. Combining Feedback Mechanisms and What/How students receive feedback totalled (8), which is an increase to previous years which could possibly reflect strategic attempts to improve this area following National Student Survey (NSS) results where 'Assessment and Feedback' tends to score lower than other categories. Good practice is regularly identified under 'Support mechanisms', reflecting staff commitment to providing a supportive environment, responsive to student needs both academic and pastoral. It is evident that Schools and Subjects are also committed to introducing innovative teaching and assessment methods with a number of methods being highlighted by Periodic Subject Review.

### 4. Dissemination and tracking of good practice

At the Learning & Teaching Committee (LTC) on 21 September 2016, good practice identified from Periodic Subject Review was discussed. LTC highlighted that a majority of practices/commendations identified, where areas that Colleges and Schools were aware of and identification of original innovation would be of greater benefit. As a result, LTC proposed that it may be more beneficial for Dr Matthew Williamson, Director of the Learning and Teaching Centre, to liaise with the Senate Office, in relation to reviewing and identifying good practice worthy of dissemination.

## 5. Recommendation to Academic Standards Committee

Academic Standards Committee is **invited to note** the areas of good practice/key strengths identified and **to endorse** LTC's proposal that good practice arising from Periodic Subject Reviews is considered by the Learning and Teaching Centre as to whether practice was worthy for dissemination.

Subject	Para	Good Practice	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Wider University dissemination?
ADU	5.1.2.2	The ADU's integration and use of Intended Learning Outcomes throughout the programme, with explicit references made to ILOs at each session in marking and feedback.	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback	Use of ILOs and linking to marking and feedback	Y
ADU	5.1.4.1	Distinction between assessment <i>for</i> learning and assessment <i>of</i> learning	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback	Assessment design	Y
EngLang	4.31	The exemplary support and development of its GTAs (including opportunities offered to PGT students to shadow GTAs), and for the additional opportunities offered to GTAs such as lecturing on their own areas of research.	Enhancement in L&T	Engaging and supporting staff	supporting GTAs	Y
Dental School	5.1.3.2	Most impressed with the innovative use of the Flipped Classroom and <b>commends</b> the Dental School on this development.	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	innovative teaching - Flipped classroom - feedback based learning approach	Y
Dental School	5.1.4.2	assessment blueprinting was a model of good practice and <b>commends</b> the Dental School for this excellent practice.	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback	Assessment blueprinting	Y
EngLit	5.1.4	The Subject made great efforts to keep material engaging and, to support this, offered a wide range of reading and discussion groups, 'work in progress' seminars, competitions and guest speaker events. These were valued very highly and it was apparent from the meetings with students that they substantially enhanced the student experience. The Review Panel <b>commends</b> this	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	Range of learning and teaching - engaging student - innovative teaching	Y
Maths and Stats	5.1.1. and 5.1.2	The attention the School was giving to curriculum design and <b>commends</b> student consultation undertaken during curriculum reviews and continued consultation following introduction of revisions made	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	curriculum design - student consultation - before, during and after	Y
Maths and Stats	5.2.2	Mentoring arrangements adopted for all new members of staff.	Enhancement in L&T	Engaging and supporting staff	mentoring arrangement for all new staff	Y
Maths and Stats	5.2.3	Level of support given to new staff prior to arrival.	Enhancement in L&T	Engaging and supporting staff	Level of support given to new staff prior to arrival	Y
Maths and Stats	5.2.9 and 5.2.10	Level of support provided to their GTAs and the use of peer observation in Statistics to help Graduate Teaching Assistants develop their teaching skills.	Enhancement in L&T	Engaging and supporting staff	Support provided to GTAS and use of peer observations	Y
ScotLit	5.5.1	The Subject's clearly reflective and innovative approach to continuous enhancement of assessment practices.	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback	Assessments were tailored to individual modules and Honours options, provided stimulating diversity of tasks sensitively adapted to different learning styles.	Y
Interdisciplinary Studies	5.1.11	Feedback Viva, which was valued by students, and facilitated learning through reflective dialogue to embed knowledge and consolidate learning	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback	Feedback - one-to-one meetings to discuss work and in particular assessment feedback	Y
Interdisciplinary Studies	5.2.11	Academic Strategy Forum, which provides staff with opportunities to consider pedagogical issues through constructive discussions and meaningful information sharing .	Enhancement in L&T	Engaging and supporting staff	Academic Strategy Forum - staff consider pedagogical issues	Y
ADU	5.1.2.1	The co-creation of ILOs for the MEd dissertation between supervisor and MEd participants.	Enhancement in L&T	Student Engagement	curriculum design - ILOs	Y
ScotLit	5.1.5	The Review Panel was impressed by the Subject's engagement with Placement Learning and commends their 'Memorialising Scottish Literature and Culture' course as an excellent example.	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	Engagement with Placement Learning	Y
ADU	4.5.1	The effective feedback mechanisms in place.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Student Engagement	Feedback mechanisms	Y
Dental School	4.3.2	The mentoring system as an invaluable element in developing student life skills.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	mentoring system - staff mentored students life skills	Y
EngLit	4.1.2	For the care taken to ensure the Widening Participation Summer School is as interesting and encouraging as possible, and that appropriate support is in place for Summer School students transitioning to full-time study	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	Support for Summer School and support in place - Widening Participation	Y

Subject	Para	Good Practice	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Wider University dissemination?
EngLit	4.4.11	An annual information event was held for students interested in pursuing their Junior Honours year abroad, and a dedicated Moodle page set up. Support was given to interested students throughout the process, and those going abroad were invited to speak to the new applicants about their experience on returning. The Review Panel <b>commends</b> this informative and supportive approach	Enhancing the Std Exp	Student Engagement	Internationalisation and Graduate Attributes - promotin and support for year abroad	Y
Maths and Stats	4.3.7	The School's careful review of the Advising system in order to provide a more responsive service to their students, whilst recognising the practical challenges the School faced in introducing a smaller number of Advisers.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	Rview of the Advising System - more responsive service to students	Y
Maths and Stats	4.5.6	The use of focus group meetings which encouraged both staff and students to discuss specific topics.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Student Engagement	Use of focus groups - feedback mechanisms	Y
ScotLit	2.3.3	Co-ordination of the Principia Consortium initiative which brings benefits of internationalisation to the student community and provides opportunities for the development of partnerships with other institutions	Enhancing the Std Exp	Student Engagement	Internationalisation and Graduate Attributes - promotion and support for year abroad	y

## For noting: other areas identified

ADU	6.1.2	The good use of and effective responses to External Examiners.	Academic Standards	Good use of External Examiners	good use of quality processes	
Interdisciplinary Studies	6.3	MA in Primary Education programme's successful reaccreditation in 2013 by GTC, which was the first in Scotland to be reaccredited twice, with no changes or conditions attached	Academic Standards	Context & Strategy	Reaccreditation - no changes or conditions	
Interdisciplinary Studies	6.4	School plans to seek 'dual certification' through the General Teaching Council for Scotland	Academic Standards	Context & Strategy		
Maths and Stats	3.1.3 and 5.1.3	The work undertaken, to date, in merging some processes, such as the combined examination system, whilst acknowledging the distinctiveness between the subject areas.	Context & Strategy	Learning and Teaching	Merging systems between 2 subject areas	
Maths and Stats	3.1.1	The vision and effort by the School in its breadth and range of provision, although it recognised that student numbers were limited in relation to collaborative provision.	Context & Strategy	Learning and Teaching	breadth and range	
Dental School	4.3.5	Creating the strong sense of community for students and staff.	Context & Strategy	Supporting students	Strong community	
EngLit	3.1.6	Providing such an open, friendly and supportive environment for its students	Context & Strategy	Supporting students	Friendly and supportive environment	
Interdisciplinary Studies	3.2.4	Success in maintaining its identity and a sense of community during a period of significant challenges due to restructuring .	Context & Strategy	Sense of community		
ADU	4.2	All staff within the Unit had undertaken University Equality and Diversity training.	Enhancement in L&T	Engaging and supporting staff	E&D training	
ADU	5.1.4.2	The range of practice-based assessment methods used	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback		
ADU	5.1.4.3	The flexibility provided for assignment submission deadlines, taking into account work commitments. Flexibility was essential to accommodate the working patterns of academic staff.	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback	Feedback	
ADU	5.1.6.2	The level of feedback provided	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback		
ADU	5.1.6.3	The feed-forward approach to feedback and the quickness of return of feedback.	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback		
Archaeology	4.3.6	In addition, the students' strongly praised the varied, flexible and interesting curriculum and commitment offered	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	curriculum design	
Archaeology	5.1.3.6	Commitment to innovation and variation in assessment	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback	range of assessment	
Archaeology	5.1.3.6	Good practice in providing high quality feedback to students	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback	high quality feedback	
Archaeology	5.2.2.5	Management of, and support for, its GTAs as well as the commitment of the GTAs to supporting the Subject.	Enhancement in L&T	Engaging and supporting staff	supporting GTAs	
EngLang	3.9	Approach to mainstreaming Equality and Diversity, specifically through the School Disability Officer's belonging to the School's Learning and Teaching Committee, promoting awareness of relevant issues and embedding Equality and Diversity in the consideration of developments in learning and teaching.	Enhancement in L&T	Engaging and supporting staff	E&D awareness	

Subject	Para	Good Practice	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Wider University dissemination?
EngLang	4.15	Approach adopted in reviewing assessment as part of the wider review of the Honours curriculum. The diversification of assessment schemes was ambitious and wide-ranging, and resulted from careful planning and consultation. Staff demonstrated to the Panel an awareness of the importance of evaluating these changes following implementation in 2016-17.	Enhancement in L&T	Assessment & Feedback	curriculum design	
Dental School	5.1.1.5	The elective programme offered students an invaluable opportunity for extracurricular activities and <b>commends</b> the Dental School on the development work undertaken on their elective programme.	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	curriculum design - elective programme opportunity for extracurriculum activities	
Dental School	5.1.2.1	The process of constructive alignment against GDC ILOs was exemplary and <b>commends</b> the Dental School for this work and supports plans to extend assessment blueprinting to PGT programmes.	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	curriculum design - constructive alignment with ILOs and assessment	
Dental School	5.1.3.1	The proactive approach of staff in enhancing the student experience through the development of technology.	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	Use of technology	
EngLit	3.1.1	Commitment to the development of creative writing in the curriculum	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	curriculum design	
EngLit	4.4.1	The interesting range of learning and teaching methods, and staff commitment to these, which clearly has the effect of engaging students with the material and enhancing their enjoyment of the subject	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	Range of learning and teaching - engaging student	
Maths and Stats	3.2.1	The level of innovation being introduced, transforming how undergraduate Mathematics and Statistics was taught.	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	innovating teaching	
Maths and Stats	5.1.8	The Panel was impressed with and <b>highly commends</b> the use of technology to deliver learning and assessment.	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	Use of technology	
Maths and Stats	5.3.3	The Review Panel considered the use of and support given by the administrative and IT staff as <b>highly commendable</b> .	Enhancement in L&T	Engaging and supporting staff	Effective Admin and IT support	
ScotLit	2.3.2	For maintaining the scope and diversity of its teaching portfolio with its small cohort of teaching staff.	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	curriculum - diverse teaching portfolio despite small teaching cohort	
ScotLit	5.4.1	Subject's online provision developments as indicators of the Subject's innovative approach to course design and delivery and its responsiveness to and support of the University e-learning strategy	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	On line developments - innovative approach to course design and delivery	
Interdisciplinary Studies	4.1.3	The strong postgraduate taught provision which emphasises an interdisciplinary approach and includes emerging subject fields, clear links to future employment, and flexible module assessments that were tailored to meet the needs of part-time students in employment	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	PGT curriculum	
Interdisciplinary Studies	4.4.4	The wide range of work-based learning opportunities (placements, field courses and projects) offered by the School, which were valued by students and seen as beneficial for future employment	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	Work based learning	
Interdisciplinary Studies	5.1.1	Teaching which was mostly delivered in two-hour slots to enable diversity of classroom practice (through lectures, small group work, debates, technology-enhanced learning, and a wide range of seminar practices that include informal presentations, peer review of assignments, debates, and problem-based learning)	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	innovating teaching	
Interdisciplinary Studies	5.3.10	Teaching Garden initiative which provides a focus for teaching ecological skills for students, staff members and members of the public	Enhancement in L&T	Learning and Teaching	Innovative involvement of staff and students on ecological skills	
Archaeology	5.1.2.2	Problem-based and case-based approach to teaching and the excellent practical emphasis of the degrees (fieldwork and artefact work), including a strong commitment to embedding Graduate Attributes in the curriculum	Enhancing the Std Exp	graduate attributes		
Interdisciplinary Studies	5.1.7	The range of assessment approaches utilised by the School, which are closely linked to Graduate Attributes and employability.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Assessment & Feedback	graduate attributes	

Subject	Para	Good Practice	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Wider University dissemination?
Interdisciplinary Studies	4.4.5	Engagement with graduate attributes, which are continually developed across a broad range learning opportunities and which include reflections on practice, to ensure students are equipped for the world of work	Enhancing the Std Exp	Assessment & Feedback	graduate attributes	
ADU	4.3.1	The clear commitment of the ADU to provide a supportive environment, providing a high level of support to participants outside of class.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students		
Archaeology	4.3.6	Support for its UG students and the academic and pastoral experience it provides, as articulated for the Panel by a very content and enthusiastic group of students.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	academic and pastoral support	
EngLang	3.17	Success in engaging students in their studies, through embedding at an early stage connections with the Honours curriculum and with staff's own research, and through the evidently inclusive attitude of staff.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Student Engagement	early connections with research - inclusive attitude of staff - employability	
EngLang	5.3	The open and responsive attitude of staff, demonstrated through effective consultation and rapid response to feedback or requests for support, attested to by students, GTAs and external examiners.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	rapid response to requests for support	
Dental School	4.1.3	School's participation and proactive approach to Widening Participation.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	proactive support to Widening Participation	
Dental School	4.2.1	The establishment of the Professionalism and Ethics Study Club – All Years (PESCAV), which brought staff and students together for the discussion of current aspects of ethics and professionalism.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	Study club - all years brought staff and students together	
Dental School	4.3.1	The high level of support provided to students and, in particular, the Dental School Student Support Group.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	Student Support Group	
EngLit	3.1.3	Commitment to small-group teaching despite the challenges presented by this	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	commitment to small-group teaching	
Maths and Stats	4.4.11	The use of the Maths Ambassador Scheme.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Learning and Teaching	graduate attributes	
Maths and Stats	4.5.2	both the formal and informal course feedback mechanisms in place (but please see Recommendations 7 and 8)	Enhancing the Std Exp	Student Engagement	Responsiveness to student feedback	
ScotLit	4.2.2	Proactive approach to recruitment, particularly in terms of awareness and engagement with school curriculum and teachers and encourages the Subject to continue this effort. The Panel also urges that the School support the Subject in these initiatives.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Recruitment	Engagement with School curriculum	
ScotLit	4.2.3	The positivity expressed by the students who met with the Panel confirmed the success of Scottish Literature in providing an excellent learning experience for its students and the Panel <b>commends</b> the Subject for this	Enhancing the Std Exp	Student Engagement	Positive student feedback	
ScotLit	4.3.1	Particularly commends the School Disability Officer's membership of the School Learning and Teaching Committee to ensure that all Learning and Teaching Initiatives take full account of the requirements of all students whatever their specific needs.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	All learning and teaching initiatives take full account of all student requirements	
ScotLit	4.3.2	The GTAs for their awareness of accessible and inclusive teaching practice.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	GTAs awareness of accessibility and inclusive teaching	
ScotLit	4.4.1	Particularly commends the excellent support for students who are preparing for entry into Honours level study.	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	Students preparing for Honours level	
Interdisciplinary Studies	4.2.2	Widening Access strategy, which includes an articulation routes with Further/Higher Education	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	proactive support to Widening Participation	
Interdisciplinary Studies	4.3.5	Availability of some staff members to support students despite challenges of increasing student numbers	Enhancing the Std Exp	Supporting students	staff availability	