

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 19 May 2017

**Periodic Subject Review: Central and East European Studies held
on 22 February 2017**

Lesley Fielding, Clerk to the Review Panel

Review Panel:

Professor James Conroy	Vice Principal (Internationalisation)
Professor Luke March	University of Edinburgh, External Subject Specialist
Dr Carl Goodyear	Senate Assessor on Court
Ms Ellie Young	Student member
Dr Andrew Roach	School of Humanities, Cognate member
Dr Matthew Williamson	Director of Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service
Mrs Lesley Fielding	Senate Office and Clerk to the Panel
Dr Janis Davidson	Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service, Observer

1. Introduction

Central East European Studies (CEES) is a multidisciplinary subject group within the School of Social and Political Sciences.

Between 1999-2010 it was the Department of Central and East European Studies, which was founded on the basis of the former Institute of Russian and East European Studies, in existence since 1949.

The CEES Self Evaluation Report (SER) was prepared by the Head of Subject, Professor Richard Berry, in consultation with six staff. All staff and students had an opportunity to comment on the SER.

The Self Evaluation Report offered a large amount of information about the Subject's activities, though it tended to be descriptive rather than reflective. The Review Panel was impressed by the examples of good practice indicated in the report though considered that more evidence to support them would have been useful.

The Review Panel met with the Head of Subject, Professor Richard Berry, the Head of School, Professor Michele Burman, the Dean (Learning and Teaching) for the College of Social Sciences, Professor Moira Fischbacher-Smith and the Head of School Administration, Mr Chris Harrop. They also met with members of academic and administrative staff, including 2 early career staff, 4 undergraduate students, 10 postgraduate taught students and 2 Graduate Teaching Assistants.

2. Context and Strategy

2.1 Staff

Central and East European Studies currently has 16 staff, 14 of which are academic staff (11.6 FTE).

The staff: student ratio is 17:1.

2.2 Students

Student numbers for 2016-17 are summarised as follows:

Individuals enrolled on one or more courses at each level	Class enrolment (headcount)	FTE
Level 1	337	56.21
Level 2	114	18.26
Level 3	7 single/18 joint	16
Level 4	11 single/20 joint	21
PGT	58	58

2.3 Range of Provision under Review

2.3.1 Undergraduate Degrees

- MA Single Honours degree in Central and East European Studies
- MA Soc Sci Honours degree in Central and East European Studies, Joint Honours (various subjects)

2.3.2 Postgraduate Degrees

- MSc Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies
- Erasmus Mundus International Masters in Russian, Central and East European Studies (EM IMRCEES) in collaboration with 11 universities from Western and Eastern Europe, Russia, Central Asia and Canada.
- MRes Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies

Central and East European Studies also contributes to a number of taught courses across the School of Social and Political Sciences. The Subject Area is the lead subject on the cross College International Master in Security, Intelligence and Strategic Studies (IMISS).

2.4 Strategic Approach to Enhancing Learning and Teaching

2.4.1 In its Self-Evaluation Report (SER), the Subject Area referred to its multi- and interdisciplinary approach, which they claimed “had made a “positive contribution to ensuring ...a world-class student learning experience”. The Review Panel concurred that the Subject’s provision was in line with the University Learning and Teaching Strategy as evidenced by a number of achievements. Notably, the Subject’s global programme, the Erasmus Mundus International Master in Russian, Central and East European Studies (IMRCEES) contributed to the development of global citizens. The Subject’s provision, which was in line with the Quality Assurance Agency’s (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statement for Area Studies, was broad and non-prescriptive with emphasis on multidisciplinary, multiple pathways, and richness of the intercultural experience.

Language Training

2.4.2 The SER stated that “Language training is an integral part of our taught postgraduate programmes”. However, the Review Panel noted the concern that language provision for Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian had been withdrawn due to funding constraints. From discussions with the Head of Subject, the Panel noted that the provision of less popular languages had not warranted University funding, requiring the Subject to seek external funding. The Subject endeavoured to accommodate

students through the organisation of exchanges and summer language schools. The Panel considered that, in order to enhance further the student experience, it was desirable for language training in less popular languages to be available. Additional funding may be available through a new cross-University language strategy with funding for three years. The Review Panel **recommends** that, in conversation with the Director of the Open Programme, the subject convenor investigate the possibility of enhanced language provision for small minority languages within extant and planned language provision.

3. Enhancing the Student Experience

3.1 Admissions, Recruitment and Success

Recruitment

- 3.1.1 The Review Panel noted the statement within the SER that “Only the capacity of the lecture theatre prevents us from admitting more students” in reference to the numbers of undergraduate students. The Panel was puzzled by this statement as, in the event of increased student numbers, alternative accommodation would be available upon request to the Timetabling Team. From further discussion, it emerged that an increase in Level 1 student numbers would necessitate double teaching of classes, which the Subject did not wish to undertake, viewing it as detrimental to the student experience. The Head of Subject advised that the Subject was content with the current Level 1 numbers and that the Level 2 student numbers were of greater concern to the Subject. This issue is discussed in more detail elsewhere in the report [para 3.1.3.].
- 3.1.2 The undergraduate students advised that it would have been useful to have had knowledge of the Subject prior to coming to University. This was acknowledged in the SER which described the challenges arising from the area not being a focus within the School curriculum. The Review Panel concurred and noted the Subject’s involvement in University open days and associated events. However, the Panel considered that the Subject should devise a more robust and proactive strategy for engaging with pre-entry students in order to increase awareness of the Subject. In order to facilitate this, the Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject consult with the Marketing, Recruitment and International Office (MaRIO) to review the current recruitment strategy and to identify ways to increase and enhance the Subject’s profile at pre-entry level.

Progression

- 3.1.3 As noted in the SER and elsewhere in the report [para 3.1.1], the numbers of Level 1 students continuing to Level 2 continued to present challenges. As part of an integrated strategy to address this, the Subject had introduced initiatives, including the Buddy System, to encourage student progression. The students observed that some of the information on progression, contained in the handbook, lacked clarity, which could deter some students. However, the students highlighted that, in the handbook, there was a list of careers suitable to students with a CEES degree, which they considered would have been useful prior to choosing their subjects. From further discussion, the Review Panel noted some confusion among students, regarding elements of the course, such as language study, which they thought was mandatory in Honours. The Panel acknowledged the existing challenges in addressing progression. However, they considered that there were options available to the Subject, which could assist in making the course more attractive to continuing students. The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject review documentation, including handbooks, to better articulate progression routes and opportunities to Level 1 students and to highlight the benefits of continued study of the Subject.

Postgraduate Taught

- 3.1.4 The Review Panel explored the viability of the MRes in view of the low numbers of students enrolled on the programme. The Head of Subject advised the Panel that the MRes was essential in order to get students from the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science (SGSSS), the UK's largest facilitator of funding, training and support for doctoral students in social science, with accredited Doctoral Training Centres (DTC) in Scotland. The Panel noted that Head of Subject considered that offering the MRes was not onerous due to its structure, which consisted of limited tutorials and was not overly demanding on staff time.
- 3.1.5 The Review Panel was most concerned to learn of the dissatisfaction of some postgraduate students regarding outdated information on the PGT website. While acknowledging that most students were content with the support and options in the second semester, these students considered that they had been misled over the availability of courses and the size of tutorial groups. One student considered they had been "mis-sold" the course and would not choose the course again. Other opportunities advertised but not offered included internship places, sponsored dissertations and funding of overseas language skills. The Panel considered that this could be damaging to the reputation of the course and indeed of the University. From the meeting with staff, the Panel learned that the College technical support was responsible for the maintenance and updating of the website and that, despite repeated requests, the information had not been updated. The Head of School acknowledged that the maintenance of the website was outwith the Subject's control and agreed that the School needed a process, which would ensure that such problems could be systematically addressed. The Review Panel was pleased to note that the appointment of a web officer was imminent; however, it **recommends** that the School take **immediate action** to update the information on the Subject's webpage, particularly in relation to Postgraduate Taught provision. Disclaimers should be included on the web pages advising that not all courses advertised would necessarily be available in any given year. The School should undertake a review of the long-term technical support for the maintenance and updating of the Subject's web pages to ensure that all subsequent requests are actioned in a timely manner.
- 3.1.6 The Review Panel noted dissatisfaction with the core course among the postgraduate students, particularly in relation to the content of semester 1, which was perceived as having weaker content than semester 2. The students found the structure of the course, which covered different topics every two weeks, to be unsatisfactory and lacking in cohesion and rigour befitting a PG course. The Panel noted that the Head of Subject was aware of the issues pertaining to the core course in semester 1. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject review their core provision at postgraduate level to identify and address areas that require development.
- 3.1.7 The postgraduate students complimented the approachability and level of support provided by staff and the provision of helpful feedback.

3.2 Equality and Diversity

- 3.2.1 The Review Panel was pleased to note from the SER, and associated documentation, a number of good practices in relation to equality and diversity. The composition of the student cohort was diverse with an equal mix of gender and international students. The Panel was pleased to note the Subject's proactive and responsive approach by ensuring all student services were accessible for disabled students. The Subject Area adhered to the School Policy on Disability and responded on an individual basis. The Head of School advised the Panel that the Erasmus Mundus regulations required institutions to take action if there was more than sixty percent of one sex in a cohort on the IMREES programmes.

3.3 Supporting Students in their Learning

- 3.3.1 The Review Panel noted, from the SER, the support provided by the Subject Area in induction and transition and **commends** the Subject for this and its commitment to an open door policy to staff and students. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students expressed their appreciation for the support provided by the CEES staff including approachable staff, flexible office hours and prompt response times. The students were appreciative of the extra work the staff would undertake to assist students such as the staff member who provided informal language practice when a PGT language choice was unavailable. The undergraduate students praised the teaching in first year and advised that, despite the large classes, CEES provided a strong sense of community. The Panel was pleased to learn that the Head of Subject was involved in the delivery of Level 1 lectures. The postgraduate students who undertook the Qualitative Methods course expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate in an expenses paid overseas field trip, which they viewed as an “excellent experience” offering the opportunity to undertake relevant research in their area of study

CEES Soc

- 3.3.2 The Review Panel was most impressed by the activities of the CEES Soc, which reflected the level of engagement among the students, with the society providing support and events outside of classes. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students expressed their appreciation for the CEES Soc and considered the society contributed to the development of a cohesive student body. The students also appreciated the educational nature of many of the activities rather than being solely social events. The Review Panel considered this aspect of CEES culture to be **good practice** for its development of cultural awareness among the students.

3.4 Student Engagement

Graduate Attributes

- 3.4.1 The Review Panel noted, from the SER, the wide ranging and prestigious work placements available and identified these as an example of **good practice**. The placements were diverse, such as the Subject’s work in conjunction with Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNet), which enabled students to be partnered with third sector organisations to undertake original research for the organisation directly relating to the student’s dissertation research. The Panel also noted this had been adopted by the College Employability Officer as an example of best practice for embedding work-based placements into programmes and would be used in future CEES PGT intakes at MSc and IM level. The Panel noted the labour intensive nature of such placements and the Head of Subject confirmed that subject staff facilitated the placements but were hampered by the lack of resources. The Panel viewed this with some concern and considered that there was a need for additional support for both the Subject and School in the area of work placements from other services throughout the University. Accordingly, the Review Panel **recommends** that University Services, most particularly, the Careers Office, review the support provided to the School with a view to facilitating the further development of work placements.
- 3.4.2 The Review Panel noted, from discussions with the Head of School, that the graduate attributes opportunities at undergraduate level were underdeveloped due to the sizeable numbers of students and inadequate resources. The Panel was advised that the School planned to invest in a Graduate Attributes Programme commencing in the autumn. To address this at a local level, the Subject intended to liaise with the Careers Office to develop more Subject-specific graduate attributes. The undergraduate students had indicated an awareness of prospective careers with a

CEES degree from the handbook that provided examples of potential jobs such as civil service fast track positions, journalism and NGOs. The students would welcome direct talks from staff on potential careers and the Review Panel suggests that the Subject include this in their consultations with the Careers Office.

National Student Survey

- 3.4.3 The Review Panel noted from the SER that CEES was not a dedicated discipline in the NSS, but that, in view of some negative feedback in the NSS results, the Subject had implemented procedures to improve the timing of assessment and feedback and were in the process of liaising with the School and College to address these areas.

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)

- 3.4.4 The Review Panel noted from the SER and discussions with the Head of Subject that the Subject was not a separate category and did not receive dedicated feedback from this survey.

Student Feedback Mechanisms

- 3.4.5 From discussions, the Review Panel noted that students were aware that the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) minutes were available on Moodle. The Panel explored the functionality of the student feedback mechanism, which students considered, overall, worked well with a few exceptions. The Panel noted that, in response to the identification of PGT issues regarding the different tracks of the MSc, modifications had been made to the structure. The undergraduate students highlighted a clash in the scheduling of the essay due dates and examinations, which prevented feedback being available for use in the examination. The Head of School commented that this had been a one-off situation and had been the result of staff shortages; however, the Panel had noted this issue had appeared in a number of the SSLC minutes. The Review Panel had some concerns regarding the functionality of the SSLC in failing to address this issue and, therefore, **recommends** that the Subject review its SSLC feedback mechanisms to ensure that such issues are fully addressed and the feedback loop is closed.

4 Enhancement in Learning and Teaching

4.1 Learning and Teaching

Curriculum Design

- 4.1.1 As outlined in the SER, in order to adapt to the changes within the subject area and restructuring within the University, the curriculum had undergone substantial developments since 2011, particularly at PGT level, which was now aligned to reflect the new College and School structures. The undergraduate students expressed satisfaction with the structure of the Subject's programmes, appreciating the contemporary teaching and guest lecturer presentations.
- 4.1.2 The postgraduate students commented on the lack of availability of some subjects compared with those listed on the website. This issue is addressed elsewhere in the report [para 3.1.6.].
- 4.1.3 The Review Panel noted with interest the reference within the SER to the practice of team teaching for Levels 1 and 2. Further to discussions with the Head of Subject and staff, the Panel observed that the method whereby staff taught for one week relevant topics to their research interest was not team-teaching but, in fact, rotation teaching. The Panel noted that this method enabled staff to share the teaching and to familiarise the students with their area of expertise and was introduced to offset resource issues. The Review Panel suggests the Subject revise this terminology and review their teaching to identify the most appropriate and resourceful delivery.

- 4.1.4 It was brought to the Review Panel's attention that one student had expressed frustration that language study at Honours level amounted to only 20 credits, whereas at Level 1 or 2, it would have had a higher credit value. Likewise, the students considered that there would be advantages to studying a language in either first or second year. The Review Panel suggests that the Subject gives some consideration to the language provision at Honours and earlier.

Plagiarism

- 4.1.5 The Review Panel noted from the SER that the Subject's practice, with regard to suspected plagiarism, did not comply fully with the Plagiarism Statement in the University Calendar. The statement outlines the practice that all suspected cases of plagiarism at Honours level should be directly referred to the Senate office and not the Head of School. The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject and School review their practice with regard to plagiarism to ensure conformity to the University regulations.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

- 4.1.6 The Review Panel noted, from the documentation, the detailed Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs). The Panel explored with the Head of Subject whether or not the ILOs were too extensive, however, the Head of Subject advised that the Subject took the issue of ILOs very seriously, as was evident from the L&T Committee, which had an ILO taskforce. In addition, the Subject considered that extensive ILOs were necessary in order to inform students about the expectations of the course.
- 4.1.7 The postgraduate students expressed dissatisfaction with the ILOs for semester one, considering the course was overly historical and lacked cohesion. The students, however, were positive regarding the semester two course, which they considered displayed the Subject's strengths. When raised with staff they advised this was due to staffing constraints. Accordingly, the Review Panel would suggest that the Subject review the semester one provision at postgraduate level in order to ensure that the course accurately reflects the ILOs and emulates the positive aspects of the semester two course, where possible.

Study Abroad

- 4.1.8 From the SER the Review Panel noted that the Subject had adopted a 20-credit format to increase students' opportunities for study abroad following the recent expansion in the number of Erasmus exchanges. New Erasmus staff had been appointed and UG student exchange agreements signed with a number of partner universities. This enabled Honours students to undertake a single semester of study abroad instead of the entire academic year. The Panel welcomed the Subject's efforts in ensuring the students were aware of their mobility opportunities and fully utilised the Subject's excellent links with other universities.

4.2 Assessment and Feedback

- 4.2.1 The Subject employed an excellent range of assessment methods including essays, oral presentations/simulated conference papers, research, examinations and reflective diaries. The undergraduate students expressed their satisfaction with the range of assessments offered, noting they were both "modern and fair". The Review Panel were pleased to note that, while some assessment techniques, such as reflective diaries, were demanding in terms of staff resources, the subject area did not wish to let such constraints limit the range of assessment methods.
- 4.2.2 The Review Panel had noted from the SER that an element of the PGT assessment was a 4000-5000 word essay for the Issues Course. The Panel explored this with the postgraduate students who expressed their frustration with this form of assessment

as the essay covered only one topic per seminar and the students indicated their preference for more generic themes. However, further to discussions with staff, the Panel learned that this form of formative assessment was a condition of the Erasmus Mundus programme. It would be helpful if this was clearly communicated to students.

Feedback on Assessment

- 4.2.3 The undergraduate students expressed their satisfaction with the level of feedback provided by staff, perceiving it to be substantial and formative with staff willing to discuss feedback with students in detail. The Level 1 and 2 students informed the Review Panel that there had been a timetabling clash with an essay submission date being too close to the examination so feedback from the essay could not be used in the examination. This issue has been explored in more detail elsewhere in the report [para 3.4.5].
- 4.2.4 Further to discussions regarding assessment and feedback at honours level, students advised of an incident regarding the delayed return of essays due to two students being granted extensions. The Review Panel suggests that the Subject investigate this issue further and clarify the correct policy with students and staff.
- 4.2.5 The postgraduate students generally found feedback to be coherent and useful and, again, were able to further discuss this with further with staff, if necessary. One student had trouble in contacting the lecturer in semester two. However, this appeared to be an isolated case.

Engagement with the Code of Assessment and Assessment policy

- 4.2.6 The Subject adhered to the University Code of Assessment. The Review Panel noted that the Subject reviewed their use of the marking scale with the Learning and Teaching Committee [para 5.1.2].

4.3 Resources for Learning and Teaching (staffing and physical)

Staffing

- 4.3.1 From the SER and discussions, it was evident to the Review Panel that the staff in CEES were dedicated to providing an excellent student experience through their teaching and were committed to nurturing a strong sense of identity with the Subject. However, it was also evident that the staff faced substantial challenges in sustaining the high quality of this provision, exacerbated by staff shortages and resources. The issue of additional staffing is outwith the remit of the Review Panel; however, the Panel considered that there were steps that could be taken to alleviate the pressure on staff.
- 4.3.2 The SER outlined the Subject's practice of double marking all Honours and PGT coursework together with Honours examination scripts. The Review Panel had concerns regarding the impact on staff workloads and timeous feedback and questioned whether this resulted in any meaningful change in marks. This was explored at the meeting with staff and the Panel was advised that staff viewed this as "the least of their problems". While the Panel respected the staff's commitment to double marking, it considered that, in view of the staff workload at postgraduate level and the demands of the Erasmus Mundus programme, this practice was not sustainable in the long-term. Therefore, in order to reduce pressure on staff and ensure effective and timeous feedback, the Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject review the practice of double marking all Honours and PGT work and introduce a form of targeted moderation.
- 4.3.3 The Review Panel noted from the SER that the Subject operated "a general open door policy" in addition to office hours. The Review Panel congratulated the staff for the level of support and commitment shown to the students, particularly the open

door policy[para 3.3.1]. However, the Panel considered that the open door policy was not in the best interests of staff. In regard to the level of support staff could provide, it set expectations so high that staff were under considerable pressure to realise them. The time spent on dealing with student issues impacted on an already heavy workload. In the interests of improving the staff workload balance, the Panel considered that the Subject should adhere to the defined access hours for student consultation which would allow both students and staff to manage their time better. The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject maintain current office hours and review the open door policy.

- 4.3.4 As stated in the SER and from discussions with the staff, the Review Panel observed that the Subject considered their workload within the School to be disproportionate to the size of the Subject. The Panel agreed that the Subject was under pressure [para 4.3.2], and considered that some of the Subject's heavy workload could be mitigated by adjusting current practices. However, outwith this, the Panel acknowledged the level of work involved for staff in managing the Erasmus Mundus programmes and work placements. The Panel was pleased to learn from the Head of School that the School had undertaken a review and rationalisation of the taught courses portfolio and fully acknowledged the need for the School to be mindful of staff and their wellbeing when reviewing workloads. The Review Panel welcomed this approach by the School and **recommends** that the Subject liaises with the School in order to identify ways to alleviate the pressures on the Subject and to find efficiencies by integrating common functions.

Library

- 4.3.5 The Subject library has a dedicated subject librarian and, as noted in the SER, was considered to be "one of the best library collections in the UK". Both undergraduate and postgraduate students praised the library, describing it as "excellent" and, although the SER noted previous complaints regarding the availability of texts, the students with whom the Review Panel met expressed satisfaction with the availability of books and articles on line. In order to maximise the availability of texts, the Panel suggests that library give consideration to digitising more material in order to accommodate increased demand at Levels 1 and 2.

Learning and Teaching Space

- 4.3.6 The Subject's dedicated teaching accommodation was adequate for teaching smaller classes. Larger classes were held in accommodation organised by the Timetabling Team. The Review Panel noted from the SER that the Subject considered the current office space available was inadequate in view of the number of international visitors linked the Erasmus Mundus programme.

4.4 Engaging and Supporting Staff

Early career support

- 4.4.1 The Review Panel met with two early career members of staff who expressed satisfaction with their work and the level of support provided by their mentors and the staff team. The Panel enquired about their experience of the Early Career Development Programme (ECDP) and both reported that there was a lack of clarity regarding the expectations of the programme. Similarly, they considered the promotions procedure was unclear and should be included in the ECDP. The PGCAP was not considered to be entirely satisfactory and both staff members queried the relevance of some sections, considering that the work demands of the programme outmatched the gains. Both staff members agreed that it would be useful for prior experience to be recognised.

Graduate Teaching Assistants

- 4.4.2 The Review Panel was pleased to note from the documentation that the Subject appointed a lead Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) who represented the wider GTA community and identified this as **good practice**.
- 4.4.3 The GTAs found staff to be helpful and appreciated the Subject's operation of an open door policy, if they required advice or support. The Review Panel noted the inclusion of the lead GTA at the Subject's staff meetings where any issues of concern were raised, on behalf of the GTAs, with the Head of Subject. The Panel considered this to be **good practice**.
- 4.4.4 In preparation for the meeting, the lead GTA had compiled a list of issues for discussion with the Panel. The GTAs indicated that more structured support and training, in order to develop assessment techniques would be welcome. The GTAs had welcomed the Subject's decision to assign the marking of Level 2 essays to the GTA workload. The GTAs also indicated that they would welcome opportunities to develop their teaching skills, including observation of their teaching for individual career development. The Review Panel advised the GTAs to consider the Recognising Excellence in Teaching programme and recommended contacting the Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service. The GTAs were unaware of any opportunities for formal training at School or College levels.
- 4.4.5 The Review Panel considered that, while there was evidence of Subject support for the GTAs, it was less clear what wider College and School training, if any, was available. In the event that such training was available, the GTAs should be made aware of the options as soon as possible. The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject engage with the GTAs to identify areas in which they could improve development opportunities and that the College and School review the availability and/or the communication of training opportunities available to GTAs.

5. Academic Standards

- 5.1.1 The Review Panel considered that CEES had a variety of robust and effective procedures in place, which ensured that the Subject engaged in a continual process of self-reflection and self-evaluation with regard to academic and pedagogical practice.
- 5.1.2 In reviewing Academic Standards, the Review Panel noted an improvement in the student results and the rise in the award of First Class degrees. This was explored further with the Head of Subject who considered that this reflected the quality of teaching and the level of support provided through the Subject's open door policy. Additionally, the Head of Subject advised that, in response to an external examiner's comment that marking was too harsh, the Subject had reviewed their use of the marking scale with the Learning and Teaching Committee and determined that the full marking scale had not been implemented. Practice had been revised, resulting in improved calibration with the marking scale. The Panel was satisfied with this account and **commends** the Subject area on its approach to reviewing and enhancing practice.

Currency and Validity of Programmes

- 5.1.3 The Review Panel, guided by the views of the External Subject Specialist, confirmed that, at the time of the Review, the programmes offered by CEES were current and valid in the light of developing knowledge and practice within the subject area.

6. Collaborative provision

- 6.1 The SER stated that the Subject had developed “meaningful, sustainable and innovative teaching collaborations with a range of key international partners”. The Review Panel **commends** the Subject on these impressive initiatives, which clearly align with the University’s internationalisation strategy. The success of the Erasmus Mundus programme was evident through the substantial funding, which was pivotal in supporting over 80 student scholarships. Similarly, it had opened up internationalisation opportunities for both students and staff and had been successful in attracting students from a wide range of countries. The Panel explored the Subject’s contingency plans for a post-Brexit scenario and noted the planned introduction of a new one-year MSc programme. Additionally, the Head of School was confident that the Subject would maintain a high international profile through established international relationships and networks which would assist in bridging the European gap. The Panel concurred that these international relationships would be important in a post-Brexit environment but had some concerns that the MSc was not sufficiently robust to offset the overall impact of Brexit. The Panel considered that the Subject required additional support from the School to assist in maintaining the Subject’s key position in fostering and providing an internationalised curriculum. Hence, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School and Subject jointly work on the development of a robust strategy to ensure that the Subject continues to thrive in the post-Brexit environment.

7. Conclusion

The Review Panel concluded that that Central and East European Studies was a thriving subject area, displaying creativity, flexibility and ambition in its enquiry-based and research-led teaching and learning provision. The Subject’s international credentials are admirable and clearly align with the University’s strategy. The dedication of the staff is evident through their commitment to practices, which strengthen and enhance the student experience. The Review Panel makes a small number of recommendations where it sees opportunities for the Subject to enhance provision further.

7.1 Commendations

The Review Panel commends Central and East European Studies on the following, which are listed in order of appearance in the report:

Commendation 1:

The Panel **commends** the Subject for the support provided in induction and transition and its commitment to supporting staff and students [*paragraph 3.3.1*].

Commendation 2:

The Panel **commends** the Subject area on its approach to internal review as evidenced in its responsiveness to the comments of the external examiner in relation to the marking scale [*paragraph 5.1.2*].

Commendation 3:

The Review Panel **commends** the Subject for the integration and strong sense of community evident, which distinguishes CEES from other subjects [*paragraph 3.3.1*].

Commendation 4:

The Review Panel **commends** the Subject for the excellent provision of international programmes. These are an excellent match with the University's strategy and reveal awareness and engagement with University policy [*paragraph 6.1*].

7.2 Good Practice

The Review Panel recognises the following **good practice** within Central and East European Studies which are listed in order of appearance in this report:

Good practice 1

Unique international programmes [*paragraph 6.1*].

Good practice 2

Enquiry-led and research-led learning and teaching [*paragraph 7*].

Good practice 3

The Review Panel noted the Subject's commitment to nurturing student cohesion and a strong sense of identity [*paragraph 3.3.2*].

Good practice 4

The Subject's wide ranging and prestigious work placements [*paragraph 3.4.1*].

Good practice 5

The Subject's appointment of a lead GTA and inclusion on the Staff Committee [*paragraph 4.4.2 and 4.4.3*].

7.3 Areas for enhancement

The Review Panel highlighted the following areas as opportunities for further work. These and the recommendations that follow are intended to support the Subject in its reflection and to enhance provision in relation to teaching, learning and assessment.

- Over-commitment of staff
- Increased College and School support
- Increasing profile of Subject at pre-entry level

Specific recommendations addressing these areas for work are listed below, as are a number of further recommendations on particular matters.

7.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made to support Central and East European Studies in its reflection and to enhance provision in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. The recommendations have been cross-referenced to the paragraphs in the text of the report to which they refer and are **grouped together** by the areas for improvement/enhancement and are **ranked in order of priority within each section**.

Recommendation 1

The Review Panel **recommends** that, in order to alleviate pressure on staff and to ensure effective and timeous feedback, the Subject review the practice of double marking all Honours and PGT work and introduce a form of targeted moderation. [*paragraph 4.3.2*]

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

The Review Panel recommends that the Subject maintain current office hours and review the open door policy. *[paragraph 4.3.3]*

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

Recommendation 2

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject and School review their practice with regard to plagiarism to ensure conformity to the University regulations *[paragraph 4.1.5]*

For the attention of The Head of Subject

For information: Director, Senate Office

Recommendation 3

The Panel was pleased to note that the appointment of a web officer was imminent; however, it **recommends** that the School takes **immediate action** to update the information on the Subject's webpage, particularly in relation to Postgraduate Taught provision. Disclaimers should be included on the web pages advising that not all courses advertised would necessarily be available. The School should undertake a review of the long-term technical support for the maintenance and updating of the Subject's web pages to ensure that all subsequent requests are actioned in a timely manner. An update should be provided to the September meeting of ASC. *[paragraph 3.1.5]*

For the attention of: The Vice Principal and Head of College

The Head of School School

For information: The Head of Subject

Recommendation 4

The Panel was pleased to learn from the Head of School that the School had undertaken a review and rationalisation of the taught courses portfolio and fully acknowledged the need for the School to be mindful of staff and their wellbeing when reviewing workloads. The Review Panel welcomed this approach by the School and **recommends** that the Subject liaises with the School in order to identify ways to alleviate the pressures on the Subject and to find efficiencies by integrating common functions. *[paragraph 4.3.4]*

For the attention of: The Head of Subject and Head of School

Recommendation 5

The Review Panel **recommends** that, in consultation with the Director of the Open Programme, the subject convenor investigate the possibility of enhanced language provision for small minority languages within the extant and planned language provision. *[paragraph 2.4.2]*

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

For information: The Head of School

Recommendation 6

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject engage as early as possible with the GTAs to identify areas in which they could improve development opportunities. *[paragraphs 4.4.4 and 4.4.5]*

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

The Review Panel **recommends** that the College and School review the availability and/or the communication of training opportunities available to GTAs. *[paragraph 4.4.5]*

For the attention of: The Head of School

For information: The Vice Principal and Head of College

Recommendation 7

The Review Panel had some concerns regarding the functionality of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee in failing to address the clash of examination and essay and, therefore, **recommends** that the Subject review their SSLC feedback mechanisms to ensure that such issues are fully addressed and the feedback loop is closed *[paragraph 3.4.5]*

For the attention of the Head of School

Recommendation 8

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject consult with the Marketing, Recruitment and International Office (MaRIO) to review the current recruitment and to identify ways to increase and enhance the Subject's profile at pre-entry level. *[paragraph 3.1.2]*

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

For information: The Director of Marketing, Recruitment and International Office

The Head of School

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject review documentation, including handbooks, to better articulate progression to Level 1 students and highlight the benefits of continued study of the Subject. *[paragraph 3.1.3]*

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

Recommendation 9

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject review their core provision at postgraduate level to identify and address areas which require further development. *[paragraph 3.1.6]*

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

Recommendation 10

The Review Panel recommends that the Subject and University services, most particularly the Careers Office, to provide support to the School in the development of appropriate national and international work placements. *[paragraph 3.4.1]*

For the attention of: Director of Careers Office

For information: The Head of Subject

Recommendation 11

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School and Subject jointly work on the development of a robust strategy to ensure that the Subject maintains its leading international position in the post Brexit environment. *[paragraph 6.1]*

For the attention of: The Head of School

For information: The Head of Subject