

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 6 October 2017

**Periodic Subject Review: Responses to the Recommendations
arising from the Review of School of Mathematics & Statistics held
on 17 and 18 March 2016**

Ms Catherine Omand, Senior Academic Policy Manager, Senate Office

Graduate Attributes

Recommendation 5

The Review Panel, whilst acknowledging that students were obtaining a range of graduate attributes, these tended to be specific to particular programmes or tailored courses. The Panel **recommends** that the School considers ways of ensuring graduate attributes are embedded throughout the curriculum, in a manner which is clearly identifiable to the students. [Paragraph 4.4.9]

For Action: Head of School

Response:

The School acknowledges this important principle and is taking further action to ensure that all students in all programmes have opportunities to develop a range of graduate attributes. The School has combined honours degree programmes with more than 20 other subjects so it is challenging to find a way forward that ensures all cohorts are covered without duplicating material and activities covered elsewhere. In response, therefore, the School has established a working group, convened by the LTC Convenor, to consult with colleagues around the University and develop detailed proposals. Implementation of the new arrangements is expected from Session 2018-19.

Updated response – September 2017

The School's working group has met to have wide-ranging discussions of the ways the School currently addresses the graduate attribute agenda, the extent to which the needs of different cohorts of students are met, how this provision might be extended and the barriers the School faces in trying to extend it. The working group has made a number of long-term recommendations that will now be considered and, where approved, implemented by the School's learning and teaching committee (and subject sub-committees) after appropriate discussion with colleagues in other Schools. The School intends immediately to take the following actions, proposed by the working group.

- Introduce a discussion of graduate destinations and graduate attributes into the Induction Week programme for new Honours and Masters students (September 2017). The working group believes that students are not always aware of the opportunities available to them.
- In consultation with the Careers Service, include presentations on graduate destinations and graduate attributes on the agenda of a School meeting early in Session 2017-18 (October 2017). The working group believes that staff in the School are not fully aware of the destinations of our graduates and, therefore, the context which makes graduate attributes an important aspect of our learning and teaching effort.

- Since the PSR visit took place, a group work task has been introduced into *Statistics 2Y* (Semester 2), which is a core course for all undergraduate students who go on to take Statistics degrees. This will be continued and group work will also be brought forward into *Statistics 2S* (Semester 1) in Session 2017-18 (November 2017).
- Since the PSR visit took place, group work has been introduced into *Advanced Data Analysis* (Statistics, Year 4, Semester 1) and this will continue in the new session.
- Combined Honours Statistics students will give a talk on their Honours project, along with all Single Honours Statistics students, rather than produce a poster as before. If the students have not already been told to expect a poster, this will be done from Session 2017-18 (March 2018); otherwise from Session 2018-19.

In addition, the working group has produced a longer list of potential actions. These require some discussion within the School in the coming session and so any implementation will be over a slightly longer timescale.

Marketing and Recruitment

Recommendation 13

The Panel **recommends** that the Senate Office bring the issue of recruitment material to the attention of the Marketing, Recruitment & International Office and the issue of limited flexibility of choice between Colleges to Academic Standards Committee. [Paragraph 4.1.1]

For Action: Clerk of the Panel

For Information: Head of School

Response:

In relation to recruitment material, the above recommendation was brought to the attention of Mr Jonathan Jones, Head of UK/EU Recruitment & Widening Participation, Marketing, Recruitment & International Office. His response is noted below.

Thanks for letting me know, however it is more to do with those students not remembering, reading or listening since the message about the flexible degree structure is and has been a core message since well before my time. It continues to be in the UG prospectus and [online](#), is highlighted in presentations that we make to school and college students, at Open Days and other recruitment events, including the large UCAS Recruitment Conventions. It also features in our online profiles across a wide range of student websites, as well as in our email, telephone and postal communications.

It is not surprising that they don't remember, it's not unusual for us to get questions about it despite all of the above, but I don't think we can do any more than we already do.

In addition to Mr Jones comments, the Learning & Teaching Committee has established a Transitions Working Group and part of its remit is to examine how students are supported on entering the University and how this can be improved. An Induction and Orientation Network, managed by the Positive Student Journey Project team, has also been established and its remit is to improve the quality of information provided as well as the format of induction sessions and to promote best practice.

In relation to limited flexibility of choice between Colleges, Academic Standards Committee **is invited** to discuss this¹.

¹ As the Report was approved under Summer Powers, ASC did not previously have an opportunity to discuss this part of the recommendation

Update October 2017 from Dean of Learning & Teaching (College of Science and Engineering)

The Chief Advisers agreed a protocol before the start of the current session so that students who found that they had chosen the 'wrong' award (BSc, MA or MA SocSci) could transfer between colleges, subject to some reasonable conditions (such as that space was available and they met the published entry requirements). This has improved the position but it did not work completely smoothly and the arrangements will be reviewed after Soc Sci have appointed a new chief adviser.

The web pages (such as <www.gla.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/mathematics>) have substantial guidance on the flexibility and operation of the programmes but it clearly doesn't sink in, as Jonathan Jones points out in his response. I have tried to explain it to many parents and it is a struggle!