

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 23 March 2018

**Periodic Subject Review: Responses to Recommendations Arising
from the Report of the Review of the subject area of Information
Studies held on 7 February 2017**

Mrs Catherine Omand, Senate Office

Overview

The School of Humanities and the subject area of Information Studies broadly welcome the report of the PSR Panel and note the commendations, identification of good practice and recommendations contained within the report, many of which had been identified by the subject area within the SER.

Colleagues within the Subject area and School are slightly disappointed to note that some of the recommendations relate to matters surrounding the critical staffing issues and rising student numbers faced by Information Studies over the last 3 years in particular but also extending to 2013/14 and had understood that these had been acknowledged by the Panel during the course of the review. Those recommendations that have arising from these issues are identified within our response.

Recommendations and Responses

In keeping with the structure of the Review Report, 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**

Strategic Approach to Enhancing Learning and Teaching

Recommendation 1

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject, in liaison with the Head of School, continue with plans to develop its five-year learning and teaching strategy, which addresses various objectives (School, College, University) to expand and enhance provision of a quality student learning experience [Section 2.4.4].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

For information: The Head of School

Response

The School of Humanities has developed and approved a School Learning & Teaching Plan which addresses the objectives of the College and University Learning & Teaching Strategies; in turn each subject area is now expected to produce their own implementation plans which respond to each point within the plan – this approach is designed to help us expand and enhance the quality of our students' learning experiences. Implementation of the plan and subject areas plans will be monitored via the School's Learning and Teaching Committee and appropriate subject level fora and an annual review of progress will take place at the start of each new academic session.

Student Handbooks

Recommendation 2

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject liaise with their students and the School Learning and Teaching Convenor, in a review of course handbooks to ensure that students are aware of support and resources available, and have a clearer understanding of relevant policies and regulations, in particular the Code of Assessment, moderation of work by external examiners and assessment undertaken on Study Abroad. [Section 3.3.5].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

For information: School Learning & Teaching Convenor

Response

All subject and course Moodle now have embedded links to course and programme handbooks all of which provide clear details to all students of support and resources available to them to enhance their learning experience at the University of Glasgow. Links are also provided to relevant policies and regulations including the Code of Assessment, the role of the External Examiner and how assessment is undertaken on Study Abroad. An assessment of the success of this approach will be done via the SSLC at the end of the academic session.

Staff Student liaison Committee

Recommendation 3

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject undertake a review of the operation of Staff Student Liaison Committee meetings, to ensure actions are clearly identified and progressed, and outcomes reported to students on-line, through Moodle/Facebook and the Student Voice [Section 3.4.1].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

Response

One of the priorities of the School Learning & Teaching Plan includes 'acknowledging the student voice' and we intend to develop a formalised process relating to the dissemination of feedback arising out of SSLC discussions. Once this has been agreed, L & T Administrators will be responsible for uploading SSLC minutes, outcomes, decisions and follow up actions on Student Voice.

Annual Monitoring

Recommendation 4

The Panel recommends that the Subject continues to follow guidance available on the Senate Office website to ensure continuous monitoring and enhancement of provision, and identification of good practice through annual monitoring, in accordance with Senate Office guidance

(<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/annualmonitoring/#tabs-2>) [Section 4.1.4].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

Response

The subject area's ability to interact fully with Annual Monitoring in order to meet our aspirations for continuous monitoring and enhancement of provision have been severely

impacted by staffing issues in the last 4-5 years. We are delighted to report that additional resources have been made available to the subject area with a new lecturer in Museum Studies commencing in January 2018 and an advert for three new or replacement posts, including a Chair in Museum Studies and a SL and L in Archives/Digital Curation currently in progress. These additional staffing resources will allow staff to re-focus their attentions on enhancement activities, some of which have been unable to be prioritised recently.

Study Abroad

Recommendation 5

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject continue to expand and promote Study Abroad opportunities to meet the University's strategic objective of 20% of students having an international experience by 2020, and ensure the accuracy of information available to students [Section 4.1.9].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

Response

This is another area of enhancement activity that has been impacted by staffing issues within the Subject area. However, the recent and imminent arrival of new colleagues together with the Subject and Schools Learning and Teaching plan, will allow us to focus our attention of strategic priorities which will improve our students' learning experiences. A review of our current statistics is currently underway which will allow us to put in place plans with a view to incremental improvement in this area. We are also exploring innovative methods of achieving international targets, such as virtual placements with international museums or archives.

Assessment and Feedback

Recommendation 6

The Review Panel **recommends** a review of current feedback procedures focusing particularly on the quality and consistency and timing of feedback, with a view to ensuring that students have appropriate feedback to help guide and inform their next assessment [Section 4.2.3].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

Recommendation 7

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject liaise with the Dean of Learning & Teaching (College of Arts) to produce a feedback calendar, which should document assessment and feedback activities for all programmes across a full session (2017-18) [Section 4.2.4].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

For information: Dean of Learning & Teaching, College of Arts

Recommendation 8

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject adopt a strategic approach to feedback on assessment, with a view to increasing the amount of formative assessment compared to summative assessment, particularly for postgraduate taught students [Section 4.2.5].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

Response to Recommendations 6, 7 and 8

These recommendations all highlight areas that were directly impacted by the staffing issues noted previously. Again, the impact of new appointments will allow a re-focus on the subject's feedback strategies and administration which will dovetail with the School's and Subject's Learning & Teaching Plans.

Via these plans, the School's Learning & Teaching Committee is charged with asking each subject to identify potential block upload assessments with a view to implementing this in 17/18; subjects have also been asked to develop assessment calendars at programme level (UG and PGT) which, in tandem with the new College of Arts L & T Moodle which contains good practice guidelines on feedback activities and strategies across all subjects, are all intended to enhance our students' learning experience. Information Studies has implemented an assessment/feedback calendar at PGT level and this has had an impact on return times.

Recommendation 9

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject's use of 'similarity checking software' (i.e. URKUND), as a learning and development tool to help students develop citation and referencing skills should be adopted on a more consistent and routine basis, in accordance with Senate Office regulations (available on website <http://senate.gla.ac.uk/calendar/current/02-feesandgeneral.pdf>) [Section 4.2.10].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

Response

The Subject has now embedded Urkund across appropriate courses/assessment type and course handbooks now make explicit reference to its use as a learning and development tool which will allow students to develop citation and referencing skills.

Recommendation 10

The Review Panel **recommends** the Subject utilise the Template for Minutes of Board of Examiners' Meetings (available at http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_196809_en.pdf) in accordance with University policy, and ensure that roles and responsibilities regarding the uploading of examination results are clearly articulated to relevant staff members [Section 4.2.11].

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

Response

During session 16/17 the Head of School Administration conducted a briefing session with all UG L & T Administrators and Convenors regarding the need to use standardised templates (for minutes and agendas) for recording minutes of exam boards in line with University policy; this session also included clarification of roles and responsibilities regarding uploading of examination results.

The HoSA intends to roll out these standardised template to PGT programmes in session 18/19.

These templates will no doubt evolve once further information regarding new GDPR requirements are rolled out across the University.

Staff Workload

Recommendation 11

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Head of Subject undertakes a review of workload management and adopts the College workload model to help plan work effectively and to bring about greater transparency for all staff (particularly early career) regarding roles and responsibilities [Section 4.3.3].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

For information: The Head of School

Response

Again, this recommendation reflects the acute staffing issues faced by the subject area over the last 4-5 years; it is anticipated that current and imminent new appointments will allow full, more effective and transparent use of the current College workload model.

Engaging and Supporting Staff

Recommendation 12

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Head of Subject engage with early career staff to ensure the provision of appropriate guidance and support in relation to the Early Career Development Programme. [Section 4.4.6].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

Response

The Head of Subject currently meets with all early career staff with advice and guidance pertaining to ECDP; the Head of School also cover ECDP in induction meetings for new starts. However, how ECDP advice and guidance is provided centrally to new colleagues is a major issue for the subject, School and College and discussions are ongoing with the PPR team regarding accuracy and consistency of advice and information which is available via the PPR website. New starts have repeatedly encountered conflicting messages relating to ECDP and it is felt that there is limited progress the Head of Subject can make with this recommendation in the absence of strategic input from the Director of Pay and Performance.

Recommendation 13

The Review Panel **recommends** the Subject ensure that GTAs receive appropriate support and development, including local training through the School of Humanities, in line with University requirements [Section 4.4.8].

For the attention of: The Head of Subject

For information: Head of School

Response

Support, development and training is provided to all new and existing GTAs by both the School and subject, both in line with University requirements. Additionally, our interactions with our whole GTA cohort have been strengthened by new appointments within the administrative team and we are unclear as to what further enhancements we can make in this area within the confines of current good practice and existing guidance.