

## University of Glasgow

## Academic Standards Committee – Friday 25 May 2018

Periodic Subject Review: Review of Music held on 13 and 14  
February 2018

Mrs Catherine Omand, Clerk to the Review Panel

**Review Panel:**

Professor John Briggs	Clerk of Senate and Vice Principal, Panel Convener
Professor Peter Nelson	University of Edinburgh, External Subject Specialist
Professor Lindsay Farmer	Senate Assessor on Court
Ms Xenia Stieger	Student member
Dr Don Spaeth	School of Humanities, Cognate member
Dr Amanda Sykes	Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service (LEADS)
Mrs Catherine Omand	Senate Office and Clerk to the Panel
Mrs Heather Lambie	Observer
Mx Nicole Kipar	Observer

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Music is one of five subject areas in the School of Culture and Creative Arts. It is located at 14 University Gardens. Its accommodation includes two main teaching rooms, a Music library/study space, an audio laboratory (with 13 workstations), and a studio. It has access to the Concert Hall in the Gilbert Scott Building. The Concert Hall has seating for up to 150 as well as a Green Room<sup>1</sup> and 2 Sonic Arts Studios. There are also two practice rooms in the Sir Alexander Stone Building plus a practice room and a percussion room in the basement of 13 University Gardens. Music also has access to centrally provided teaching spaces (SER, 2.1.3.5, page 10).
- 1.2 Accommodation had been acknowledged as being inadequate in previous reviews. This was still the case but would be addressed in the medium term, with the a new building to accommodate the School of Culture and Creative Arts, expected to be completed in 2022.
- 1.3 Professor William Sweeney prepared the Self Evaluation Report (SER), with input from staff and students. Both staff and students had received regular updates on the Periodic Subject Review process. The Panel was **pleased** to note that the Subject had taken the initiative to undertake a survey to both staff and students with responses incorporated into the SER.
- 1.4 The Review Panel met with: Professor William Sweeney (Head of Subject), Dr Jane Stanley (incoming Head of Subject), Dr Ian Garwood (School Learning and Teaching Convener), Professor Dimitris Eleftheriotis (Head of School), Dr Wendy Anderson (College Dean Learning & Teaching) and Professor Roibeard O'Maolalaigh (Vice Principal and Head of College). It also met with fifteen members of staff, nine

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<sup>1</sup> Green Room' is a room for artists to rest and prepare before and during a performance

undergraduate students from across degree programmes, one Postgraduate Taught (PGT) student, one PhD student, four Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) and three early career staff.

## 2. Context

### 2.1 Staff

Music has 12.7 FTE academic staff, including the Gardiner Chair of Music, endowed in 1930 (held currently by Professor John Butt). At the time of the previous review in 2010-11, there had been nine FTE. Music also has two Tutor/Lecturer hourly paid posts. The support staff comprises: a School Learning & Teaching Support Administrator, Music Development Officer, Resource Development Officer, a Technician, and one janitorial support member, supplied by Central Services.

The FTE profile of academic staff is:

Professor	3.5
Reader	1
Senior Lecturer	2
Lecturer	4.3
Temporary Lecturer	1.9

The Self Evaluation Report (SER) draws attention to a high staff: student ratio of 1:25 which is above the Russell Group average for Music.

### 2.2 Students

Student numbers for 2017-18 are summarised as follows:

Individuals enrolled on one or more courses at each level	
Level 1	79
Level 2	67
Level 4 (Junior & Senior Hons)	93
PGT	12 (MSc Sound Design: 10 students (7 full-time, 3 part-time) and MMus HIPP: 2 students (both part-time(

### 2.3 Range of Provision under Review

Undergraduate

- Master of Arts
- Bachelor of Music
- BEng Music with Electronics

Postgraduate Taught

- Master of Music Composition and Creative Practice,
- Master of Music Historically Informed Performance Practice (run with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)
- Master of Music Musicology

- MLitt Music Industries
- Master of Science Sound Design and Audio Visual Practice

## 2.4 Strategic Approach to Enhancing Learning and Teaching

- 2.4.1 The Self Evaluation Report (SER) clearly described the historical development of Music's provision and how colleagues' research contributes to its configuration. At the meeting with the Head of Subject, the Panel discussed future strategy, particularly in light of moving to a new build and what opportunities this would provide both to the School and Subject in relation to provision and facilities. The Head of Subject drew attention to the streams introduced at both UG and PGT programmes: musicology, composition, performance and performance studies and sonic arts which encapsulated the Subject's vision for future provision. It was difficult to foresee what provision would be warranted in 20 years' time, but Digital Arts was an area that was likely to expand.
- 2.4.2 The College and School vision is to enhance collaborative provision between subject areas, with dedicated programmes in Audio and Visual, Film and TV, Theatre Studies, performing arts, whereby Music would have input. The College and School both recognised that there would be considerable planning and consultation required to undertake this.
- 2.4.3 Inadequate facilities have constrained the Subject's ability to develop, but it was recognised that a move to a new build expected to be completed in 2022 provided the School and Subject with real potential for growth and development. It was clear that an overall holistic approach to provision and creating a sense of community at College, School and Subject level was the planned vision and strategy. The Panel **welcomed** the College and School approach to ensure each subject area was involved in the design to ensure the best student experience will be given to students.
- 2.4.4 In the SER, Section 2.2, page 11, it stated: "Music would argue that enhancement is embodied throughout our approach to curriculum development. This is rooted in the subject area's ethos based on research-led or research informed teaching but responsive to the needs and interests of students". In discussion with the Head of Subject, staff and students, it was evident to the Panel that the Subject provided a research-led teaching environment whilst fully committed to the student experience. The balance between research and research-led teaching was considered **good practice**.

## 3. Enhancing the Student Experience

### 3.1 Admissions, Retention and Success

#### *Admissions: UG*

- 3.1.1 Entry to the MA programme is controlled by the College of Arts, standard University practice, while entrance to the B/MEng programmes is controlled by the College of Science and Engineering. In addition to academic entry requirements, admission to the BMus is subject to an audition and interview with students having to demonstrate a playing ability of ABRSM Grade 8 Merit.
- 3.1.2 Student numbers are healthy, with significant proportions of RUK and International students. However, the BMus predominantly attracts West and Central Scotland students, which was believed to be due to word of mouth recommendations by current and former students, this reflecting a programme with a strong local reputation. The Subject, however, was fully aware that further recruitment from a more diverse background would be beneficial.

3.1.3 The School of Engineering is responsible for admission to the BEng/MEng with Music, although Music is responsible for a third of the component courses in this programme. The Glasgow BEng/MEng is unusual as it is a fully accredited engineering degree (by the *Institution of Engineering and Technology - IET*), valid for employment in general engineering fields. The music component provides an integrated programme in which technological studies (through the *Sonic Arts* strand) are balanced with options in performance, composition or music history. As this is one of Music's main areas for future expansion and development, the Subject Area welcomed greater involvement with curriculum development of the BEng/MEng as there is potential to tap into a wider student market. At the meeting with staff, some administrative and advisory issues were highlighted in relation to the BEng. Staff proposed having shared ownership of this degree programme, potentially with Music acting as the principal subject. This was particularly in relation to the growth of Sonic Arts. In terms of future development, the early career staff would like to see a new undergraduate degree in the Sonic Arts. This reflected the general opinion given at the meeting with staff. The Panel agreed that it would be beneficial for both disciplines to have joint ownership and involvement with the future direction of the BEng/MEng. In order to facilitate this, the Panel **recommends** that the Subject Area initiates a review with the School of Engineering in relation to future administration and content of the degree. Formal arrangements should be established to enable both disciplines to share ideas for enhancing the programme as well as consider the wider market potential of this programme.

#### *Admissions: Taught Postgraduate*

3.1.4 PGT numbers recruited onto the five PGT programmes are low. At the meeting with the Head of Subject, the Panel questioned what was being done to improve recruitment or review provision. It was affirmed that the MLitt had not been successful in terms of numbers, but of those that did undertake it, a high proportion went onto study PhDs, to the benefit of the Subject and School. The Head of Subject confirmed that the MMus had been ill defined and would be redeveloped and offered as MMus taught degrees in Musicology and Composition.

3.1.5 The Head of Subject highlighted that due to current workload, the Subject had been unable to undertake a review of the MLitt provision. It was anticipated a review would be undertaken once the new appointment in Popular Music was established. The Head of School indicated that Sonic Arts would be further developed and expanded across the School.

#### *Retention*

3.1.6 Programme pass rates are high, as would be expected in a Subject with high entrance requirements. Recruitment over the years, as represented in the SER, was consistent. This reflects a Subject with a strong reputation.

#### *Progression*

3.1.7 The SER (Section 3.1.3.2, page 3) drew attention to discussions the Subject had had with one of their External Examiners regarding variation of degree classification awarded. This was discussed with the Head of Subject where it was confirmed that, although the award distribution for Music was in line overall within the College of Arts, the proportion of second class, lower division (2:2) was proportionally higher for MA single Honours students than either MA Joint Honours or BMus students. This had been debated at annual course review meetings and with External Examiners. Whilst there was some speculation as to why this was, there was no single reason to explain the variation. The School Learning & Teaching Convener advised that the Subject Area was attempting to address this; had reviewed Year 4 courses and had amended some assessment practices, offering a choice of critical and practical assignments. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject and School continue to monitor degree

award classifications across programmes to measure whether changes to assessments have addressed variation in degree classification across programmes. If variation continues, further support should be provided for single honours MA students.

- 3.1.8 At the meeting with the undergraduate students, those students studying on the MA were asked whether they would welcome the opportunity to study performance prior to Year 3. Currently, the number of bursaries is limited and primarily taken by BMus students. The students accepted that they were unable to study performance in earlier years due to financial constraints placed on the Subject to offer performance more widely. Some of the students indicated that they paid for private weekly tuition and were willing to do so. Students on the BMus advised that they too paid for additional tuition as their requirements often exceeded the bursary awarded to them. Most students found tutors independently, but selected from lists supplied by the Subject. The Subject should be aware of students who might struggle financially as a consequence of this potential constraint, in particular, in relation to equality and diversity and this may require attention in course documentation / student handbooks.

### **3.2 Equality and Diversity**

- 3.2.1 The overall gender balance in Music is approximately 47% Male/53% Female, whereas the College of Arts ratio is 33% Male/67% Female. However, there is a significant gender imbalance within the BEng with 92% male/ 8% female. This is reflective of the recognised gender imbalance within Engineering.
- 3.2.2 The SER (Section 3.2.2, page 15) identified that Music has a significantly larger Scottish domicile population, as compared to the rest of the College of Arts. In terms of ethnicity the student population is largely white and this suggests that enhancing international recruitment may be of benefit.
- 3.2.3 The Panel queried whether the high entry tariff on the BMus hindered widening participation. The Head of Subject agreed that the required music ability is particularly high, but reducing the tariff would overstretch students, which would have consequences on retention. Offering a summer school had been considered, but balancing the necessary skills required for the programme with the level of ability acquired at Scottish school level had proven difficult. The Subject is aware that development of diversity is required.
- 3.2.4 The proportion of students with disabilities is around 7%. Students with a registered disability are brought to the attention of Course Conveners and Progress and Examination meetings, when deemed appropriate. Music has a Disability Officer, Dr Jane Stanley, who liaises with Student Disability Services via the College of Arts main contact. All staff have been made aware of the recently introduced University Accessible and Inclusive Learning policy. The Panel acknowledged that 14 University Gardens is not well equipped to accommodate mobility disability.
- 3.2.5 The Panel was **pleased to note** that all staff had completed the University training in Unconscious Bias as well as Equality & Diversity.

### **3.3 Supporting Students in their Learning**

#### *Undergraduate students*

- 3.3.1 In addition to College and School level induction, the SER (Section 3.4.6, page 20) highlighted that the Subject held a "Welcome" event in the Concert Hall for new students to meet staff in a less formal context. In Session 2017-18, this event included a Performance course ensemble followed by "Academic Speed Dating" in which students and staff had been arranged into small groups and given 30 seconds to

exchange information. The Panel **commends** this very innovative 'ice-breaking' induction event created to welcome new students and put them at ease.

- 3.3.2 At the meeting with the undergraduate students, the Panel was advised that staff were generally approachable, if students required any personal support or guidance. It was clarified that Programme Coordinators dealt with personal as well as academic issues. The Panel acknowledged and appreciated the friendliness and approachability of staff, but this relied on an informal arrangement and a more formal approach should be considered.
- 3.3.3 From feedback contained in the student survey (SER, Section 3.5.3, page 22), it was indicated that there was some perceived difference between students on the three degree programmes and the Panel queried whether this resulted in a different student experience, particularly between BMus and MA students. The SER suggested that any variation in identification within the Music community was possibly due to the different practical demands and organisation of each of these two programmes. At the meeting with the Head of Subject, the Panel was advised that no distinction was made between students on courses and all were treated equally. At the staff meeting, Composition teaching staff verified that this course was available to all three degree programmes with students from different programmes were taught together. However, the scheduling of engineering courses sometimes made it difficult for BEng students to take Composition.
- 3.3.4 There was a perception that the School of Engineering had limited knowledge about the Music options available and due to timetable constrictions, some students on the BEng were unable to take some music options. The consequence of this was that there was limited opportunity for BEng students to meet with Music students. The class representative arrangements also meant that BEng students only had representation on engineering courses. (Please refer to recommendation made under 3.1.3)
- 3.3.5 The Subject recognised that it was unfortunate that MA students are unable to take performance courses until third year, due to time and financial constraints. However, other skills are obtained such as critical thinking. The Subject is also exploring other options to allow for additional performance practice, such as Ensembles, which would be available to all students.
- 3.3.6 Student space is small but heavily used by all students and this provides a sense of community. The Music club also provides opportunity for integration. Students are generally content with the dedicated space provided and appreciate the provision of 'after hours' space and the online booking system. The Panel considered the provision of after hour access and online booking system as **good practice**.
- 3.3.7 From the documentation reviewed as part of the review, the Panel found the information in handbooks to be inconsistent. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject reviews its handbooks, course material, and provide this in a standardised format. This should include assessment, feedback criteria and marking criteria.

#### *Postgraduate students*

- 3.3.8 At the meeting with the taught postgraduate students, it was indicated that there was limited opportunity for integration with the academic community. Research seminars were not held on a regular basis and there was no office space for PGTs to establish a base. It was recognised that there were only nine students on the MSc programme of which two were part-time and that it was difficult to establish a sense of community. The Panel **recommends** that other School, College or University-wide events include PGT student from across subjects and that the Subject consider including PGTs in staff events.

### *Graduate Attributes*

- 3.3.9 The Subject is starting to give greater focus to increasing placement and graduate attributes. Currently, six students are taking the 'Composition in the Classroom' course. This involves working with Fourth to Sixth Year secondary school pupils, whereby the pupils are encouraged to write and compose. A workshop and presentation is given as well as one-to-one or small group tuition. The Subject plans to instil more vocational aspects to learning, which will be built into a stream of courses. At the meeting with the undergraduate students, those who had undertaken the outreach programme spoke enthusiastically about the experience and found it very rewarding. The Panel was informed that an educational project at Hillhead Primary had also been undertaken involving sixty 11-year old pupils. The Panel recognised such outreach programmes as **good practice** and would encourage the expansion of the Composition in the Classroom course.
- 3.3.10 The SER (Section 2.1.3.6, page 10) highlighted a number of music performance activities that introduced students to a number external of organisations and professionals.
- 3.3.11 Career events were perceived as infrequent and students did not feel informed of potential career paths, with students taking the initiative to seek out information. Although students taking such an initiative should be encouraged, the Panel **recommends** that the Subject provides a suite of career information throughout the programmes of study.
- 3.3.12 The Panel suggested that the Subject could consider introducing a mentoring system, involving Year 2 students mentoring Year 1 students to assist students settling into the University and Subject Area. This would also benefit students who undertook the mentoring role.

### *Student feedback mechanisms*

- 3.3.13 The Staff Student Liaison Committee was one of the Subject's main student feedback mechanisms at which NSS and Course evaluation were discussed. At the meeting with staff, it was queried as to whether the SSLC format was considered effective including appropriate student representation and closure of the feedback loop. It was confirmed that the SSLC had been re-organised to ensure all courses were represented. All SSLC minutes were made available on Moodle. The Panel considered this **good practice**.
- 3.3.14 In line with the University's course evaluation policy, the Subject Area evaluated each course with feedback provided to students via Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLC). SSLC minutes and feedback responses were placed on course Moodle pages. Course feedback was considered at the end of year course review meeting. At the meeting with the Undergraduate students, they confirmed that they were given opportunities to provide feedback and that it was taken into consideration. The Panel considered this **good practice**.
- 3.3.15 Responses to course evaluation are posted on Moodle, although the Subject recognised that not all students would pro-actively access this. The Panel **recommends** that responses to course evaluation and previous SSLC minutes be placed at the top of Moodle course pages to encourage incoming students and in particular, class representatives, to view issues raised in previous years and associated responses. The Subject should consider whether more formal mechanisms for providing feedback would be useful in establishing links between staff, class representatives and students.
- 3.3.16 The Panel welcomed the recently established forum for discussion called the 'Music Council' and considered this **good practice**. The Panel saw this as a further useful

mechanism to provide feedback. A “You said, we did” event could be an opportunity to encourage student engagement. It was further suggested that the Subject Area could encourage student societies to become involved in discussion forums.

- 3.3.17 From the SER, the Panel noted that the current class representative system has been to have representatives from each course, but will change in 2018-19 to representatives appointed from each degree/year. The Subject Learning & Teaching Convener advised that the new approach had been established to ensure all courses were covered. Under the old system, if there had been no volunteers, some courses were left without representation. The revised system was more realistic and it was anticipated would lead to more engaged class representatives. Class representatives are invited to staff meetings. The Subject also provides class representative training on top of the generic training provided by the Student Representative Council (SRC) which the Panel considered as **good practice**.
- 3.3.18 From review of the SSLC minutes, persistent requests from students for more information on assignment criteria were noted, and the Panel queried whether more could be done to ensure assessment criteria were clear [please see 4.2.1]. The Head of Subject highlighted the complexity of some areas, such as composition skills and practice skills, which required individual and responsive feedback, whereby established criteria could in effect inhibit some performances. At the meeting with the undergraduate students, assessment and feedback did not appear to be a particular issue.
- 3.3.19 The Sonic Arts course sought additional mid-course feedback using the ‘minute paper’ which enabled students to provide immediate feedback which could be taken into consideration with immediate effect benefitting those students currently on course. The Panel recognised this as **good practice** and encouraged staff to use this practice across the Subject.
- 3.3.20 As mentioned under [1.1.3 above], the Panel was **pleased to note** that the Subject had undertaken a survey in relation to Periodic Subject Review, which was distributed to all staff and students and the responses included with the documentation. Although the student response rate was low, this was a very inclusive and honest approach.
- 3.3.21 The SER highlighted (Section 3.5.2, page 20) the high NSS scores in relation to “staff are good at explaining things” and “I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course”. It was evident to the Panel that the student voice was very important to the Subject Area.

## **4. Enhancement in Learning and Teaching**

### **4.1 Learning and Teaching**

#### *Study abroad*

- 4.1.1 The small number of students, six in Session 2017-18, undertaking study abroad was discussed at the meeting with the Head of School. The Panel acknowledged that the Subject had appointed an academic lead in this, recognising the benefits provided to its students with some links recently established with America, Australia and Canada. However, both staff and students confirmed that establishing Music networks was difficult, due to the difference in teaching music between the UK and Europe. In Europe, the practical element of music is undertaken in conservatoires rather than university. Some students indicated that they had reservations regarding study abroad as they did not want to break from instrumental/composition teachers with whom they had established good relationships and which would not be readily available in other countries. The students did not feel encouraged to undertake Study Abroad with students having to investigate opportunities for themselves.

4.1.2 There was also some concern regarding credit requirements. It was perceived as being too complicated. Opportunities were available in Canada but the deadlines did not match that of the University (Canadian deadline was 1 February but the University deadline was the end of February). The Erasmus scheme was very limited for Music students. At the meeting with staff, it was recognised that further work had to be undertaken in this area. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject streamlines processes to improve study abroad opportunities. Attempts should be made to explore potential networks and or partnerships, identifying viable curricula. Establishing formal networks with other institutions would alleviate pressure from students wishing to undertake a year abroad. Consideration should also be given to Semester visits or other short-term opportunities. The Panel proposed that a number of case studies could be put together which could inform students of potential pathways making it easier for students. The Subject should explore what arrangements other Schools have in place and what potential platforms are available for exchange programmes of various lengths.

#### *Sharing good practice*

4.1.3 Opportunities for sharing good practice were discussed at the meeting with staff. It was queried as to how the Subject reviews new forms of assessment or styles in learning and teaching; identifying what worked well or what did not work. Staff confirmed that this normally took place at the annual course review and at the Away Day. The recently established Music Council should provide the Subject with further opportunities to share good practice. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject introduces a formal teaching forum to enable staff to exchange ideas on alternative forms of assessment and different styles of teaching. The annual course review should also provide an opportunity for exchange of good practice.

#### *Curriculum Design*

4.1.4 The curriculum across each of the three available programmes appeared strong, coherent and genuinely research-led. There were significant opportunities for students to engage with 'real-world' learning experiences through workshops.

4.1.5 Teaching included a variety of small and individual tutorials and performative interaction which provided a sense of continuing staff engagement. The Panel recognised this as **good practice**.

4.1.6 The Panel was **pleased to note** from the SER (4.1.2.3 page 28) that Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) had been involved with the development of Sonic Arts.

4.1.7 Music had recently undergone a full revision of the MA Honours programme to accommodate the College of Arts requirement to standardise provision to 20-credit courses. The SER and staff indicated that this had been a very difficult process with the consequence of the Subject introducing more courses, some of which were taught twice due to student numbers, having significant workload implications. In total, 70 undergraduate courses are offered, some of which contain small numbers of students. The staff perception was that due to the diversity of the three undergraduate degree programmes, it was difficult to remove courses, if damage to the student experience was to be avoided. The design of the previous curriculum had been well balanced. At the meeting with staff, it was clear that staff were unsure regarding the sustainability of maintaining the current level of teaching and growth of student numbers. Whilst the Panel understood the practical nature of the subject which limited the ability to teach large classes and the pressure on space, consideration should be given to other strategies, including blended learning. In light of workload issues, the Panel **recommends** a review of the range of courses offered. This should include the effective use of staff time and efficient delivery of courses exploring different modes of teaching with a view to rationalise the number of courses where possible. The Subject

should consult with the Dean (L&T) and Head of College in relation to this. Credit standardisation does not necessarily require offering more courses.

- 4.1.8 The co-location of the School was regarded as an opportunity to have greater cohesion and collaboration across the School. Staff welcomed this approach and recognised the potential for future opportunities, particularly with Theatre, Film & TV Studies. However, the Subject is still committed to dedicated specialist training as required for entry to the BMus. Staff agreed it was exciting to be given an opportunity to think strategically but it was also challenging. The Subject had to consider how to balance traditional and modern elements of Music. The staff advised that most debate took place at staff meetings. Away Days were also held which staff found useful. Away Days gave time to reflect on strategy for both learning and teaching and research. The Panel identified this as **good practice**.

#### *Approach to Intended Learning Outcomes*

- 4.1.9 It was confirmed that an overview and mapping of Intended Learning outcomes (ILOs) would be central to the School's review of provision. A working group had recently been established to start this review. The remit of the group is to identify potential core courses that reflect the ethos of the School and not just research interests. Assessment blueprinting would also be undertaken to ensure that assessment correlated with ILOs. The Panel **commends** this School on its strategy to reflect and develop all School provision to ensure opportunities for cohesion and collaboration were maximised.

#### *Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching*

- 4.1.10 The technology support for course delivery through Moodle was well used and provided engaging and clearly organised learning materials. Electronic submission of assignments had been introduced some years ago and was now used for ca 90% of all submissions. This included audio and video upload.
- 4.1.11 The Study Room, Library and the Audio laboratory gave students access to specialised music software. The Music Audio laboratory for audio production, acoustics composition and sound synthesis work contained 12 iMacs with Avid audio hardware, MIDI keyboard and suite of installed software including Finale, Sibelius, Pro Tools, Cycling 74, GRM Tools, Cycling 74 Max, Each machine was connected to a high quality playback system (SER, page 35).
- 4.1.12 The development of Sonic Arts has introduced a range of software applications as part of 'Music and Technology' and Composition courses introduce students to a range of software applications. It was brought to the Panel's attention by students that software required for some courses was not taught and self-directed learning had to be undertaken. The one exception to this was Sonic Arts, where basic instructions were given. Some courses did not specify any particular software and it could be unclear what was the most suitable to use. The Panel **recommends** that clearer instruction is communicated to students to clarify instructions in relation to what software students are expected to use and what level of support will be offered. Material for self-directed learning should also be considered.
- 4.1.13 Study space, including the audio laboratories were available to students when not in use for teaching during working hours and could also be accessed after hours. This was very much appreciated by the students (see 4.3.2).

## **4.2 Assessment and Feedback**

- 4.2.1 The Subject Area offered a wide range of assessment modes, which was considered **good practice**. Music did not use unseen examinations as a form of assessment. Continuous assessment placed a substantial burden on staff particularly taking into consideration the variety of formative and summative assessments provided. The SER

drew attention to disappointing scores in the National Student Survey (NSS) in relation to assessment and feedback. It was confirmed by staff that students regularly received formative feedback, normally on a weekly basis as weekly homework tasks were set. The School had a clear directive that written feedback had to be provided within 15 working days as per the University regulation. However, the SSLC minutes revealed persistent requests for more clarity about what was expected across a range of courses, and also unpopularity of some new forms of assessment. Reliance on coursework only was unusual within the University and the clarity of assignment criteria was therefore vital. Student anxiety may also be in relation to the reliance on some relatively small number of high stake assessments. Some External Examiners had also raised concern regarding the consistency of feedback. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject reviews the weighting of assessments and reviews its assessment and feedback strategy ensuring criteria across programmes are clear and consistent and available to all students in advance. The Subject should engage with the School NSS plan, particularly in the area of assessment and feedback

- 4.2.2 The Panel discussed linkage between assessment and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) with staff. It was confirmed that at one of the Subject's Away Days, both assessment and Programme ILOs had been reflected upon with changes made to a number of course assessments rather than a complete overview. The Panel was **pleased to note** reflection on mapping ILOs with assessment had taken place (see paragraph 4.1.9).

### **4.3 Resources for Learning and Teaching (staffing and physical)**

#### *Staffing*

- 4.3.1 Staffing and workload had been identified as an issue both in the SER and the PSR staff survey. Due to research leave and staff illness, full staff capacity was not complete which placed the Subject under considerable strain. However, from the meeting with students, the Subject had managed to safe guard students from this. There appeared to be no perceived adverse impact on their experience.

#### *Learning and Teaching Space*

- 4.3.2 The music practice facilities seem inadequate for a unit of this size, and are out of line with norms in comparable UK institutions. However, the undergraduate students appeared content with what they had access to and had found the on-line booking system particularly convenient. The students agreed that more facilities would be welcomed but the Subject Area had attempted to make access as easy as possible. At the final meeting with the Head of Subject, School, Dean (Learning and Teaching) and Head of College, it was agreed that facilities were unsatisfactory but affirmed that the Subject Area had worked very hard to provide a good learning and teaching environment for its students. Focus is now on the move to the new build (see paragraph 2.4.3) which will provide specialist and bespoke facilities. As accommodation had always been an issue for Music, the early career staff were excited regarding the potential of a new building, which they found "liberating". At present, the challenges with space required duplication of tutorials with up to three groups. They were keen that their voice would inform developments. It was suggested that it would be useful to have an indication of decision making in relation to the new building and responsibilities during the consultation process.
- 4.3.3 The Head of College confirmed that consultation would be widespread across staff and reassured the Panel that consideration was being given to learning and teaching and the curricula, and how facilities would be developed to support the School vision. Core staff are in place to take the design forward and are meeting with the recently appointed design team. Staff are enthusiastic and excited about the potential of the move including further collaboration with staff from across the School. The School is

currently reviewing provision and is attempting to maximise opportunity for collaboration. The Panel **encourages** engagement with curricular development in light of the design of the new build and potential opportunities this will provide.

- 4.3.4 Class size was raised as an issue in the staff PSR survey. The Panel sought clarification and was advised that as Music is a practical hands-on subject, class size was limited and there was little scope to use alternative teaching techniques. The undergraduate students confirmed that typical class size was 50-60 but 10 in performance classes. It was unclear to the Panel if this related to pre-Honours or Honours. Tutorials are smaller with an average class size of 10. In some specialist courses, class size could be as small as 4 which were not sustainable. (Please see 4.1.7)

#### *Engaging and Supporting Staff*

- 4.3.5 Staff valued research-led teaching and the opportunity to incorporate research into courses.
- 4.3.6 There appears to be a strong element of team teaching, with discussion and sharing of ideas and methods. Apart from the annual review of courses and the Away Days, it was not clear what other formal opportunities are provided for sharing ideas and good practice. The creation of the Music Council would address this (see 3.3.16).

#### *Early career support*

- 4.3.7 The early career staff found the PGCAP useful for developing networks across different subject areas and welcomed the integration of the PGCAP into the Performance and Development Review process. The quality of the training workshops was considered variable, but they highlighted a course on dealing with the media as particularly useful.
- 4.3.8 The Panel queried whether the Early Career Development Programme (ECDP) was more research-focused in terms of objective setting or whether it allowed for reflection on learning and teaching-related matters. Staff considered that it did and found observing others' teaching practice very useful. In some cases, the Aspiring Leaders Development Programme was preferred to the ECDP.
- 4.3.9 As peer observation was considered useful, the early career staff suggested that it would be beneficial to formalise the process of observing others' teaching and hoped that future co-location in an Arts building might facilitate this. One staff member had been allocated a 'buddy'. Such a system provided a friendly and supportive environment. The Panel **suggests** that the School and Subject consider introducing a formal mechanism for peer observation.
- 4.3.10 Two of the early career staff indicated that, although they had not been involved in developing new courses, they had been involved in teaching a new course and had contributed to the development of materials. One had been involved with redesigning some undergraduate courses.
- 4.3.11 The Panel was content that the early career staff were well supported by the University and their colleagues.

#### *Graduate Teaching Assistants*

- 4.3.12 The GTAs had undertaken the generic training provided by Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Services (LEADS), but no Subject or School training had been provided. One of the GTAs had undertaken the additional "Developing as a teacher" course run by LEADS which was considered very helpful but was not mandatory. It was unclear to the GTAs which staff should be approached if they had basic administrative queries, although they confirmed that relationships with senior staff were good and that they were approachable. Guidance on assessment and

feedback and grading criteria had not been provided. No guidance had been provided in relation to the amount of time that should be allocated to class preparation and marking and, often, GTAs had to improvise. A considerable amount of preparation was required for first year classes. How the rate of pay was calculated was unclear to the GTAs. No opportunity was given to provide feedback on GTA performance. The Panel **recommends** that the School and Subject provide GTA training which should include: clarity of role and responsibilities, office hours and time expected to prepare, teach and mark. This should include a breakdown of rate of pay. Training should include clarification of the Code of Assessment, and what level of feedback should be provided. In addition, the Panel **recommends** that the Subject provides regular meetings between staff and GTAs to discuss lecture and seminar material, assessment and feedback and marking to provide support and ensure consistency; particularly in light of the complexity of Music and that the GTAs are paid for their time at these meetings. At the meeting with the Head of Subject, School and College and with the Dean (Learning and Teaching), it was acknowledged that this was an area the College is currently discussing with the expectation that training would be provided at School and Subject level as recommended. The Panel highlighted that GTAs should not be acting as second markers who simply agree with first markers and should be supported in this role. The Panel **recommends** that this should be addressed immediately.

- 4.3.13 There was no opportunity to meet with other GTAs from across the School. There was no peer support or senior GTA role to provide support and guidance to more junior GTAs. The Panel **recommends** that the School works with the Dean of Learning and Teaching to introduce a peer mentoring scheme across College which would provide GTAs an opportunity to meet other GTAs plus enable more senior GTAs to observe more junior GTAs and provide feedback on teaching, marking and feedback.
- 4.3.14 The GTAs did not offer 'drop in' sessions for undergraduate students, but provided responses to email queries. It was unclear to the GTAs whether or not payment included their time undertaking this role. Please refer to 4.3.12 above.
- 4.3.15 The GTAs were not invited to staff or course review meetings. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject invite GTAs to staff and course review meetings. This would promote their inclusion in the teaching community as well as provide them with valuable insight into course provision and review. The GTAs should be paid for their time when attending these meetings.

## 5. Academic Standards

- 5.1.1 The Review Panel consider that Music has a variety of robust and effective procedures in place which ensured the Subject was engaged in a continual process of self-reflection and self-evaluation with regard to academic and pedagogical practice. Academic standards are high, with research-led teaching provided across the curriculum. There is strong evidence of excellent topicality, thematic structure and learning materials in individual courses. Some student comments suggested that the diversity of experience and knowledge across particular programme cohorts may lead to certain students feeling unchallenged or unengaged by aspects of the class materials. This is a consequence of some of the disciplinary tensions noted in the SER. The External Subject Specialist verified that this was a common experience across UK HE music departments, but nonetheless should be taken into account when reviewing provision (see paragraphs 4.1.7 and 4.1.8).
- 5.1.2 External examiners had raised issues about certain specific aspects of courses and assessment, but were complimentary about the content of courses and the standards of assessment and achievement. The BMUS was particularly well regarded.

- 5.1.3 Good use was made of the Annual Monitoring process with an annual course review meeting held at the end of each Session. This provided the Subject with a comprehensive overview of the curriculum; informed by Board of Examiners' meetings, staff reflection and student evaluation (SER, page 39).

#### *Currency and Validity of Programmes*

- 5.1.4 The Panel, guided by the views of the External Subject Specialist, confirmed that, at the time of the Review, the programmes offered by Music were current and valid in the light of developing knowledge and practice within the subject area. The External Subject Specialist was satisfied that benchmark statements were being met.

## **6. Collaborative provision**

### **6.1 Key features of the School/Subject's context and vision in relation to Collaborative provision**

- 6.1.1 The Taught MMus in Historically Informed Performance Practices was taught jointly with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS). Whilst this was a highly stimulating course which attracted high achieving students, numbers were very low. The SER suggested that this might have been due to inadequate marketing. Consequently, the RCS will be taking over the administration of the programme with input from the Subject Area. It is anticipated that RCS would be in a better position to market it, which would be to the advantage of the University of Glasgow whilst alleviating administrative load.
- 6.1.2 The Panel agreed that there was potential for future collaboration with other institutions, such as the Glasgow School of Art once there were sufficient resources for doing so.
- 6.1.3 The College and School were attempting to establish inter-School collaboration whereby course would be available to students from across subject areas. It was acknowledged that the Genders and Inter War Cultures courses were the first of these. The Panel agreed that this would be popular with both staff and students providing an opportunity to reduce teaching load, increase choice for students, and foster a cohesive School community.

## **7. Summary of perceived strengths and areas for improvement**

### **7.1 Key strengths**

The Review Panel identified the following areas as key strengths:

- Shared vision between College, School and Subject
- The three principal programmes – BMus, MA and BEng, were broad and thorough, with an excellent range of courses that capitalised on the possibilities available across the university
- Provision of high quality research-led teaching
- Strong engagement with students and notably good practice in the area of responding to student evaluation of provision
- Supportive community environment with very committed staff. Although facilities were problematic, the Subject had managed to shield their students and provide an environment students were content with
- Approachable and supportive staff

- Articulate, enthusiastic and engaged students, clearly committed to the Subject Area and their subject

## 7.2 Areas for improvement

The Review Panel highlighted the following areas as opportunities for improvement:

- Whilst it was clear that the Subject had been working hard to establish Study Abroad opportunities, there was potential to make this easier for the students. The Panel recognised the challenges faced but there were some good practice across the University that could be drawn upon. There were opportunities for the Subject to establish networks and partnerships that were compatible and provide study abroad packages which would encourage a greater uptake from their student population
- Improved support and guidance for GTAs
- Development of clear assessment and feedback criteria
- Consistency in information – course information on Moodle and handbooks should be reviewed to ensure that consistent information<sup>2</sup> for each course was provided. Standardised information and communication prevented misunderstanding

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

## 8. Conclusion

The Subject was experiencing a number of issues clearly stated within the SER, in relation to workload and accommodation, but the developing relationship between the Subject of Music and the School of Culture and Creative Arts indicated that careful consideration was being given to sustainability of future provision with the creation of a strategy for increased co-operation.

The degree programmes reviewed showed strong academic vision, alongside a broad and thorough approach to the discipline of Music. There was clearly care for the development of all aspects of the student experience, and the range of courses available, along with their planning and delivery, demonstrated excellent, research-led teaching. The processes for support and review of these courses and programmes were effective and have delivered recent, significant change. In terms of improvement, the NSS responses indicate that certain aspects of student support and engagement require further work. The SER draws attention to questions of sustainability around the complement of core academic staff, and academic workloads more generally. These areas for improvement will benefit from a firmer vision of Music's position within the School.

Overall, the Panel's perception was that Music was offering an exciting range of courses, keeping pace with developments in theory and in practice, and that the student body was engaged and excited by these offerings. The diverse range of courses was matched by variety in modes of delivery and assessment. That said, the feedback from GTAs, the student survey and from SSLC minutes suggested that a strategy for assessment and feedback with improved clarity and consistency around assessment criteria would benefit the Subject Area.

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<sup>2</sup> Please see Moodle minimum template for guidance

## 8.1 Good Practice

The following good practices were identified in order of appearance in the Report

- Full involvement of staff and students in the PSR process, incorporating a survey undertaken by both staff and students into the SER (paragraphs 1.3 and 3.3.20)
- The Subject's ability to provide a research-led teaching environment whilst fully committed to the student experience (paragraph 2.4.4)
- Provision of after hour access and online booking system (paragraph 3.3.6)
- 'Composition in the Classroom' course and outreach projects (paragraph 3.3.9)
- The availability of SSLC minutes which were regularly placed on Moodle (paragraph 3.3.13)
- Opportunities given to allow students to provide feedback (paragraph 3.3.14)
- The recently established 'Music Council' to provide opportunities for wider discussion across the Subject(paragraph 3.3.16)
- The provision of Subject level class representative training [Paragraph 3.3.17]
- The use of the 'minute paper' by Sonics Arts to seek student feedback mid-course, allowing for quick response to feedback. The Panel encourages this practice to be used across the Subject (paragraph 3.3.19)
- Teaching included a variety of small and individual tutorials and performative interaction which provided a sense of continuing staff engagement (paragraph 4.1.5)
- The establishment of 'Away Days' giving staff an opportunity to reflect on strategy for both learning and teaching and research (paragraph 4.1.8)
- The range of assessment modes (paragraph 4.2.1)

## 8.2 Commendations

The Review Panel commends Music on the following, which are listed **in order of appearance** in this report:

### Commendation 1

The Panel commends the "Welcome" event in particular the innovative 'ice-breaking' induction event of "Academic Speed Dating" created to welcome new students and put them at ease. [Paragraph 3.3.1]

### Commendation 2

The Panel **commends** the School on its strategy to reflect and develop all School provision to ensure opportunities for cohesion and collaboration were maximised. [Paragraph 4.1.9]

## 8.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made to support Music 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**.

## *GTA Support*

### **Recommendation 1**

The Panel highlighted that GTAs should not be acting as second markers who simply agree with first markers and should be supported in this role. The Panel **recommends** that this should be addressed immediately. [Paragraph 4.3.12]

The Panel **recommends** that the School and Subject undertake GTA training which should include: clarity of role and responsibilities, office hours and time expected to prepare, teach and mark. This should include a breakdown of rate of pay. Training should include clarification of the Code of Assessment, and what level of feedback should be provided. [Paragraph 4.3.12]

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject provides regular meetings between staff and GTAs to discuss lecture and seminar material and; assessment and feedback and marking to provide support and ensure consistency; particularly in light of the complexity of Music and that the GTAs are paid for their time at these meetings. [Paragraph 4.3.12]

**For the attention of: Head of School and Head of Subject  
For Information: LEADS**

### **Recommendation 2**

The Panel **recommends** that the School works with the Dean of Learning and Teaching to introduce a peer mentoring scheme across College which would provide GTAs an opportunity to meet other GTAs plus enable more senior GTAs to observe more junior GTAs and provide feedback on teaching, marking and feedback. [Paragraph 4.3.13]

**For the attention of: Head of School and Dean (Learning & Teaching)  
For information: Head of Subject, LEADS**

### **Recommendation 3**

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject invite GTAs to staff and course review meetings. This would promote their inclusion in the teaching community as well as provide them with valuable insight into course provision and review. The GTAs should be paid for their time when attending these meetings. [Paragraph 4.3.15]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject  
For information: Head of School**

## *Review of the BEng*

### **Recommendation 4**

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject Area initiates a review with the School of Engineering in relation to future administration and content of the degree. Formal arrangements should be established to enable both disciplines to share ideas for enhancing the programme as well as consider the wider market potential of this programme. [Paragraph 3.1.3]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject and Head of School of Engineering  
For Information: Head of School**

## *Study Abroad*

### **Recommendation 5**

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject streamline processes to improve Study Abroad opportunities. Attempts should be made to explore

- Potential networks and or partnerships, identifying viable curricula
- Establish formal networks with other institutions alleviating pressure from students wishing to undertake a year abroad
- Consider Semester visits or other short-term opportunities
- Put together a number of case studies to inform students of potential pathways making it easier for students
- Arrangements in other Schools and what potential platforms are available for exchange programmes of various lengths [Paragraph 4.1.2]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject**

**For information: Head of School and International Dean of Mobility**

*Courses offered*

### **Recommendation 6**

The Panel **recommends** a review of the range of courses offered. This should include the effective use of staff time and efficient delivery of courses exploring different modes of teaching with a view to rationalise the number of courses where possible. The Subject should consult with the School L&T Convener, Dean (L&T) and Head of College in relation to this. Credit standardisation does not necessarily require offering more courses. [Paragraph 4.1.7]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject**

**For information: School L&T Convener, Dean (L&T) and Head of College**

*Assessment and Feedback*

### **Recommendation 7**

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject reviews the weighting of assessments and reviews its assessment and feedback strategy ensuring criteria across programmes are clear and available to all students in advance. The Subject should engage with the School NSS plan, particularly in the area of assessment and feedback. [Paragraph 4.2.1]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject**

**For information: Head of School**

*Course information*

### **Recommendation 8**

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject reviews its handbooks, course material, and provide this in a standardised format. This should include assessment, feedback and marking criteria. [Paragraph 3.3.7]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject**

### **Recommendation 9**

The Panel **recommends** that responses to course evaluation and previous SSLC minutes be placed at the top of Moodle course pages to encourage incoming students and in particular, class representatives, to view issues raised in previous years and associated responses. The Subject should consider whether more formal mechanisms for providing feedback would be useful in establishing links between staff, class representatives and students. [Paragraph 3.3.15]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject**

### **Recommendation 10**

The Panel **recommends** that clearer instruction is communicated to students to clarify instructions in relation to what software students are expected to use and what level of support will be offered. Material for self-directed learning should also be considered. [Paragraph 4.1.12]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject**

### **Recommendation 11**

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject provides a suite of career information throughout programmes of study. [Paragraph 3.3.11]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject**

### **Recommendation 12**

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject and School continue to monitor degree award classifications across programmes to measure whether amendments made in assessment have addressed variation in degree classification. If variation continues, further support should be provided for single honours MA students. [Paragraph 3.1.7]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject**

**For information: Head of School**

*Sharing of good practice*

### **Recommendation 13**

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject introduces a formal teaching forum to enable staff to exchange ideas on alternative forms of assessment and different styles of teaching. The annual course review should also provide an opportunity for exchange of good practice. [Paragraph 4.1.3]

**For the attention of: Head of Subject**

*PGT support*

### **Recommendation 14**

The Panel **recommends** that other School, College or University-wide events include PGT students from across subjects and that the Subject consider including PGTs in staff events. [Paragraph 3.3.8]

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

**For Information: Dean of Graduate Studies**