

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Friday 22 March 2019

Periodic Subject Review: Response to Recommendations Arising from the Report of the Review of Music held on 13 and 14 February 2018

Mrs Catherine Omand, Clerk to the Review Panel

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**.

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**

(The response to Recommendation 1 was received and approved at the October meeting of ASC)

Response:

It is very concerning to hear that GTAs reported feeling a lack of empowerment in marking. We are confident that in some courses at least, coordinators already do liaise very closely with GTAs to provide guidance and support ahead of marking, for example carrying out calibration exercises, offering advice on aligning written comments with generic descriptors, and emphasising the importance of providing constructive feedback. But in the coming year will ensure that the guidance described above is applied across the board.

For the coming year we will have the following support mechanisms in place:

- The School is publishing a Handbook that will explain to GTAs processes for claiming pay. This will be circulated to GTAs throughout the School of CCA at the start of semester 1.

- We have uploaded HR's guidance document for GTAs to our Teaching Associate Forum Moodle page and will flag it to GTAs at their induction. https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_598400_en.pdf
- Music will update its GTA Handbook and will endeavour to maximise the visibility of this document on Moodle. Issues covered include assessment and feedback, including an outline of their role in this, with an emphasis on a culture of empowerment and professional development. This will include clarification of what we expect from our GTAs as well as what they can expect from us (e.g. respect for their point of view, clear reasoning around the application of marking criteria).
- Music will provide an induction meeting as part of our Teaching Associate Forum led by Dr. Drew Hammond at the start of semester 1 that will provide training on the Code of Assessment, and guidance on principles of feedback.
- Each course coordinator will provide briefing sessions for their GTAs throughout the year on the content of the course as well as detailed support with marking (GTAs will be paid for attending these briefing sessions). As part of this training we will engage with marking calibration exercises ahead of marking an assessment topic.
- We will also create a guidance document for members of staff outlining their responsibilities to GTAs.
- A GTA rep will be invited to attend selected staff meetings, for which attendance will be paid.
- Each GTA will be assigned a mentor (normally the course coordinator) who will carry out a teaching observation during the year.
- As a means to help our GTAs feel more empowered and informed about marking, as well as informing the students they teach, GTAs in for our first year course Listening in Culture will spend the final session discussing key aspects of the Code of Assessment, including the 22-point scale.

Recommendation 2

The Panel **recommends** that the School works with the Dean of Learning & 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

Joint response:

This recommendation was discussed in detail in summer 2018 by a group including the Dean of L&T, and the then Head of School, Head of Music, and School L&T convener. It was discussed in the context of the various other types of support open to GTAs in the College of Arts: the University's mandatory GTA training, the training run at School level (which in at least one case, includes a shadowing scheme in which prospective GTAs can observe more experienced GTAs), and the support and training offered by Subjects, or indeed at course level, including the enhancements to the support offered in Music as part of the response to other recommendations in the PSR. There was a concern that adding in a further layer of support would confuse matters, and a demand for this from GTAs themselves had not been evident. Therefore, to establish the demand and the particular types of additional support that GTAs would like, the Dean of L&T, in collaboration with the Deputy Dean of Graduate Studies, has organised a College-wide session open to all GTAs and PGs who are considering GTA

work. This is being trialled this year, slotted into the College PGR training provision. The session will take place in late February 2019, and will include discussion of the support that GTAs feel would be useful, including the idea of a peer mentoring scheme. Following the session and in light of feedback from those present, the Dean of L&T and Deputy Dean of Graduate Studies will assess the demand for additional support (whether peer-led, staff-led, face-to-face or virtual) and make provision accordingly.

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

Response:

While we appreciate and support the principles behind the recommendation, the subject regards it as impractical in its present form. Music currently has 13 GTAs; this would effectively double the size of staff and course review meetings, making them unwieldy and possibly inefficient. Furthermore, we do not currently have appropriate meeting rooms for such a group. Finally, if all GTAs were to take part, a single meeting would cost around £416, amounting to £1664 for the whole year.

Admittedly, only few GTAs would be likely to take part, but this would itself defeat the objective. We therefore believe that it would be both more practical and more productive for one or more GTA rep(s) to be elected by their peers who would attend these meetings and report back to their community. This person/these persons would have a greater incentive to attend and their reporting would strengthen the GTA community and its structures, such as the GTA forum.

The subject meeting on 12 February 2019 was the first at which a GTA rep was present.

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

Subject Response:

Dr Louise Harris, the convener for the BEng/MEng in Music, is leading on this review, in collaboration with the Head of Music. After receiving useful suggestions from the external examiner, Dr Diana Salazar (RCS), Dr Harris has met with representatives from Engineering to discuss the structure and content of the degree. Discussions are ongoing, but the focus from our perspective is to make the entry requirements and the recruitment strategy more

inclusive and offer greater flexibility of course choices if timetabling obstacles can be overcome.

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

Response:

University of Glasgow are centralized to a considerable extent, particularly in which concerns the following:

- a. The timescale, format and criteria of the Study Abroad application procedure are decided by the Study Abroad office and may not always reflect the best interests of the individual subjects or their students.
- b. Non-European partnerships (i.e. non-Erasmus) are decided centrally by the University. Subject areas do not have the capacity to establish their own Study abroad partnerships outside Europe and are not encouraged to do so.
- c. While the University is keen to encourage short-term student mobility, no funding is provided for subjects or schools to develop their own initiatives in this regard.

With this in mind, we propose the following action points (which are in turn part of broader initiatives to improve awareness of Study Abroad opportunities at the School of Culture and Creative Arts):

1. To improve awareness of Study abroad opportunities from year 1, with a dedicated webpage intended for 1st-year students on the SCCA webpages. Where practicable, the subject or School International convenor will also visit 1st-year lectures to draw attention to these pages, as well as encourage students to start thinking about their study abroad plans well in advance and plan their degrees accordingly.
2. To continue with the practice of organizing Music-specific information workshops as students start their Study abroad applications in year 2, focusing on how to successfully integrate study abroad in the curriculum.
3. To analyse, together with other Exchange convenors at the School, the viability of sharing existing Erasmus partnerships between subjects to maximize their potential and increase opportunities for students.

4. To compile a directory of short-term mobility opportunities (incl. available funding) and to promote those in the SCCA webpages as well as internally within the subject.

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

Response:

This was taken into consideration over the summer when the outgoing and incoming Heads of Subject Area planned Music's undergraduate timetable. Music has a particularly complex offering of courses due to the fact that we operate three programmes, one of which is single-hons across the entire degree. We carried out some curriculum mapping of a sample of our students to ensure that we are offering a sufficient but not excessive number of options.

In addition a working group consisting of the programme conveners, PGT convener and HoSub has looked into rationalising the PGT curriculum by sharing courses or classes between programmes. This has been suspended due to the reform of the MLitt in Music Industries. The latter will provide additional opportunities for content-sharing since it will bring the programme in line with the 20 credit structure of the others.

Assessment and Feedback

Recommendation 7

The Panel **recommends** that 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. Students should be involved with this review. In addition, the Subject should consult with Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Services (LEADS) in relation to this. 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 and Director of LEADS

Response:

There has already been an extensive School-wide assessment blueprinting exercise. Based on this, the Acting HoSub, Prof Björn Heile, together with the L&T convener, Dr Drew Hammond, will undertake audit of assessments and documentation across the curriculum. On this basis, we aim to define and implement minimum standards for feedback. In the process, we will be guided by ongoing work within the School and consult with the Staff Student Liaison Committee. Any revisions undertaken will be informed by LEADS and the School NSS plan as appropriate.

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

This recommendation has been made partially obsolete by a new School-wide moodle template. There are, however, ongoing discussions about best practice in the presentation of course and assessment information. The assessment audit referred to under recommendation 7 will include assessment, feedback and marking criteria.

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

Response:

All staff will be reminded to do this. Led by our subject L&T representative Dr. Drew Hammond, we will explore further options for providing more formal mechanism for feedback.

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

Response:

Our reading of this recommendation is that it primarily relates to Composition and Sonic Arts courses. Point 4.1.12 highlighted that some guidance is already in place in some Sonic Arts courses. Dr Louise Harris is proposing the creation of Moodle videos to supplement existing resources; these will supplement the existing provision of .pdf tutorial documents, through allowing students to work through lesson materials in class and at home in their own time. For some of the more complex software used, such as reaper and max, these should prove very beneficial. We have also recently switched to reaper from the far more expensive Pro Tools for our early sonic arts teaching; this is a programme that has very inexpensive student licenses, but is also free to use indefinitely under their evaluation license.

In terms of notation software, students have access to a range of software packages, and we are in favour of giving students flexibility to choose the programme that suits their needs and working patterns most comfortably. Historically we have recommended that students use Finale, but, in response to student feedback, we have also installed Sibelius in the Study Space in the Music Building, while the Main Library offers Dorico. Many students have their own programmes or use free software, such as MuseScore. For this reason, we do not

prescribe the use of specific software packages, and we also accept hand-written work, although we expect minimum standards in the presentation of work, regardless of how it has been produced. Most modern software packages are relatively easy to use and provide good documentation and tutorials. We will, however, clarify expectations and practices where appropriate.

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

Response:

We are providing a regular programme of career events with music industry professionals. This included a panel with delegates from the Performing Rights Society (PRS) and the Musicians' Union (November 2017) and a workshop on 'Creative Entrepreneurship for Musicians' by the professional percussionist Eddy Hackett. There are advanced plans for a similar event later this academic year.

In addition, we are looking into the creation of a moodle with useful career development resources for students.

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

Response:

In the MA single-honours cohort graduating in 2017/18, three students graduated with a first and seven with a 2.i, with no lower classifications being awarded. It is obviously early days, but this seems a very positive result and suggests that the measures already taken have had an effect. We will, however, continue to monitor results and take further action if necessary.

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

Response:

We plan an initial session on sharing good practice in assessment and feedback at our Away Day in September. Following this, we are holding informal fortnightly coffee meetings which will provide opportunities for sharing good practice and discussing relevant topics.

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

Joint Response:

Within Music we are very open to PGT and PGR students attending events. For example, all are welcome to our fortnightly research colloquia. This year, we ran our first PG symposium, to which PGT students were invited and, indeed, encouraged to present work. It is intended that future iterations of this event will involve cross-school participation.

PG students will also be invited to selected Music research forum meetings led by Dr. Matt Brennan (1 per semester).

PGT Recruitment

Recommendation 15

The Panel **recommends** consulting with External Relations in relation as to how PGT recruitment could be enhanced. [Paragraph 3.1.4]ⁱ

For the attention of: Head of Subject and School

For Information: Head of External Relations

Joint Response:

Dr Louise Harris, the PG Convener, has consulted with External Relations. Among the results is a change in programme title on our part and more targeted marketing on the part of External Relations. There is further ongoing communication about how to continually enhance the presentation and marketing of our offering.

Equality and Diversity

Recommendation 16

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject review potential equality and diversity implications of additional costs associated with the programme as well as highlight this in course documentation / student handbooks. [Paragraph 3.1.8]

For the attention of: Head of Subject

For Information: Head of School and Head of Equality & Diversity

Response:

The subject has applied for a substantial increase in the funding performance budget, which would enable us to raise performance bursaries and thus obviate the need for additional personal resources. In addition, the reduction in credits of Perf3 from 30 to 20 and Perf4 from 60 to 40 has changed student expectations. The course documentation has been revised to reduce student expectations; this will be reviewed should the bursary be increased as we hope.

There is, however, a slight correction to be made to the review report: the fact that performance tuition is not provided for MA students is not exclusively due to financial concerns but has also to do with the need to provide a balanced curriculum. MA students take only 40 credits in Music in year 1 and 40-60 in year 2; all year 1 courses are core (as in most other CoA subjects) and so is one in year 2. There simply is no space in the curriculum for performance without undermining other aspects and/or further exacerbating the skills gap between BMus and MA students in some areas. Furthermore, doing so would run the risk of making the BMus programme redundant.

Widening Participation

Recommendation 17

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject examine alternative measures to promote widening participation. [Paragraph 3.2.3]

For the attention of: Head of Subject

For Information: Head of School and Head of Widening Participation

Response:

Our outreach project “Scottish Young Composers Project”, launched in 2017-18 offers a significant opportunity for widening participation, in that it provides students applying from secondary schools throughout Glasgow with the opportunity to work intensively throughout the year to develop a range of musicianship/composition/performance skills that will strengthen their performance in courses at tertiary level, should they apply to one of our UG programmes.

In addition, we are due to take part in a summer school run by Widening Participation in conjunction with the Sutton Trust. Finally, we are actively contributing to the planned creation of a new programme within the School, which is intended to integrate WP in its structure and design. We are certainly open to further initiatives; at the same time, we are, however, operating within tight constraints in terms of staffing and financial resources.

Support for Early Career Staff

Recommendation 18

The Panel **recommends** that the School and Subject consider introducing a formal mechanism for peer observation. [Paragraph 4.3.9]

For the attention of: Head of Subject/Head of School

Joint Response:

This is something that we can very reasonably implement this year. We have engaged with peer review to some extent in previous years, but certainly we can set this up across the board for all of our early career staff.

ⁱ Recommendations 15 to 18 were additional recommendations requested by Academic Standards Committee which have been agreed by the PSR Panel Convener