University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 4 October 2019

Report on Item Approved under Summer Powers

Mrs R Cole, Clerk to the Committee

1. Periodic Subject Review Reports

The reports of the following Reviews were approved under Summer Powers subject to some minor amendments. The finalised reports are provided in **Appendices 1 and 2**.

Subject	ASC Reviewers
Politics	Professor Jim Anderson Dr Margaret Martin
School of Engineering	Dr Aileen Bell Dr Sandy Whitelaw

2. Programme Approval

The following new programme was approved for introduction in September 2019:

College of Medical, Veterinary & Life Sciences

   PG Cert Clinical Neuropsychology Practice

The PG Certificate comprises one 60 credit course and the novel element is that the 60 credits is what constitutes the independent project work for the MSc (Med Sci) Clinical Neuropsychology Knowledge and Practice. The only PG Certificates that were previously available in the University are comprised of 60 credits of **taught courses**.

There is a specific context to this proposal and approval for this Certificate was agreed only for this context, i.e. not a general approval for PG Certificates made up of independent work.

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee – Summer Powers 2019

Periodic Subject Review: Review of Politics held on 6 March 2019

Mr Chris Buckland, Clerk to the Review Panel

Review Panel:

Professor Jill Morrison	Clerk of Senate and Vice Principal, Panel Convener
Professor Fiona Mackay	University of Edinburgh, External Subject Specialist
Professor Nick Hill	Senate Assessor on Court
Ms Teresa Banos	Student member
Professor Michael Brady	School of Humanities, Cognate member
Dr Matthew Williamson	Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service
Mr Chris Buckland	Registry, Clerk to the Panel
Mrs Catherine Omand	Senate Office (Observer)

1. Introduction

1.1.1 The Subject of Politics is the largest of five Subjects within the School of Social & Political Sciences, which is one of 5 schools within the College of Social Sciences.

1.1.2 The previous review of Politics undertaken by the University was in March 2013. The Panel was impressed with the actions taken in response to the recommendations made at the last Review, in particular, the introduction of a pre-honours induction for undergraduate students, the reduction of the Student Staff Ratio from 29.17 in 2013 to 15.0 in 2018, which is currently in line with the College's target, and the steps taken to improve feedback and assessment. The Panel was pleased to note the significant improvement in the National Student Survey (NSS) scores in relation to feedback following the recent changes implemented by the subject.

1.1.3 Preparation of the Self Evaluation Report (SER) was led by Dr Kelly Kollman, Head of Subject until January 2019. A number of staff were consulted, including Honours Convenors, and the Convenors of the Subject's postgraduate taught programmes. The Head of the School of Social & Political Sciences, Professor Michelle Burman, was provided an opportunity to review the draft SER. A student consultation exercise was undertaken with Student Representatives in October 2018.

1.1.4 The Review Panel met with Dr K Kollman, Professor C Carman (Head of Subject since January 2019), Mrs M Murray (Course Administrator), Dr S Deeley (Dean for Leaning & Teaching) and Professor A Anderson (Head of College and Vice Principal). A subsequent meeting between the Panel Convenor, Clerk, and the Head of School and Head of Subject took place on March 22. The Panel also met with 8 members of Academic Staff, 5 members of Administrative Staff from the School and Subject, 5 Early Career staff, 4 GTAs/Tutors, 10 UG students, and 4 PGT students.

2. Context

2.1 Staff

The SER indicated that the Subject has 24 full-time academic staff (FTE), as well as 4 additional members of staff on fractional contracts. The Panel noted that the Subject has

a relatively small Professoriate (4), with 9 Senior Lecturers and 15 Lecturers also employed. In addition, the Subject have 2 Lord Kelvin Adam Smith postdoctoral fellows on renewable R&T contracts, 4 part-time Tutors with 3-year fixed term contracts, and 9 Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs).

Following the University's restructuring in 2010, administrative support was reconfigured and the Subject now has one full-time administrator, and three further administrators who work on a part-time basis - further administrative support is provided to the Subject by the School.

2.2 Students

Student numbers for session 2018/19 are as follows:

Undergraduate	Headcount	Postgraduate	Headcount
Politics 1A	473	Chinese Studies	7
Politics 1B	439	Human Rights & International Politics	42
Politics 2A	349	International Relations	46
Politics 2B	345	Political Communication	38
Politics Level 3	3	Global Security	40
Junior Honours (Single)	89	Erasmus Mundus International Masters in Security, Intelligence & Strategic Studies (IMSISS)	67
Junior Honours (Joint)	136	**Postgraduate Total**	**240**
Senior Honours (Single)	73		
Senior Honours (Joint)	92		
Undergraduate Total	**1999**		

2.3 Range of Provision under Review

Undergraduate

- Master of Arts (Social Sciences) – Politics (single honours)
- Master of Arts (Social Sciences) – Politics with Quantitative Methods
- Master of Arts (Social Sciences) – Politics (joint honours, with 40 subject choices)
- Master of Arts (Social Sciences) – Politics (3-year general degree)

Postgraduate (run directly through the subject):

- Chinese Studies (MSc)
- Human Rights & International Politics (MSc and MRes)
- International Relations (MSc and MRes)
- Politics Communication (MSc and MRes)

Postgraduate (run through the School of Social and Political Sciences and with substantial input from the subject):

- Erasmus Mundus International Masters in Security, Intelligence & Strategic Studies (IntM)
- MSc International Relations (Joint Graduate School with Nankai University)
- Global Security (MSc and MRes)

3.   Review Outcomes

3.1.1 It was evident to the Panel from both the SER and the meetings with staff and students that the Subject's academic team showed a clear commitment to teaching, learning and the student experience. The Panel were also impressed by the responsiveness of the Subject in its openness to highlighting its concerns and weaknesses, as well as its strengths, as part of their reflective and open approach taken to the PSR process.

3.1.2 The Panel congratulate the Subject on a well-structured and broad curriculum, particularly in Junior and Senior Honours years where a wide range of course choices allow students to build upon core skills developed during Levels 1 and 2. The Panel also recognised the thought and care with which the Subject have approached the development of the Master of Arts (Social Sciences) in International Relations programme, which will be introduced from 2019/20, and acknowledged the challenges presented with the decision taken to introduce this programme.

3.1.3 The Panel were impressed by the students with whom they met, who demonstrated enthusiasm for the Subject and the opportunities provided to work in partnership to improve provision. Students described the Subject and its staff as approachable and helpful and reported good experiences when support from staff was required. Both UG and PGT students welcomed the flexibility and willingness of staff to adapt content and support provision to reflect interests expressed by students.

The following paragraphs detail the key points discussed during the review visit along with commendations recognising good practices and areas where the Review Panel identified scope for improvement. Commendations and recommendations are made to support the subject in its reflection and to enhance provision in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. Appendix 1 provides a summary list of the commendations and recommendations.

4.   Strategic Direction

4.1.1 The Panel noted that both the relatively recently introduced Politics with Quantitative Methods Honours programme, and the new programmes which will be introduced with effect from 2019/20 (Master of Arts (Social Sciences) in International Relations, and the two-year Erasmus Mundus International Masters degree programme in Southern European Studies (EUROSUD)) demonstrate responsiveness to trends in the discipline and markets.

4.1.2 The SER indicated that there would be an increase in student numbers from 2019/20 onwards as a result of these new programmes, but it was unclear to the Panel how this was going to be supported in terms of staffing, both academic and administrative, and physical capacity. At the meeting with the Head of the Subject it was acknowledged that, although there had been recent staff appointments, additional UG numbers from 2019/20 might necessitate the need for double-teaching and possibly the live streaming of lectures at Level 1, that academic staff were currently at capacity in terms of workload and that staffing levels have not been commensurate with the recent increase in PGT numbers, and that recent Student Staff Ratios reflected this. In the Meeting with the Head of Subject and Head of School it was also noted that with the introduction of the new International Relations Honours programme, consideration would need to be given

to the existing Politics programme to ensure that it remains distinct, and to maintain its integrity.

4.1.3 In the meeting with the Head of College, the Panel was advised that 2 new Professorial appointments had been approved by College Management. Whilst the Panel was pleased to note this additional resource, it **recommends** that the Subject, School and College develop a clear strategy for the introduction of the new IR degree programme and how this will complement the current Politics degree programme, ensuring both are equally supported. The Subject and School should closely monitor the impact the new degree programme may have on current provision and staff morale. This strategy should be developed and agreed in consultation between the Subject and School and ratified by the College Management Committee ensuring all teaching commitments are considered within College forward planning.

4.1.4 The School's Curriculum Oversight Committee was highlighted in both the SER and the Panel meetings as an area where Politics staff would welcome greater Subject representation, or for the Committee's recommendations to be presented to the School's Learning & Teaching Committee to allow for greater involvement of Subject staff. There was an acknowledgement that there is a degree of complexity in ensuring that staff feel suitably involved in the decision making process within the School, which comprises of 5 distinct subject areas, but at the meetings with the Head of Subject and staff it was unclear as to how the whole School community was consulted in relation to learning and teaching strategy and what opportunity was given to have input into decision making. The Review Panel **recommends** that the School reviews communication, engagement and inclusion of all staff to ensure all staff are given an opportunity to contribute to strategy and teaching developments in an open and transparent environment.

5. Enhancing the Student Experience

Admissions

5.1.1 The subject utilises the centralised admissions process managed by External Relations, but they have a proactive involvement in recruitment, marketing and (at PGT level) conversion.

5.1.2 Admission to UG programmes remains healthy and high. There is currently flexibility post-admission for UG students where they may enter the Politics Honours programme without naming Politics on their UCAS application. This flexibility will not be extended to the International Relations Honours programme which is being introduced in 2019/20.

5.1.3 Admissions to PGT programmes have grown dramatically over the last 3 years, with FTE increasing by 68% during this period. The SER and PSR meetings with staff highlighted difficulties with students being admitted to PGT programmes up until the end of week 2 of teaching, with the Subject and School identifying issues with timetabling and staff allocation as a result of this flexible timescale. Difficulties for students themselves were also highlighted, as although those arriving after orientation are given a 1-to-1 individual induction, the onus is on the student to ensure that they catch-up, concerns were raised on their ability to make sufficient academic progress if they have missed both orientation and the first 2 weeks of teaching. The Panel encourages the Subject to review the procedures around late orientation of students to ensure that they are given adequate support, and to work in conjunction with the School and College to identify any trends in student attainment for those admitted after teaching has started to establish whether certain programmes would benefit from having their admission cut-off date brought forward.

5.1.4 In 2019/20, the College will welcome the first cohort of students via the HNC Articulation Programme with Clyde College. Politics is one of the Subject areas onto which students will receive direct entry into Year 2, and the Politics pre-Honours and Honours

coordinators have conducted a mapping exercise comparing the University's curriculum with that of Clyde College to help ensure that the articulation students are sufficiently equipped to begin their studies. This aligns with the College and University strategy for widening participation, and the Panel **commends** the Subject's efforts in this area.

Progression and Retention

5.1.5 The SER and documentation highlighted that Politics has good progression of students from first year into second year and that this continues from year 2 to 3. Progression rates of 90% are comparable with the School of Social and Politics Sciences and the College of Social Sciences.

5.1.6 Retention of students is monitored at a College rather than a subject level. Various staff who met with the Panel noted the value of the relationships between the College Social Sciences Advising Office and their counterparts in cognate subjects (e.g. College of Arts Advising Office) in ensuring that students receive advice in a holistic manner.

5.1.7 Subject staff contribute to College progress boards at the end of each academic year and manage the local Good Cause process. It was noted in both the SER and Panel meetings with staff that a number of Good Cause applications are received each year, but feedback also suggested that the process is unclear to students and is time-consuming for staff. The Panel encourages the subject to review this process and work with the School where appropriate to ensure that it is efficient and fit for purpose.

5.1.8 Around 25% of students have been awarded a first-class honours classification over the past three academic years, with about 60% being awarded a 2:1 classification. This profile is in keeping with the College of Social Sciences as a whole, as well as wider sector trends, and classifications are routinely confirmed by external examiners.

Advising

5.1.9 The SER reported that concerns around the levels of advice offered to students on course choice and curriculum have been highlighted by both student-staff meetings and NSS responses. The Panel heard about the approach taken at UG level, where Politics students are assigned an Advisor of Studies by the College Advisory Service, with feedback from both staff and students stating that this was an improvement to the previous system of individual advisors. The Panel note the positive steps taken but suggest that the Subject reflect upon how other subject areas approach advice to students in the School, College and University as a whole, and work with the Student-Staff Liaison Committee to identify what steps can be taken to meet student demand in this area.

5.1.10 The Panel heard from PGT students on their experience of the support offered to them by the Subject, both by PGT programme convenors, and the Advisor of Studies to whom they are assigned. The students with whom the Panel met reported that programme convenors combine elements of advising and support, as do members of administrative staff, but that they were largely unaware of having an Advisor of Studies, with those who were aware only being notified of this mid-way through the semester. The Panel suggests that the Subject clarify the types of support available to PGT students and to bring this to their attention during Induction, and later for those students who enrol for the session after Induction events are run.

International Students

5.1.11 The SER and meetings with staff highlighted that, although there are no specific arrangements in place at the Subject, provisions were put in place to support International students with Politics staff taking pro-active steps to signpost students to support that is available via the College of Social Sciences, Student's Representative Council (SRC) and the Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service (LEADS).

5.1.12 The SER reported that the Subject welcome a large number of incoming study-abroad students each year (237 in 2017/18), as well as the long-running exchange that the Subject has developed with Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy, where incoming Duke students combine academic study with study trips and a programme of cultural enhancement activities which are organised by Politics staff. The Panel agree with the Subject that the arrangement with Duke University is an example of **good practice** in the field of internationalisation.

5.1.13 The Panel heard from staff and students on the Subject's efforts to support transition of students who articulate from Glasgow International College (GIC) into Year 2 of the UG Politics programme, with Politics staff working with GIC to ensure that there is consistency of curriculum, as well as moderating GIC coursework to ensure that students have a good understanding of the level of work expected when they progress to the University. The Panel noted the high level of care and attention given to the transition of this cohort of students and were encouraged by the positive links which have been fostered.

Equality and Diversity

5.2 The Panel was impressed with the ambition of the Subject with respect to de-colonising the curriculum, which was highlighted in the SER and panel meetings with staff and something that the subject is working toward in dialogue with students. The Head of Subject acknowledged that much work still needs to be done to achieve this, but there is a strong commitment from staff to engage with existing University networks in this area. The UG students who met with the Panel also responded positively to this, expressing the view that the curriculum in Politics is less Euro-centric than other subjects in which they are taking courses.

5.3 The UG students who met with the Panel reported that the subject utilises the "trigger warning" process, whereby students are notified of content within the curriculum which could cause potential upset or concern. This was acknowledged as positive by the students, but it was felt that more could be done to provide further advanced warning to allow them to assess whether they are comfortable in attending. The Panel **recommends** that the subject consider this process to ensure that adequate context is provided, which may include providing details in course handbooks, and reconsideration given to the use of sensitive material in data sets.

Student Engagement

5.4 The students who met with the Panel had mixed experiences of the Student Staff Liaison Committee process. PGT students highlighted that there was a good awareness of who their class representatives were, and that a good relationship with programme convenors ensured that there was constant dialogue between staff and students and that feedback was being responded to. UG students however noted that there was a general lack of awareness of where to find details of student representatives, that there were limited options for each year group to provide feedback, and that the structure of the Liaison Committee meeting itself limited the amount of feedback which could be provided. The Panel **recommends** that the subject take steps to address the perceived lack of awareness amongst UG students of the Student-Staff Liaison Committee, including the methods of communication used to make students aware of the process, and how contact details of class representatives are advertised.

Graduate Attributes

5.5 The SER and meetings with staff and students highlighted a wide range of provision for students to develop their graduate attributes and employability, both as part of the curriculum and outside of the classroom. The subject's employment of a PhD intern to assist with extra-curricular activities was noted by the Panel as a good example of

student engagement, as was the utilisation of social media to disseminate information on events.

5.6 The Panel also noted a pilot project, highlighted in the SER, which involves the Subject teaching a similar UG course at the same time at the Universities of Glasgow and Leiden in the Netherlands. As part of this, a Politics lecturer from Glasgow travels to Leiden in December to teach, with three students also in attendance where they are actively involved in teaching working groups. The Panel highlighted this pilot as a **good example** of the Subject's attempts to provide students with both transferable skills, and embedding social and cultural links, and the Panel encourage the subject to review the pilot and assess whether it can be widened in future years.

5.7 The Panel heard from staff and students on the Olive Tree Initiative (OTI), an experiential learning programme which allows 10 UG students each year to participate in a 3-week field trip to the Middle East between the Junior and Senior Honours years, which builds upon existing knowledge acquired via the *Narratives of Conflict in the Middle East* module upon which participating students are enrolled. Different sources of funding available to participants ensures that the Project is accessible to a broad demographic. Upon completion of the field trip, students are supported by the College Employability Officer to reflect on the impact of the experience by developing an online e-portfolio and LinkedIn profile. The Panel **commends** the subject on the continued offering of the Olive Tree Project and its related activities[1]. The UG students who met with the Panel expressed disappointment that there were not more subject-specific opportunities to allow them to reflect upon how key skills and graduate attributes acquired through academic study can be applied to an employment setting, and that OTI opportunities such as the online e-portfolio and LinkedIn profile were not available more widely. The Panel encourages the subject to continue to develop the area of embedded graduate attributes and identify what elements of existing best practice or provision can be applied to a larger cohort of students.

5.8 PGT students who met with the Panel reported that they had made use of the central-University Careers Service and College Employability provision but suggested that they would benefit from having an element of careers advice tailored to each programme, and that information on progression into academia or PhD studies would be welcome. The Panel heard positive feedback on the relationship between students and course convenors, with convenors organising an employability workshop following a request from students – the Panel felt that this response to student feedback further highlighted the commitment from the academic team to the student experience.

5.9 The Panel heard from UG students on the pilot being undertaken in 2018/19 to give three students the opportunity to undertake a collaborative Dissertation with MSPs in the Scottish Parliament. The scheme, which is being supported by the John Smith Centre, also requires students to submit a separate policy background paper to the MSPs office. The UG students noted this as a beneficial opportunity and hoped that it would be expanded in future years, but also raised concerns about potential ethical issues if students are not able to select their own dissertation subject and are instead required to align their theme to the MSP's interest. The Panel encourages the Subject to reassure students and ensure that they are familiar with academic ethical approval processes.

5.10 The SER reported that field trips to Brussels and Geneva were also included for PGT programmes in International Relations and Human Rights respectively. The Panel heard from PGT students on their experiences of these, with concerns being raised that, whilst funding opportunities are available, costs of the trips can prove to be prohibitive and act

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[1] At the time of the Review the Panel commended the Olive Tree Initiative but following the Review, the Subject advised that this had been suspended to allow for reassessment and programme evaluation. The Panel hopes that an opportunity presents itself in order for the Subject to continue with this initiative.

as a barrier to involvement. It was also the student's understanding that costs for similar activities in other subjects based in the School of Social & Political Sciences, such as the Geneva field trip in the MSc Global Health, is fully funded. The Panel suggest that the Subject work with the School to ensure that funding options for field trips allow such opportunities to be open and inclusive.

6.   Enhancement in Learning and Teaching

6.1   Learning and Teaching

Curriculum Design

6.1.1 The SER reported that the two existing Honours programmes are based on a common pre-Honours curriculum, which provides students with a grounding in the major sub-disciplines of the field and a necessary foundation for Honours. Changes to the existing pre-Honours structure will take effect from 2019/20 to reflect the introduction of the new International Relations programme. Politics is offered as a Joint-Honours combination with 40 other subjects, and given the size, complexity and scope of the Politics joint degrees the Subject is not able to consult all possible degree plans when adopting changes to the Politics curriculum.

6.1.2 The staff who met with the Panel expressed the view that they were able to show initiative with regards to the curriculum, as they were not restricted to only teaching on existing courses, rather they could identify requirements for new provision at Honours level and had the opportunity to develop and introduce these courses. The Panel also heard that, although courses are withdrawn as part of this process, the subject currently offers c.35 Honours choices at an Undergraduate level, with staff reporting that they are at capacity in terms of what they can teach. The Panel **commends** the quality and variety of programmes offered, the pro-active approach taken by staff to ensuring that the curriculum content remains contemporary and up-to-date, as well as the positive culture fostered within the subject which allows this approach to prosper. The Panel however also suggest the Subject keep all courses under review, balancing ability for staff to show innovation and introduce new courses with the time constraints currently placed on them as a result of teaching the existing UG Honours portfolio.

Approach to Intended Learning Outcomes

6.1.3 The SER reported that Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for all programmes and courses are outlined in the programme or course specifications, in the programme and course guides, and in the Politics Programme Handbook for Honours courses. These documents are made available to students via Moodle, and they are outlined during induction sessions and introductory lectures. The Panel noted that both programme specifications and ILOs were clear and that there is a good articulation with assessment methods and **commends** the subject for this.

6.1.4 The UG students who met with the Panel confirmed that they were aware of the purpose of ILOs and understand those relating to their courses, but they highlighted that a better connection could be made between ILOs and the guidelines for assessment. They also felt the core messages contained in the guidelines for assessment were somewhat lost within the detail of the course handbook(s), with the students suggesting that they be made available in a separate document which was accessible via Moodle alongside other key documents e.g. the assignment cover sheet, extension request form etc. The Panel suggest that the Subject ensures that guidelines for assessment and ILOs are effectively communicated to students, and that students are reminded to consult ILOs prior to assessments.

6.1.5 The Panel heard from both UG and PGT students about the subject's use of Moodle more widely in relation to ILOs, specifically the availability of course handbooks. Both sets of students highlighted that, when changes were made to course handbooks

following their initial publication, both the old and new versions of handbooks were available on Moodle, leading to a lack of clarity about which version is the live document and what changes had been made. The Panel suggests that the Subject review their Moodle content and version control processes to ensure that students are clear on which documents should be referenced.

Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching

6.1.6 The UG and PGT students who met with the Panel noted that, whilst agreeing with the SER statement that all programmes and courses use Moodle, they felt there was inconsistency in how the platform was utilised by different lecturers. There was a general feeling that the overall utilisation of Moodle by Politics was at least as good, if not better, than other subjects in which they are taking courses, but that this did not apply to the return of summative assessments which are initially submitted via Moodle. Most feedback is received in hard-copy, which is contrary to the student's experience in most other subjects. The UG students also noted that not all students appeared to be automatically enrolled in the Honours Moodle page, which the Panel suggests that the subject look to address to ensure that students have timely access to relevant materials.

6.1.7 Both UG and PGT students highlighted (as noted in 6.1.5) issues with old versions of documents not being removed from Moodle, as well as some technical issues they'd encountered where Moodle was unavailable for assignment submission, with the students' perception being that it was unable to cope with the demand of students from multiple courses submitting coursework online at the same time. The Panel also heard from staff who also expressed similar concerns about the ability of the Moodle software to cope with "peak" demand.

In the previous Periodic Subject Review conducted in 2013, it was recommended that the Subject extends plans in relation to online essay submission with a view to reducing the administrative burden, by including submission of all written work through Turnitin, Moodle or similar. In the current review, it was clear from the SER and meetings with staff that a large number of the academic team are not utilizing online assessment, with only c.25% of staff using Moodle to mark in-course summative work online, but that the Subject is committed to full online submission of in-course work to reduce paper wastage and to meet the growing student preference for this. The Panel heard from staff that the continued use of paper-marking was partly the result of personal preference, but more significantly the result of technical and functionality issues with Moodle which does not consistently allow the Subject's marking template to be uploaded. The Panel **recommends** that the subject work with LEADS to identify any University best practice on the use of online assessment which can be shared, and that the technical issues with Moodle software is raised with College and University IT Services to identify what steps can be taken to address these.

6.1.8 The SER noted that most courses utilise an e-reading course list via the University Library's Talis system. The Panel heard positive feedback from both UG & PGT students and staff on the Talis system, with students noting that the thematic reading lists were a positive resource. The Panel note the consistent use of Talis by the Subject as an example of **good practice**.

6.1.9 The Panel noted the experimentation within the Subject of the Aropa online peer review system for some Honours and PG modules. The Panel acknowledge the development in this area and encourage the Subject to assess whether use of the system could be adopted more widely.

Study Abroad

6.1.10 The SER noted that one third of students participate in an international experience during their programme of study, with opportunities for students including the ability to undertake a semester or full year abroad at one of multiple partner institutions, shorter

field trips (e.g. to Geneva and Brussels) which are embedded into certain MSc courses, and the Olive Tree Initiative. The range of opportunities continues to grow, with the subject securing funding for the Erasmus+ ICM/Open Skies initiative with McGill University from 2019/20 onwards. The Panel recognise the number of students noted in the SER are above the University's Strategic Plan aim for 20% of all students to have an international experience by 2020.

6.2 Assessment and Feedback

6.2.1 The Panel noted from both the SER, and meetings with staff and students, that Politics utilises a wide variety of assessment methods at UG and PGT level, and that the Subject was commended by an External Examiner in 2017 for its efforts to allow students "to develop different skills and to understand Politics and its salience to 'real life' in a variety of ways". In the meeting with UG students, the use of policy briefings was highlighted as a form of summative assessment which was thought to be useful for a variety of potential future career paths. The range of summative assessment types also includes essays, exams, oral presentations, research proposals, research projects, and reflective journals, and is something on which the Panel **commends** the Subject.

6.2.2 The UG students who met with the Panel raised concerns about the anonymity of late submission, with the apprehension being that extension requests for assignments must be approved, and that the identity of the student can be identified by virtue of the extension request process. The Panel encourages the Subject to ensure that documentation related to extension requests/late submission reassures students that marking is consistent and subject to moderation.

6.2.3 The SER noted the measures taken by the Subject in recent years to improve its feedback and assessment procedures, with past NSS and PTES scores indicating that students rated feedback lower than other aspects of Politics' teaching. Recent changes include the introduction of an assessment calendar for the Honours Programme, which aims to ensure that coursework is returned within the University's recommended three-week timeframe. The UG students with whom the Panel met were aware of the calendar and felt that it was working well, and the Panel noted that the Subject aim to introduce this for PGT programmes in future. The SER also noted the subject's reworking of feedback template forms in response to student feedback and the introduction of dedicated essay feedback office hours as positive developments, which are demonstrated in improved NSS scores. The staff with whom the Panel met recognised that these developments are not an end in themselves, with PGT students highlighting particularly wide variations in turnaround times for feedback across different courses, but the Panel **commends** the Subject for the steps they have taken to improve feedback and encourage them to continue this direction of travel and embed these changes within all programmes.

6.2.4 At both the meetings with staff and students, it was confirmed that staff responded informally to student feedback via email. However, there were no student summary response documents to course evaluation questionnaires, a requirement of the University's Course Evaluation policy. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject provides summary response documents to course evaluation questionnaires and that these are placed on course Moodle pages as well as provided to SSLCs.

6.2.5 The PGT students who met the Panel noted that results for some aspects of their summative assessment had been converted to a percentage, rather than being fed back to them as a grade, with the result being that the students were attempting to map the percentage result onto the grading system. It was unclear to the Panel whether this practice was limited to multiple choice assessments or used more widely within PGT programmes, so the Panel encourage the Subject to ensure that student results are fed back consistently and in accordance with the University Code of Assessment.

6.3 Resources for Learning and Teaching (staffing and physical)

Learning and Teaching Space

6.3.1 The meetings with staff and students reinforced comments raised in the SER in relation to the difficulties experienced by the Subject in securing appropriate teaching space, with particular concerns expressed in relation to the fact that not all floors within the Adam Smith Building are accessible to students or staff with mobility challenges.

6.3.2 The UG students who met with the Panel perceived that, due to the limited lift provision within the Adam Smith Building, students with mobility challenges who need to access the upper floors need to arrive at the building 10-15 minutes before their classes are due to commence. Both staff and students highlighted that the ability to arrive either on-time, or suitably in advance, of the lecture or seminar commencing was made more challenging by the timetabling of sequential sessions in venues such as the St Andrews Building. The Panel recognise that the current Campus Development will alleviate pressure on teaching space, but **recommend** that the School of Social & Political Sciences work with the College and Estates & Buildings to address accessibility issues in the Adam Smith Building, and to work with the Space Management & Timetabling Team to factor in the distance between buildings when scheduling consecutive lectures.

Staffing

6.3.3 The SER and meetings with staff noted that, in order to encourage and support curricular innovation, Subject staff receive additional Workload points when they teach a new course. The Panel were not clear however whether staff received similar recognition for substantially overhauling existing courses, with the concern (noted in 6.1.2) that the time constraints of teaching the existing course portfolio are potentially being intensified by the development of new provision. It was also not clear to the Panel the extent to which the Workload Model in place was working well for staff, although the Panel did note comments from staff and the Head of Subject that the increase in student numbers over the past three years has led to an increase in staff workload. It was reported that the measures needed to accommodate increasing numbers, such as staff teaching lectures and seminars back to back for 4 hours, were a challenge to both staff morale and the student experience.

6.3.4 The SER, Staff Survey and meetings with staff highlighted issues with the administrative support for teaching within the Subject and the School, which was having a significant impact on all staff. It was not clear to the Panel which tasks fell within the remit of the Subject, and those which fell to the School, with feedback from the two areas differing as to who does what, and also that administrative procedures within Politics differ from other Subjects within the School, making it harder to implement consistently. The Panel heard that the School of Social & Political Sciences have attempted to address these administrative issues, and the Review Panel **recommends** that the Head of Subject work, in consultation with the Head of School and Head of School Professional Services, to continue to review the administrative provision and develop and implement a plan to resolve current administrative difficulties in a manner that is resilient to the planned future growth.

6.4 Engaging and supporting staff

6.4.1 The SER noted that all Early Career Staff are assigned a mentor and participate in the Early Career Development Programme (ECDP), and the Panel met with Early Career Staff to discuss their experience with this programme. There was a general agreement that it had not lived up to their expectations in many respects, as although there are opportunities for support and mentoring, communication lines between the different levels of support are unclear and not well structured. The Panel also heard that some individuals had been required to participate in ECDP despite having experience as an academic in other institutions, with feedback from the staff that the programme is not

tailored to those who are genuinely "Early Career". The feedback that the Panel received from staff who had participated in the PGCert in Academic Practice (PGCAP) was generally positive, however.

6.4.2 The meeting with Early Career staff also highlighted that the process for progression is slow, which has an impact upon staff moral and retention, and that staff would welcome greater guidance on clarity on aspects of the promotion criteria. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject work in partnership with the College Human Resources Team to ensure that staff are clear on the criteria for Academic Promotion, and that they are suitably supported through the promotion application process.

6.4.3 It was noted in the meeting with the Head of School that work had been undertaken at a School level to rationalise the use of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), address existing issues with GTA variable contracts and uneven training, and to refresh the lapsed GTA committee within the School. These were acknowledged by the Panel as positive steps and **good practice**. The SER noted that the Subject employ 9 GTAs and 4 Tutors on multi-year, part-time contracts, and that all staff were provided with a bespoke training session run by the School and LEADS. The GTAs with whom the Panel met acknowledged the training that was provided but highlighted that additional practical training would be welcome before they take up their roles, and also highlighted that they currently receive no formal feedback, either from students or from colleagues. The Panel **recommends** that efforts be made to provide GTAs with a level of peer assessment and feedback on their teaching performance, with the GTA committee being consulted on potential requirements.

7.   Academic Standards

7.1.1 The Panel considered that the Subject had a variety of robust and effective procedures in place which ensure that the School was engaged in a continual process of self-reflection and self-evaluation with regards to academic practice.

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

7.1.3 The Panel established from the Self-Evaluation Report and the supporting documents that the Subject was operating effective quality enhancement processes in line with University policy and practice. The Panel did note a concern from the supporting documents that in 2018, only 1 of the Subject's 3 External Examiners for Level 2 and Honours were able to attend an Exam Board. This was raised with the Head of Subject who confirmed that whilst this was unusual, the circumstances relating to their non-attendance were unique, and that the Subject received pre-reports from the Examiners to confirm that they were satisfied with marking arrangements to ensure that scrutiny was not reduced.

7.1.4 The Panel noted from the SER and from meetings with academic staff and the Head of Subject that there were concerns relating to the process of making changes to courses and programmes, and how the time-consuming nature of this process had the potential to discourage innovation to existing provision. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject work with the School and College to provide clarity on what constitutes a minor or major change to an existing course or programme to ensure that the approval process is timely, and that Subject staff receive adequate feedback on changes which have been assessed by the College Board and School Oversight committees.

8.   Collaborative provision

8.1.1 The SER noted the contribution made by the Subject to the MSc International Relations programme that is run as part of the Joint Graduate School with Nankai University in

Tianjin, China. The programme has been running since 2015 and has seen a steady increase in student numbers since its inception. The Subject convenes and teaches 2 core courses on the programme, as well as contributing supervision, with dissertations in the 2nd year being jointly supervised and marked by both institutions. The Panel acknowledged that the collaborative MSc is a well-planned and well-managed venture and were encouraged by the intensive induction offered to each new cohort, as well as the language support which is made available, both in the form of in-sessional English language lessons and the three-week summer school.

8.1.2 The Panel also note that in 2019/20 Politics will introduce a new International Masters degree programme in Southern European Studies (EUROSUD), with funding awarded as part of the EU Erasmus Mundas Joint Masters (EMJMD) programme, and that the Subject, School and College will monitor the impact of Brexit on the running of this programme.

Appendix 1 Summary of Commendations and Recommendations

The Review Panel commends the Subject of Politics on the following:

Commendation 1

The reflective and open approach taken by the subject to the self-evaluation report. [Paragraph 3.1.1]

Commendation 2

The evident commitment of the academic team to teaching, learning and the student experience. [Paragraph 3.1.1]

Commendation 3

Support for Widening Participation, both in terms of the WP Summer School, and the preparatory work undertaken to ensure that students entering Politics Level 2 via the Clyde College Articulation Programme are sufficiently equipped to enter the University. [Paragraph 5.1.4]

Commendation 4

The high level of care and attention given to the transition of students from Glasgow International College and the positive links which have been fostered with GIC.

Commendation 5

The quality and variety of the programmes offered – years 1 and 2 offer a solid grounding, which allows students to articulate to an impressive range of honours choices. [Paragraph 6.1.2]

Commendation 6

Good articulation between Intended Learning Outcomes and assessment methods. [Paragraph 6.1.3]

Commendation 7

Improvements in student feedback, which have seen a positive change to NSS scores. [Paragraph 6.2.3]

Commendation 8

The use of a broad range of assessment methods, such as placement-based assessment, reflective journals, policy briefing and individual research projects. [Paragraph 6.2.1]

Commendation 9

Impressive range of extra-curricular activities, including the Olive Tree Initiative. [Paragraph 5.7]

Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made to support the Subject 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.

Context and Strategy

Recommendation 1

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject and School develop a clear strategy for the introduction of the new IR degree programme and how this will complement the current Politics degree programme, ensuring both are equally supported. The Subject and School should closely monitor the impact the new degree programme may have on current provision and staff morale. This strategy should be developed and agreed in consultation between the Subject and School and ratified by the College Management Committee ensuring all teaching commitments are considered within College forward planning. [Paragraph 4.1.3]

For the attention of: Head of Subject, Head of School, Head of College

Strategic planning for future growth

Recommendation 2

The Panel **recommends** that the School reviews communication, engagement and inclusion of all staff to ensure all Subject staff are given an opportunity to contribute to strategy and teaching developments in an open and transparent environment. [Paragraph 4.1.4]

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

Supporting staff

Recommendation 3

The Panel **recommends** that the Head of Subject should, in consultation with the Head of School and Head of School Professional Services, continue to review the administrative provision and develop and implement a plan to resolve current administrative difficulties in a manner that is resilient to the planned future growth. [Paragraph 6.3.4]

For the attention of: Head of Subject, Head of School and Head of School Professional Services
For information: Head of College

Accommodation

Recommendation 4

The Panel recommends that the subject work with the School, College and Estates & Buildings to address accessibility issues in the Adam Smith Building, and to work with the Space Management and Timetabling Team to factor in distance between buildings when scheduling consecutive lectures. [Paragraph 6.3.2]

Enhancement in learning and teaching

Recommendation 5

The Panel **recommends** that the Subjects work with the Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service to share University best practice on the use of online assessment & marking, and that the technical issues with Moodle software be raised with University IT Services to identify what steps can be taken to address these. [Paragraph 6.1.7]

For the attention of: Head of Subject
For information: Head of School, Director of LEADS, Director of IT Services

Academic Standards

Recommendation 6

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject work with the School and College to provide clarity on what constitutes a minor or major change to an existing course or programme to ensure that the approval process is timely, and that Subject staff receive adequate feedback on changes which have been assessed by the College Board and School Oversight committees. [Paragraph 7.1.3]

For the attention of: Head of Subject and Dean for Learning & Teaching
For information: Head of School

Supporting staff

Recommendation 7

The Panel recommends that the Subject work in partnership with the College and Human Resources to build upon existing provision and ensure that staff are clear on the criteria for Academic Promotion, and that they are suitably supported through the promotion application process. [Paragraph 6.4.2]

For the attention of: Head of College Human Resources, Head of College
For information: Head of School

Recommendation 8

The Panel **recommends** that efforts be made to provide GTAs with a level of peer assessment and feedback on their teaching performance, with the GTA committee being consulted on potential requirements. [Paragraph 6.4.3]

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

Recommendation 9

Assessment and feedback

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject provides summary response documents to course evaluation questionnaires and that these are placed on course Moodle pages as well as provided to SSLCs. [Paragraph 6.2.5]

For the attention of: Head of Subject

Enhancing the student experience

Recommendation 10

The Panel **recommends** that the subject take steps to address the perceived lack of awareness amongst UG students of the Student-Staff Liaison Committee, including the

methods of communication used to make students aware of the process, and how contact details of class representatives are advertised. [Paragraph 5.4]

For the attention of: Head of Subject

Equality and Diversity

Recommendation 11

The Panel **recommends** that the subject consider their "trigger warning" process, by which students are notified of potentially sensitive material which will be discussed in a lecture, to ensure that students are given suitable advanced warning to allow them to assess whether they are comfortable in attending. This may include providing details in course handbooks, and reconsideration given to the use of sensitive material in data sets. [Paragraph 5.3]

For the attention of: Head of Subject
For information: Equality & Diversity Unit

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee – Summer Powers 2019

Periodic Subject Review: Review of the School of Engineering held on 7 and 8 March 2019

Lesley Fielding, Clerk to the Review Panel

Review Panel:

Professor Moira Fischbacher-Smith	Assistant Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching) Panel Convener
Professor M H Ferri Aliabadi	Imperial College London, External Subject Specialist
Professor Laurie Cuthbert	Emeritus Professor Queen Mary University of London, External Subject Specialist
Dr Simon Kennedy	Senate Assessor on Court
Ms Fiona Paterson	Student member
Professor Quintin Cutts	School of Computing Science, Cognate member
Dr Janis Davison	Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service
Ms Lesley Fielding	Senate Office and Clerk to the Panel

1. Introduction

1.1 The School of Engineering is the largest School within the College of Science & Engineering and the last review was undertaken in 2013.

1.2 The School of Engineering has separate structures for research, five Research Divisions which are Aerospace Sciences; Biomedical Engineering; Electronics & Nanoscale Engineering, Infrastructure and Environment and Systems, Power and Energy. The Teaching Divisions are each led by a Head of Discipline (HoDisc) and are: Aerospace Engineering; Biomedical Engineering; Civil Engineering; Electronics & Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering.

1.3. The School provides taught courses at both undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PGT) level. The School has a substantial Transnational National Education (TNE) provision. It delivers two undergraduate degrees in Chengdu, PR China jointly with the University of Electronic and Technology of China (UESTC). Both degrees are in Electronics. At the time of the review, there were 20 academics, 19 of whom are based in Glasgow and typically fly to Chengdu one week in every four. The School is also responsible for five undergraduate degrees in Singapore in Civil, Aerospace and Mechanical and Electronic Engineering. The teaching is undertaken by staff based in Singapore with Glasgow staff providing support to the Director of the University of Glasgow Singapore (UGS) in the QA of course material, delivery and assessment.

1.4 The teaching organisation of the School is overseen by the Convener of Learning & Teaching who ensures delivery of all taught programmes supported by the five Heads of Discipline and the Vice Dean of Glasgow College UESTC. In addition, a PGT convener oversees the integration of PGT programmes with the assistance of a separate PGT project coordinator.

1.5 In 2017-18, the School had approximately 1855 students on 13 UG and 16 PGT taught

degree programmes on the Glasgow campus, together with approximately 2010 students on campuses in China and Singapore. School-level teaching related activities are organised through the School's Teaching Office.

1.6 Preparation of the School of Engineering Self Evaluation Report (SER) was undertaken by a working group led by the Head of School, Professor David Cumming, with the five Heads of Discipline, the Convener of Learning & Teaching and with contributions from the Transnational Education staff in both China and Singapore. Wider staff consultation was undertaken, and specific Self Evaluation Report topics were shared with student representatives and the wider student body.

1.7 The Review Panel met with Professor David Cummings (Head of School), Professor Scott Roy (Convener of Learning & Teaching), Mrs Debbie Goldie (Head of School Administration), Professor John Davies (Dean of Learning & Teaching) and Professor Muffy Calder (Head of College), Professor John Marsh (Transnational Education Dean – China), Professor Imran Muhammad (Vice Dean, Glasgow College UESTC). The Review Panel also met with one Level 1 student, one Level 2 student, two Level 3 students, one Level 4 student and two Level 5 students, five PGT students, 18 academic staff, one technician, eight MPA staff, three GTAs, and seven Early Career Staff. At the TNE meetings, the Review Panel met with four UGS students, six UESTC students, four UGS staff and three UESTC staff.

2. Context and Strategy

2.1 Staff

Engineering has a total of 202 staff (192 FTE, of which 108 (103 FTE) are academic staff. 67 (65 FTE) are Technical and IT and 27 (24.8) Management, Professional and Admin (MPA) staff.

The student-staff ratio is 22.2:1 which is higher than the University and Russell Group averages.

2.2 Students

Student numbers for 2017-18 are summarised as follows:

Individuals enrolled on one or more courses at each level	Form of Study	
	class enrolment	visiting/erasmus/ exchange
Level 1	430 + 506 (UESTC)	0
Level 2	432 + 452 (UESTC)	0
Levels 3, 4 and 5	857 + 496 (UGS) + 426 (UESTC)	Approx. 80
Postgraduate Taught	265	

2.3   Range of Provision under Review

2.3.1 Undergraduate Degrees

Degree	Abbrv.	Discipline	Accreditation	Site
Aeronautical Engineering	AE	Aero	IMechE, RAeS	Glasgow
Aeronautical Engineering (w. SIT)	AE(SIT)	Aero	IMechE, RAeS	S'pore
Aerospace Systems	AS	Aero	IET, RAeS	Glasgow
Aerospace Systems (w. SIT)	AS(SIT)	Aero	IET, RAeS	S'pore.
Biomedical Engineering	BME	BME	IET, IMechE, IoP	Glasgow
Civil Engineering	CE	Civil	ICE, IStructE, CIHT, IHE	Glasgow
Civil Engineering (joint w. SIT)	CE(SIT)	Civil	not yet accredited	S'pore
Civil Engineering with Architecture	CArch	Civil	ICE, IStructE, CIHT, IHE	Glasgow
Electronics & Software Engineering (joint with CS)	E&SE	E&EE	IET	Glasgow
Electronics & Electrical Engineering	E&EE	E&EE	IET	Glasgow
Electronics & Electrical Engineering (JEP w. UESTC)	E&EE (JEP)	E&EE	pending	Chengdu
E&EE with Communication (JEP with UESTC)	E&EE (Comm)	E&EE	pending	Chengdu
Electronics with Music (2/3 Engineering, 1/3 Music)	EMus	E&EE	IET	Glasgow
Mechanical Design Engineering	MDE	Mech	IED, IMechE	Glasgow
Mechanical Design Engineering (w. SIT)	MDE(SIT)	Mech	IED, IMechE	S'pore
Mechanical Engineering	ME	Mech	IMechE	Glasgow
Mechanical Engineering with Aeronautics	MEA	Mech	IMechE, RAeS	Glasgow
Mechatronics	MT	Mech	Pending	Glasgow
Mechatronics (w. SIT)	MT(SIT)	Mech	IMechE	S'pore
Product Design Engineering (with Glasgow School of Art)	PDE	Mech	IED, IMechE	Glasgow

2.3.2 Postgraduate Degrees

Degree	Discipline	Accreditation
Aerospace Engineering	Aero	
Aerospace Engineering & Management	Aero	
Biomedical Engineering	BME	IET, IPEM
Civil Engineering	Civil	ICE, IStructE, IHE, CIHT
Civil Engineering & Management	Civil	ICE, IStructE, IHE, CIHT
Computer Systems Engineering (Jnt CS)	E&EE	
Electronics & Electrical Engineering	E&EE	
Electronics & Electrical Engineering & Management	E&EE	
Electronics Manufacturing	E&EE	
Mechanical Engineering	Mech	IMechE
Mechanical Engineering & Management	Mech	
Mechatronics	Mech	
Nanoscience & Nanotechnology	E&EE	
Product Design Engineering	Mech	IMechE, IED
Structural Engineering	Civil	ICE, IStructE, IHE, CIHT
Sustainable Energy	E&EE	ICE, IStructE, IHE, CIHT, IMechE, IET

2.4 Strategic Approach to Enhancing Learning and Teaching

2.4.1 The Review Panel congratulated the School on its expansion of the Transnational Education (TNE) since the previous review with the establishment of a Joint Educational Programme with the University of Electronic Science & Technology of China (UESTC) in 2013 and the evolution of provision as the Singapore Institute of Technology moved from providing polytechnic courses as feeder programmes to external institutions to becoming a University in their own right, partnering with external institutions. This subject will be explored more fully at item 6.

2.4.2 From the Self Evaluation Report (SER), the Panel noted the School's clear strategic position which set out their future plans to be "At the forefront of engineering discovery, creation and practice, delivering international leadership in education, innovation and capability" (SER, p2). In exploring how the School intended to achieve the aims of their strategic vision it was explained that the intention was to build a foundation of core technical material, and the development of students' creativity and analytical thought; (particularly in years 1 and 2), through projects involving creation and demonstration.

2.4.3 The Panel **commends** the School's commitment to harmonisation which was reflected in the development of the Level 1 common curriculum which provided year 1 students with a common student foundation of mathematics and engineering physics. The School considered that the key elements of the common curriculum included the engineering teaching threads of Design, Creativity and Project/Teamwork which were essential skills for engineering students. Harmonisation is further discussed under 4.1.1.

2.4.4 The Review Panel noted from the SER that fundamental to achieving their aims of being at the forefront of engineering was the provision of high quality, research-led teaching and learning. The Panel noted the statement that all academic staff were engaged in teaching, including those with heavy research commitments. The SER indicated that there would be an increase in student numbers from 2019/20 onwards as a result of new programmes, but it was unclear to the Panel how this was going to be supported in terms of staffing, both academic and administrative and in terms of physical capacity. The Panel was concerned to note that academic staff were currently at capacity in terms of workload and that staffing levels were not commensurate with the recent increase in PGT numbers.

2.4.5 With regard to technical staff the Panel noted that, as opposed to their previous focus which mainly provided support to research, the technicians now provided support to both teaching and research which created substantial demands on the team. The academic staff recognised the contribution of the technical staff and considered that the technicians' contribution enabled the School to teach the large number of students and was a crucially important feature of the School's learning and teaching resource. From their discussions with all staff and from the SER, the Review Panel considered that the School, while performing admirably, had very little room to manoeuvre and was operating at full capacity. The increase in programmes being offered and continued increased enrolment placed significant pressures on all staff. That a large number of staff are on PGCAP and have reduced teaching loads, together with a sizeable number of research staff, means that the teaching responsibilities are borne by a smaller contingent of staff than the SSR might otherwise indicate. The Review Panel concurs with this view and considers there is a further need, and indeed an opportunity, to review the traditional perception of the teaching team and the associated staffing requirements in order to support large classes, and to draw effectively on technical and learning technology skills. The Review Panel **recommends** that the School, with the support of the College, rethinks teaching support and potentially restructures the teaching teams for large classes. The review should include the role of technical staff, learning technologists and GTAs in order to optimise the School's resources and to alleviate the pressure on all staff.

2.4.6 From the staff survey and discussions with staff it was evident to the Panel that the vision held by the Executive Team was not fully understood and shared by all staff. Among staff there did not appear to be a clear understanding of the rationale of the strategy. The School had a committed Teaching & Learning team, however, the limited understanding of the School's aspiration for growth appeared to have impacted on morale. The Head of School's comment that the postgraduate growth was aligned to market demand was not widely understood by staff. There was an acknowledgement that there is a degree of complexity in ensuring that staff feel suitably involved in the decision-making process within the School, particularly over five disciplines. However, at the meetings with the Head of School and staff it was unclear as to how the whole School community was consulted in relation to learning and teaching strategy and what opportunity existed for contributing to the decision making. The Review Panel **recommends** that the School reviews communication, engagement and involvement of staff to ensure all staff are actively involved in the developments in relation to strategy and engage effectively with opportunities to contribute to strategy and teaching developments in an open and transparent environment.

3. Enhancing the Student Experience

3.1. Admissions, Retention and Success

Admissions

3.1.1 The School has a dedicated Student Recruitment and Communications Officer together with MPA staff working from the School Office. The Undergraduate Recruitment Committee coordinates recruitment and there is a Recruitment Officer and an academic School Admissions Officer. The Panel was impressed with this provision. The Panel was pleased to note that the School provided students with pre-arrival packs which contained a sample lecture and sample maths problems. From feedback received from students concerning enrolment, the School had introduced block enrolment with information on individual components provided to students.

3.1.2 From the SER, the Review Panel noted that there had been a substantial increase in both UG and PGT numbers including 1560 FTE students on 19 undergraduate (UG) and 17 postgraduate taught (PGT) degree programmes in Glasgow together with approximately 300 students in Singapore in 2013 to 2059 FTE students on 20 UG and 16 PGT programmes in 2018-19. The main growth in Glasgow had been in the recruitment of international MSc students. From the meeting with the Head of School, the Panel considered that, although additional staff had been appointed, there was a mismatch between the PGT portfolio and staff expertise. In exploring this issue further, the Panel noted there were a number of PGT courses with small student numbers. At the final meeting, which included the Convener of Learning & Teaching, the Panel was advised that the intention of the portfolio was to protect the School from the potential impact of market forces, particularly with regard to the international market. The Head of School advised that no new programmes were introduced until there was evidence that it would have minimal impact on the teaching load. Nevertheless, the Review Panel would encourage the School to continue the review of provision in view of the current pressures on teaching.

The School participated in several initiatives that aimed to widen participation among non-traditional groups including the Headstart initiative and the Widening Access[2] Summer Schools (organised by the University and free for students from MD40), with successful completion giving an adjusted entry tariff for 40 students per annum. In addition, the Panel noted that the School was in discussion with the City of Glasgow College regarding a possible articulation agreement which was considered a positive development. The Panel welcomed the School's commitment to widening participation.

3.1.3 From the meeting with staff, the Panel noted that that managing expectations of students presented a challenge to the School. Staff considered that many students arrived unprepared for the learning environment of the University. The School had deliberated on this and found there to be a mismatch of expectations of students prior to enrolment. Those postgraduate students with experience of UK Higher Education Institutions adapted more easily to postgraduate study than those students who were studying in the UK for the first time. As noted in 3.1.1, the Panel welcomed the provision of pre-arrival packs and suggests that it may be helpful to supplement these packs for international students and those students unfamiliar with the UK Higher Education System with further advice to effectively manage students' expectations, highlighting the different learning and environment and challenges that University presented.

Retention

3.1.4 The Review Panel noted that, while progression rates in Year 1 had improved, the figure of 18% dropout was still high. From discussions with staff, the Panel noted that the common curriculum was considered to have been a contributory factor in the improved

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[2] https://www.gla.ac.uk/study/wideningparticipation/supportingaccesstogeneralsubjects/summerschool/

progression rates as it enabled students to experience the full range of disciplines and to amend their original choice, if necessary. Staff expressed concern regarding retention, particularly for widening participation students, who tended to be more at risk of withdrawing. However, staff advised that there was substantial provision for widening participation students but there was no capacity to increase this level of support. While it was acknowledged that students could choose not to pursue a degree in engineering, there were concerns that some students faced substantial challenges in coping with their studies. The Review Panel was concerned about the high dropout rate, and whilst recognising the challenges, **recommends** that further consideration be given to the contributory factors and the potential solutions. Specifically, the Panel recommends that the School work closely with Planning and Business Intelligence to undertake an analysis of retention, progression and continuation for Levels 1 and 2 of the kind recently undertaken in Computing Science.

3.1.5 It was acknowledged that Maths presented a substantial challenge to students however this had been offset by the excellent and increasingly embedded support provided to students by Ms Shazia Ahmed from LEADS. Both staff and students were generous in their praise of Ms Ahmed's work. The Review Panel **commends** the embedded LEADS Maths support in the School.

Progression

3.1.6 In considering other contributing factors impacting on progression, the Panel noted the tradition for assessment methods to be predominantly examination based. This is discussed further at 4.2.2.

3.2 Equality and Diversity

The Review Panel noted from the SER that the School held an Athena Swan Bronze award and intended to apply for a Silver Award in November 2019 to increase female representation throughout the School. The Panel acknowledged that gender imbalance was common within engineering across the UK and was challenging to address but was pleased to note the improvements in female representation since the last PSR in 2013. In particular, the disciplines of Biomedical Engineering (50%), Product Design Engineering (~40%) and Civil Engineering with Architecture (~40%). UESTC also had a higher cohort of female students. There were continued challenges with regard to the gender balance in Electronic & Electrical Engineering despite increased enrolment of European female students. The Panel noted the prominent role of the School societies in raising awareness including the FemEng and WiSTEM. The Panel acknowledged that the School had a higher percentage of female students in comparison to other HEIs. However, the Panel considered that the School was not unique with regard to gender imbalance within the University and that other subjects, with similar challenges, had assumed a more proactive approach. The Review Panel **recommends** that, in addition to the current practices, the School should review the marketing of the programmes, including the School website, to present a more contemporary and inclusive image. The School could compare the current website with those of other institutions, such as the University of Bristol and advice should be sought from External Relations and the Equality and Diversity Unit in the first instance, but potentially also from the School of Physics & Astronomy which has a Silver Athena Swan award, and where a range of initiatives have been undertaken as part of the University's Gender Action Plan.

3.3 Supporting Students in their Learning

3.3.1 At the meeting with undergraduate students, the Review Panel noted the students' general satisfaction with the level of support provided by the School. The Panel explored the students' experience of large classes and how they managed to integrate with their peers. The students found the large classes daunting but acknowledged that events such as the induction day, with subject classes and lab work, were helpful. However,

the students considered that the most successful routes to making friendships were through the Engineering Society and Freshers' Week. The postgraduate students advised of some difficulties regarding module selection, but this had been resolved with the assistance of the Teaching Office.

Advisory System

3.3.2 The Review Panel noted from the SER and staff meetings the Advisory System process for alerting Advisers to students' poor performance by the Teaching Office. The Teaching Office provided Advisers with a list of exam results of their advisees following the December diet which enabled Advisers to contact those students who failed to meet the progression requirements in order to discuss their performance. In addition, the Teaching Office checked each MSc student's MyCampus records against several common advising problems to trigger Advisers to contact such students. The Review Panel considered the advising system to be an impressive organisation and **commends** the School for developing this process.

3.3.3 While the Review Panel commended the Advisory System processes for alerting Advisers to those students who were struggling via the Teaching office, it was noted that both undergraduate and postgraduate students were not necessarily as aware of the provision as the School believed. The undergraduate students had commented that, apart from a meeting in first year, they often had no other contact with their Adviser throughout their time at University. However, the students were aware that they could contact their Advisers in the event of difficulties. The Review Panel **recommends** that the School works with the student body to enhance visibility of the formal elements of, and improve engagement with, the Advisory System and in particular, the first meeting with Advisers of Studies in order to identify those students who may need to withdraw or transfer at an early stage.

3.4 Student Engagement

Feedback Mechanisms

3.4.1 The Review Panel noted from the SER, the Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) process whereby the topics were collected in advance of each SSLC by the Learning & Teaching Office and forwarded to individual course coordinators, who would respond prior to the meeting. Additional issues raised at the SSLC were forwarded to course coordinators and the responses and actions minuted by administrative staff. The Head of Discipline would respond to any SSLC actions which had not been resolved. However, further to discussions with UG and PGT students, there appeared to be some variation in the process with the feedback loop not always closed. There was also perceived variations in practice between the different disciplines. The students were not aware that the Head of Discipline was responsible for feedback and were under the impression that, if an academic disagreed with the action/suggestion, there would be no action and the student would be obligated to make a complaint. The students advised that, generally, one or two staff members attended the SSLCs. The students considered the timing of the first SSLC meetings during week 6 to be too early for students to have identified issues of concern. Class Reps commented that there was a lack of awareness among the general student population of the My Class Rep system and website which presented challenges for class reps in communicating updates to students. The Panel noted the valuable foundations of the SSLC process however it was evident that the system required to be modified to ensure more transparency to students in term of operation and feedback. The Review Panel **recommends** that the School review the SSLC process in consultation with the SRC Sabbatical Officers/President to ensure sufficient dialogue and feedback between staff and students and to engage the wider student population in the process.

Course Evaluation

3.4.2 The Review Panel noted from the SER that informal methods of obtaining important feedback from students were effective during or after lectures and events such as the 'beer and pizza' sessions.

3.4.3 The Panel explored the poor response rates of online course evaluation with the students. At the meeting with students, it was confirmed that staff responded informally to student feedback via email. However, there were no student summary response documents to course evaluation questionnaires, a requirement of the University's Course Evaluation policy. The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject provides summary response documents to course evaluation questionnaires and that these are placed on course Moodle pages as well as provided to SSLCs.

4. Enhancing the Student Experience

4.1 Learning and Teaching

Curriculum Design

4.1.1 The Review Panel considered that the work on harmonisation had produced positive results, particularly the common curriculum. The undergraduate students expressed their appreciation of the common curriculum in Year 1. The students recognised the value of this method of teaching and considered the benefits included learning the language of each other's speciality which was hugely beneficial when they interacted with these students in Years 3 and 4. The Review Panel **commends** the School for the work undertaken to ensure the success of the common curriculum.

Work-based Placements

4.1.2 The Review Panel noted, from the SER, the opportunity for MEng students to undertake an individual project within industry during their final year. The range of industrial organisation was impressive, and the Review Panel considers this to be an example of good practice in relation to Graduate Attributes and employability.

Approach to Intended Learning Outcomes

4.1.3 The Review Panel noted that the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were influenced by regular accreditation visits and were regularly reviewed. From the documentation, the Panel was confident that the ILOs were explicitly outlined in all programme specifications and was satisfied that these were appropriate.

Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching

4.1.4 The SER referred to the use of various innovative teaching techniques including online provision, flipped classrooms and automated assessment. Although the Review Panel did not entirely agree that the examples provided were innovative *per se*, due to their implementation throughout the University for a number of years, it nonetheless recognised them as beneficial enhancements to practice and recognised the commitment to these approaches from the staff involved. Staff indicated that adoption of Technology Enhanced Learning & Teaching (TELT) is largely a function of the intentions of individual staff members rather than a response to a holistic view of TELT across the programmes. The Panel explored how, in view of the pressure on staff time teaching large classes, the School continued to evolve and enhance its approach to teaching and assessment exploiting the use of technology. The use of Teleforms (optical scanning software) was given as an example which had improved efficiency in exam marking in Years 1 and 2 from the point of view of academic workload and turnaround. However, the Panel also noted this was a labour-intensive process that required substantial administrative support given the size of the student population and prominence of exams as an assessment strategy. As discussed at 2.4.5, this could be

included in a review of the teaching team for large pre-honours courses. The undergraduate students mentioned the use of YACRS and advised that, while this did engage students, there was no consistency in its use throughout the School and they would welcome further use where appropriate.

Study Abroad

4.1.5 The Review Panel noted from the SER that the School's degree programmes were structured to enable students to undertake study away from Glasgow. In the full-time final year project during semester 1, 37 out of the 57 industrial MEng placements were taken outside the UK. The Review Panel **commends** the School for enabling a substantial number of students to undertake their industrial placement outwith the UK.

4.2 Assessment and Feedback

4.2.1 The Review Panel noted, from the SER, that assessment varied from 100% examinations through to 100% coursework / project work. This was confirmed at the Panel's meetings with staff and students. The Panel acknowledged the constraints of the Accreditation Bodies requiring the School to assess by traditional methods. However, the Review Panel considered that the current form of assessment presented a number of challenges to students, particularly in Year 1, which was thought to be impacting on progression rates. The Panel noted that most elements which contained mathematics were assessed by traditional methods, however, there had been more formative assessment introduced with regards the teaching of first year Maths which had resulted in a substantial improvement.

4.2.2 The students expressed concern that where assessment was 100% exam based, the students were vulnerable to having an "off day" which could result in a poor performance and impact on their overall attainment. In discussion with staff, attention was drawn to the recurring poor performance by first year students in the December diet of examinations. Staff considered that this was, in part, attributable to timing as many students had not settled fully into their course and were not adequately prepared for examinations. Staff advised that, conversely, weaker students' performance had often improved by the second semester examination. The Panel explored adjusting the weighting of exams and course work, however, staff considered that, in view of the large class sizes, this would impact on staff time and workload. There were justified concerns that the current system disadvantaged some students in fulfilling their potential, therefore, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School review the current first year assessment design and identifies ways to increase the level of formative assessment as well as reduce the reliance on high stakes assessments, subject to remaining within the constraints of accreditation.

4.2.3 As noted in 4.2.1, the Review Panel acknowledged the importance of the requirements of the accreditation bodies which can sometimes limit, or be thought to limit, the School's assessment options. The Panel considered that it would be advantageous for the School's academic staff to take a more proactive role within the accreditation process. The Review Panel **recommends** that the School encourage and assist staff to assume active roles within the accreditation bodies to contribute and influence future policy and accreditation requirements in relation to teaching and assessment in Engineering.

Feedback on Assessment

4.2.4 The Review Panel noted, from the SER, the School's development of an Assessment & Feedback Calendar which provided details of the date of issue of all coursework components, including assessment of courses and the date at which feedback would be provided to students. It was the School's intention that the Calendar would alert students to their workload for the year and to enable them to plan accordingly. Surprisingly, the students were less aware of the Assessment & Feedback Calendar than the Panel expected, and students advised it was not always clear when feedback would be

returned. The Review Panel suggests that the School reiterate the availability and purpose of the Assessment & Feedback Calendar to students at the beginning of the teaching year.

4.2.5 The Panel noted the pressure on staff with regard to marking reports and lab books and the subsequent pressure to meet feedback dates. The staff advised that it was not possible to meet the feedback dates and that students were made aware of this. The Panel enquired whether GTAs were used for marking but noted that GTAs worked with Levels 1-4 on a demonstration basis only and did not undertake any marking. In view of the pressure on staff to meet their marking obligations, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School should consider using GTAs for marking at pre-Honours, and possibly Honours level where appropriate, with suitable levels of training, supervision and support.

4.3   Resources for Learning and Teaching (staffing and physical)

Learning and Teaching Space

4.3.1 The Review Panel noted, from the SER, the number of changes to the learning and teaching space since the last PSR. In 2017 a Creativity 'Lab' in James Watt South was established containing staff offices, a small meeting room, flexible teaching space with clustered tables and large screen displays. It was noted that the School had lost 18.5% of their meeting room capacity, however, with further developments including a new online School room booking system and the flexibility of the Creativity 'Lab', the students appeared to be satisfied with the meeting accommodation available. The five postgraduate students the Panel met with, confirmed they were satisfied with the facilities and resources available to them within the University. Nevertheless, due to a combination of increased student numbers and the multi-purpose nature of labs, the School had experienced challenges in providing adequate lab accommodation, confirmed by the postgraduate students who commented that there was insufficient lab accommodation. From the SER and the meeting with the Head of School, the Panel noted that there were plans for a new engineering building, however, the first phase would not commence for two or three years. The Panel appreciated the difficulties that securing additional lab accommodation presented but noted the importance of the allocation of appropriate resources to support the School in terms of space due to their sustained and continuous growth. The Panel is hopeful that the University capital plan will addressed these individual cases.

4.3.2 *Staffing*

The Review Panel noted, from the SER, that adequate staffing was a substantial issue for the School due to the growth in student numbers. Staff departures in specialised areas also made degree programmes vulnerable, such as Civil and Aerospace Engineering, with staff covering additional teaching at relatively short notice. In order to cope with sudden staff departures, the School was obliged to rely on short-term appointments to bridge the teaching gap. This is discussed under item 2.4.5. From discussions with staff, it was confirmed that the processes involved with succession planning and recruitment processes were a significant hindrance. The staff identified the need for these processes to be reviewed in order to streamline the recruitment process to enable staff members to be replaced before demitting office. The impact of the current system resulted in substantial staffing shortages with detrimental effects on staff during the remainder of the session. The Review Panel **recommends** that the College review the staffing and recruitment practices with the School to identify ways to improve the process and reduce the impact on existing staff. There may also be the opportunity to feed into the World Changing Glasgow project on recruitment.

4.4 Engaging and Supporting Staff

4.4.1 The Review Panel explored the workload tensions between fulfilling teaching and research obligations with staff. The Panel was advised that there were substantial all year-round pressures due to teaching becoming a twelve-month activity, in contrast to previous practice, whereby research could be undertaken during the summer. The staff outlined some of their commitments during the summer period which included project supervision, (336 MSc students to be supervised among 80 staff), three summer schools contemporaneously (3 or 5 week, UESTC), 4 widening access (1x1 week + 1 x 4 weeks, local and England, overlapping and then 2 x Headstart x 1 week, contemporaneous. The Panel sympathised with staff and considered this should be considered as part of the recommendation under 2.4.5.

Graduate Teaching Assistants

4.4.2 The Review Panel noted that the GTA survey was very positive with the majority of GTAs expressing satisfaction. However, at the meeting with the GTAs, some of the views expressed ran counter to the survey results. The Panel's impression was that there was variable oversight of GTA input by the course coordinators which in some cases led to confusion and pressure. As the Review Panel only met with a small number of GTAs it was difficult to establish a broader picture of their experience. However, from discussions, the Panel noted that, outwith the LEADS training, there was no co-ordinated School GTA training. The Review Panel **recommends** that the School review the oversight and training of GTAs to ensure that more consistency in the GTA experience and consult with LEADS for guidance and advice on GTA training.

4.4.3 There was some uncertainty as to how involved GTAs can be in marking at different levels and the current University policy was considered to be unclear on certain aspects of GTA marking. The Dean of Learning & Teaching expressed a willingness to work with Academic Services to clarify current policy documentation.

4.4.4 The SER stated that in session 2017-18 there were 8500 hours of laboratory demonstrating, from 112 PhD students (out of a possible cohort of 291) and that the School had developed a policy where PhD students were expected to help in demonstrating by default. Further to discussions with the Head of School, the Panel established that, while GTA participation was essential, the School would aim for a more uniform distribution of load and identify more GTAs who would be suited to lab work. This would be included as part of the review recommended under 4.2.6 and 4.4.2 above.

Early Career support

4.4.5 The Panel met with seven early career staff who advised the Panel that they had freedom in relation to teaching style and liked the block teaching (two lectures and one laboratory) but would welcome guidance on best practice on teaching and assessment during the early stages of teaching from more senior and experienced colleagues. The staff indicated that they were supported by their mentors and the School. Two of the early career staff who met with the Panel were involved with TNE which included one week of teaching at UGS.

4.4.6 Early career staff commented to the Panel that it would be useful to have a School induction handbook and an annual calendar of events. The Head of School advised that there was such a handbook which included these headings together with a checklist and was available on the web. In view of the uneven awareness of the handbook, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School seeks input from Early Career Staff on the contents and the dissemination of the information.

4.4.7 There was a sense of some dissatisfaction with certain aspects the PGCAP. Some ECDP staff did not see its relevance to Engineering, particularly in view of the specialised and scientific nature of Engineering teaching. Others commented that it did

not address the issue of large-scale teaching which is particularly pertinent in Engineering. Concern was also expressed that PGCAP assessment required too much commitment, was too time consuming and was not always as relevant to practice as it might be. They felt that feedback from senior/experienced colleagues on participants' teaching practices would be more beneficial as their focus was improving teaching and assessment practices at this early stage in their teaching. The Early Career staff appreciated the role of peer review and mentors and the Panel considered it would be helpful if peer review could become a more prominent feature of the PGCAP although recognises that this would need to be consulted on with the wider cohort of PGCAP participants. This aspect of the report does not lend itself readily to specific recommendations, especially recommendations relating to the School or College. Therefore, the Panel **recommends** that the PSR Convenor raises the ECDP and PGCAP feedback with the University's ECDP Lead (Prof Murray Pittock) and with the Director of LEADS in order that the feedback is acted on appropriately through the ECDP Champions in the Colleges and other appropriate ECDP committees as part of the wider governance of the ECDP programme. The Panel also **recommends** that the review of PSR that is currently underway within Academic Services, gives consideration to how issues relating to broader University initiatives (such as ECDP), but that don't lend themselves to specific recommendations that ASC might follow up on, could be more meaningfully recorded and addressed in future.

Teaching Office

4.4.8 The Review Panel noted the high level of engagement and support provided by the Teaching Office as detailed at the meeting with students and staff. The Teaching Office team were involved in a wide range of duties ranging from assisting and supporting staff and students to labour intensive and time-consuming procedures such as resolving time table clashes, supporting the advisory system and processing examination papers from China. The Review Panel was most impressed with the work of the Teaching Office staff. They had developed innovative practices while providing an excellent level of support to both students and staff. The Panel **commends** the Teaching Office staff for the level of support and assistance provided to both students and staff. The Teaching Office expressed considerable appreciation of the support from the School's IT section and acknowledged that much of the process improvement within the office had depended on the IT team developing bespoke solutions. The Teaching Office Team asked that the report acknowledge this level of service and support, and the dependence on input from the IT section.

4.4.9 The Review Panel considered the scanning and printing of examination papers from UESTC to be time consuming and in view of the technology available, potentially obsolete. However, the Panel has since learned that the mathematical nature of the papers is such that technological solutions are not readily available and that there are limited alternatives to the current approach. The Review Panel **recommends** that the School review the current processes with a view to identifying a more efficient and streamlined process if possible, to alleviate the pressure on the Teaching Office and to free staff time for other processes. The Review Panel acknowledges that opportunities for streamlining may be limited in the absence of improved online assessment of mathematical subjects and **recommends** that the issue is raised with the Chair of the Assessment & Feedback Transformation Project, Professor Frank Coton, to include within considerations of online assessment.

4.4.10 The staff advised that several essential processes required by the University presented challenges. These included the Tier 4 monitoring system for students and GTA recruitment. The staff indicated that although they believe their approaches to be robust, they were aware that each School has developed individual solutions with no means of sharing expertise. The team considered that as the processes and challenges in managing them were not unique to the School of Engineering, and rely on specialised

knowledge, that it would be beneficial to approach them more centrally and consistently across the University. The Panel **recommends** that guidance on best practice in these matters be explored with College of Science & Engineering HR, and with the Central Services HR.

4.4.11 The Panel noted the crucial role undertaken by Dr Karen McIlvaney, Senior Administrator, within the Teaching Office. The Panel was pleased to note that the School was treating Dr McIlvaney's forthcoming retirement as a priority and that discussions were being held about identifying a successor. In view of the level of support provided by the Teaching Office and their pivotal role in relation to much of the School administrative processes, the Review Panel **recommends** that the support for the Teaching Office is reviewed to continue to streamline unnecessary processes and alleviate pressures where possible taking into account the role played by the IT team.

5. Academic Standards

5.1 The Review Panel considered that the School had a variety of robust and effective procedures in place which ensure that the School is engaged in a continual process of self-reflection and self-evaluation with regard to academic and pedagogical practice.

Currency and Validity of Programmes

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

6. Collaborative provision

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

6.1.1 As noted at 2.4, there have been significant changes to the School's TNE provision since the last PSR. From discussions with the Head of School and staff, the Review Panel noted the work and organisation that was required to support this substantial and admirable endeavour. The Panel met with staff and students from UGS and UESTC institutions via teleconference and was extremely impressed by the level of enthusiasm and engagement displayed by all participants. The Panel would have valued more time with the TNE staff and students and, therefore, the Review Panel **recommends** that, in future, Student and Academic Services and the School, give consideration to whether the Engineering TNE activity is reviewed separately or that the review visit is extended. The Panel acknowledges there is a trade-off between considering the School holistically and giving due attention to TNE but certainly given the scale of endeavour, there is a need for further time to explore and acknowledge in full, the TNE activity in the future.

6.2 Learning and Teaching Enhancement in UGS and UESTC

The Review Panel held discussions with students and staff from both the University of Glasgow Singapore (UGS) and UESTC via teleconference and the discussions are outlined below.

UGS

6.2.1 The students reported that, overall, they were satisfied with their experience to date. The students used the University of Glasgow website and found the course handbooks provided a clear descriptor of what to expect from the course. Through discussion of the various courses, the students reported they found the Aerospace Engineering content rather dry and lacking in practical tasks and resources. Students on the Civil Engineering course commented that the material was similar to that of other courses. The students would welcome additional laboratories. The students were generally satisfied with the lectures, although it was noted that the local lecturers and UGS staff

had differing styles and the delivery of some lectures were too fast for some students to follow. Students had access to lecture notes as a supplement to the lecture and found these beneficial. There was an issue with regard to one lecturer not uploading lecture notes to Moodle which required students to reuse old material and it was also noted that past papers were not available. The Review Panel **recommends** that there is a general review of the curriculum and teaching approach to address the issues identified in relation to overlapping content, opportunities for more interactive teaching and students' understanding of the material on an ongoing and formative basis.

6.2.2 From discussion with UGS staff, as part of a University's Learning & Teaching Development Fund project on effective online learning design, staff had experimented with blended learning and active learning activities. As a result, there had been an increased use of interactive lectures, with students answering questions via their mobile phones. This had proven popular with the students due to anonymous participation encouraging students to ask questions during lectures. As part of the University's Learning & Teaching Development Fund on effective online learning design, the staff had created/experiments with blended learning and active learning activities. The Panel noted the increased use of interactive lectures with students answering questions via their mobile phones which was more popular with the students due to anonymous participation. The Panel noted the variety of assessment including groupwork, presentation, projects and research development. The UGS staff advised that, with regard to innovation, the aim was to align the material and approach with Glasgow but that it was necessary to contextualise this locally.

Student Experience

6.2.3 From discussion with UGS students, the Panel noted the good Staff Student Ratio, with 80 students in each cohort who were split into four groups. The Panel learned that, although the students enjoyed their visit to the Glasgow campus, students considered it too short and therefore felt more of an affiliation with the Singapore campus. In order to encourage a greater sense of inclusion for the UGS students, the Review Panel suggests that the School review the timing of the UGS students' visit and whether it would be possible to prolong their visit to one or two semesters but acknowledges that the scope for this could be limited for a range of reasons. Alternatively, or in addition, joint on-line activity between UGS and the UoG campus students could be considered.

Feedback

6.2.4 The SIT students were most satisfied with the Class Rep system. Each semester, Class Reps met with lecturers and discussed issues raised by the students. All Class Reps' names and contact details were listed for students to access. The students preferred to discuss issues with Class Reps rather than raising them directly with staff. However, the Panel noted that all students were encouraged to communicate directly with lecturers and there had been some improvement to date. The Review Panel was impressed with the effective implementation of the class rep system and the students' commitment to this role.

Course Evaluation

6.2.5 The Panel noted that Civil Engineering sought evaluation of their courses at the end of semesters and the students were aware that the changes would not have an impact on the current cohort but on the next. Students commented that they did seek feedback but, sometimes, there would be no explanation as to why an issue could not be resolved. Staff at the Singapore campus should be reminded to provide feedback to students, including a statement as to why action has or could not be undertaken.

Staff

6.2.6 Due to the geographical and time zone difference, the UGS staff reported that there was not a strong sense of connection to the Glasgow campus, although it was stronger for those staff who had visited the Glasgow campus. The Panel was advised that the requirement for a PGR supervisor to be Glasgow-based presented some challenges to new staff who were less familiar with staff based at Glasgow. The Panel determined from staff that research teaching and collaboration with Glasgow was important and highly valued and that the staff would like to have a more interactive relationship. The Panel had the sense that the Glasgow campus was less engaged regarding collaboration and that initiatives for PhD scholarships and grant applications, were driven mainly by UGS. At the final meeting with the Head of College and Head of School they advised that attention had to be given to ensuring a balance of ownership and opportunity and that each institution is in a position where they are enabled to be pro-active.

6.2.7 The Panel noted that the Early Career staff considered the LEADS online PGCAP to be very good. The staff could view all the material and were able to participate in on-line discussions. While, they were unable to participate in the Glasgow sessions as they were not synchronised, they advised that the staff in LEADS were very accommodating. The Panel noted that the Early Career staff would meet with the LEADS staff when they accompanied students to Glasgow in June.

UESTC

6.3 The students advised the Review Panel that they enjoyed the overall experience at UESTC particularly the English teaching, self-directed learning and the interaction with students from other countries. However, the Panel noted that, similar to UGS, the students did not feel part of the wider University of Glasgow community with interaction limited to visiting students from Glasgow. The Panel noted that although there is an existing link to the UESTC site, the students were unaware of this as it was very difficult to locate which served to reinforce this sense of disconnect for the students. To address this, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School promote their international partners more prominently.

6.3.1 While the students found no differences between the UESTC and Glasgow staff lectures, they advised there was a noticeable difference in the marking. The students found that the Glasgow staff generally awarded higher marks than the UESTC staff with one student commenting that the marks from the Glasgow staff were "amazing". The sense among the students was that the Glasgow marking was more reflective of their performance but advised that they had not been informed of the grading criteria, receiving only a final mark with no breakdown of how this was achieved. As such, they considered more transparency was required in the marking across the two sets of staff. The Review Panel **recommends** that a review of the marking process be undertaken to ensure consistency of approach in terms of explaining the grading criteria when providing feedback on assessment.

6.3.2 The students advised that that their interaction was predominantly with UESTC staff but that they would welcome increased interaction with Glasgow staff. It was noted that although students could meet with staff during office hours, the students preferred to communicate via email or Moodle with their lecturers. The students acknowledged this was partly a cultural preference but that usually by the final years, students were more confident to go to the office to seek advice.

Staff

6.3.3 In the meeting with the Glasgow teaching staff, the Panel noted that the fly in/out model used at UESTC was demanding. However, this was offset by the time available upon their return to Glasgow to undertake research. The staff also welcomed the ECDP

support, discipline meetings and the option to attend the School's Learning & Teaching day. The Panel noted that whilst the Glasgow staff did not teach when back in Glasgow, they were expected to be involved in the examination process.

6.3.4 The Review Panel explored the level of administrative support that the current assessment system required. The staff acknowledged the considerable support provided by the Teaching Office staff, particularly the large amount of assessment that the Teaching Office staff dealt with on an ongoing basis. The Panel noted that the UESTC had a multiple resit system which was not compatible with MyCampus and was an onerous task for administrative staff. The level of administrative support that the UESTC assessment required was discussed further at 4.4.8.

6.3.5 The students reported some issues regarding the GTAs who conducted the labs. The students considered that the GTAs were not fully informed and that there was a need for increased training for the GTAs.

6.4 Overview

6.4.1 As stated previously, the Review Panel was most impressed with the work of the School and both the TNE institutions and acknowledged the positive impact this arrangement had on the School's reputation and **commends** the School on this achievement. However, the Panel noted that the collaboration was not always seen as part of the core School activity or as part of the wider university (see 6.2.6). The Panel identified a need for cohesion to address the tendency for a one-sided relationship that was evident to an extent for both TNE institutions during the review. The Panel noted that the proposals for collaboration were typically initiated by the TNE partners and not the School or that was at least the perception. Given the maturity of the TNE relationships at this point, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School takes the opportunity to explore with its TNE partners how to reprofile this activity so as to incorporate TNE more prominently, recognising its importance as part of the School's strategic contribution to research and teaching, and considers how to strengthen partnerships around research and teaching initiatives.

6.4.2 Also highlighted was the need for wider awareness of the international nature of TNE in relation to representation within University discussions such as at Learning & Teaching Committees, the Student Experience Committee and in University Services discussions concerning support for learning, teaching and research. Limited awareness was evident in terms of the lack of recognition that key dates and holidays for the University were not necessarily relevant to the TNE institutions. This was highlighted regarding IT support during the Christmas vacation given Christmas is not a holiday in either China or Singapore. These differences can be impactful when there are assignment submissions over the Christmas period but no corresponding Moodle or IT support. The Review Panel **recommends** that the University review the support models for the TNE students and staff to recognise the different requirements of these institutions to Glasgow and to ensure that these requirements are understood and met. Additionally, the Review Panel recommends that the School review how to achieve wider awareness of TNE partners through representation at key School committees.

7. Summary of perceived strengths and areas for improvement

7.1 Key strengths

The Review Panel identified the following areas as key strengths:

- Clear strategic vision of the School management and sense of growth.

- Improvements made to the curriculum and positive impact made to retention and progression by the introduction of a common First Year.

- The introduction of more specialist programmes.

- TNE provision and commitment and enthusiasm of both staff and students based at University of Glasgow Singapore and Glasgow College UESTC.

- The Teaching Office and commitment to supporting and working closely in partnership with both academic staff and students; following which processes had been introduced to be time cost effective for academic staff and enhance the student experience at Glasgow, Singapore and UESTC.

- Overall commitment to Teaching and learning improvements and support provided to students.

- Extent of accreditation and connection to high academic standards being enforced.

- Industrial Work Placements and the number of these that are taken outside the UK.

- SSLC Administrative processes.

7.2 Areas for improvement

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

- Whilst recognising the benefits of introducing specialist programmes, potential for some level of consolidation to prevent resources and staff being over stretched.

- Reconfiguring the way staff deliver teaching in Years 1 and 2.

- Wider engagement with the strategic vision of the School.

- Review of current assessment for large classes, and identification of ways of increasing level of formative assessment.

- Visibility of the formal elements of the Advisory System.

- Review SSLC processes to ensure consistency and all feedback loops are closed.

- Increase level of engagement and collaboration with TNE institutions recognising that the nature of the partnerships differs between institutions.

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

8. Conclusion

It was evident to the Review Panel that the School had undergone significant changes since the last review. There was strategic vision for growth and development, and clear and committed leadership from the Convener of Learning & Teaching, in particular. The Review Panel was impressed by the level of transformation in the degree programme through the process of harmonisation which produced initiatives such as the common curriculum which was valued by the students throughout the different disciplines of the School as well as having a positive impact on retention and progression. The collaborative arrangements with Singapore and China are a huge endeavour, and whilst the School was still transitioning and refining arrangements, it was evident to the Panel that the staff and students at Singapore and China are very positive and enthusiastic. Moving forward, the School is encouraged to continue to build and develop its relationships, providing a sense of community and cooperation across campuses with staff brought on board with strategy and teaching developments. Further consolidation

of teaching provision, including a review of assessment, teaching support and administrative processes should further enhance provision.

8.1 Commendations

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

Commendation 1

The Review Panel **commends** the School for the work undertaken to ensure the success of the common curriculum. *[Paragraph 2.4.3]*

Commendation 2

The Review Panel **commends** the embedded LEADS support in Maths in the School. *[Paragraph 3.1.5]*

Commendation 3

The Review Panel considered the advising system to be an impressive organisation and **commends** the School for developing this process. *[Paragraph 3.3.2].*

Commendation 4

The Review Panel **commends** the Teaching Office staff for the level of support and assistance provided to both students and staff. *[Paragraph 4.4.8]*

Commendation 5

The Review Panel **commends** the School for enabling a substantial number of students to undertake their industrial placement outwith the UK. *[Paragraph 4.1.5]*

Commendation 6

The Review Panel was most impressed with the work of the School and both the TNE institutions and acknowledged the positive impact this arrangement had on the School's reputation and **commends** the School on this achievement. *[Paragraph 6.4.1]*

8.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made to support the School of Engineering 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**.

Strategic Approach to Enhance Learning and Teaching

Recommendation 1

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School, with the support of the College, rethinks teaching support and potentially restructures the teaching teams for large classes. The review should include the role of technical staff, learning technologists and GTAs in order to optimise the School's resources and to alleviate the pressure on all staff. *[Paragraph 2.4.5]*

For the attention of: The Head of School

For information: Vice Principal and Head of College of Science & Engineering

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School reviews communication, engagement and involvement of staff to ensure all staff are actively involved in the developments in relation to strategy and engage effectively with opportunities to contribute to strategy and teaching developments in an open and transparent environment. *[Paragraph 2.4.6]*

For the attention of: School Engagement Lead

Assessment and Feedback

Recommendation 2

The Panel explored adjusting the weighting of exams and course work, however, staff considered that, in view of the large class sizes, this would impact on staff time and workload. There were justified concerns that the current system disadvantaged some students in fulfilling their potential, therefore, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School review the current first year assessment design and identifies ways to increase the level of formative assessment as well as reduce the reliance on high stakes assessments, subject to remaining within the constraints of accreditation. *[Paragraph 4.2.2]*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School review the current processes with a view to identifying a more efficient and streamlined process if possible, to alleviate the pressure on the Teaching Office and to free staff time for other processes. The Review Panel acknowledges that opportunities for streamlining may be limited in the absence of improved online assessment of mathematical subjects and **recommends** that the issue is raised with the Chair of the Assessment and Feedback Transformation Project, Professor Frank Coton, to include within considerations of online assessment. [*Paragraph 4.4.9*]

For the attention of: The Head of School

Chair, Assessment & Feedback Transformation Project

In view of the level of support provided by the Teaching Office and their pivotal role in relation to much of the School administrative processes, the Review Panel **recommends** that the support for the Teaching Office is reviewed to continue to streamline unnecessary processes and alleviate pressures where possible taking into account the role played by the IT team. [*Paragraph 4.4.11*]

For the attention of: The Head of School

Recommendation 3

The Review Panel was concerned about the high dropout rate, and whilst recognising the challenges, **recommends** that further consideration be given to the contributory factors and the potential solutions. Specifically, the Panel recommends that the School work closely with Planning and Business Intelligence to undertake an analysis of retention, progression and continuation for Levels 1 and 2 of the kind recently undertaken in Computing Science. *[Paragraph 3.1.4]*

For the attention of: The Head of School

Recommendation 4

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School works with the student body to enhance visibility of the formal elements of, and improve engagement with, the Advisory System and in particular, the first meeting with Advisers of Studies in order to identify those students who may need to withdraw or transfer at an early stage. *[Paragraph 3.3.3]*

For the attention of: The Head of School

Recommendation 5

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School review the SSLC process in consultation with the SRC Sabbatical Officers/President to ensure sufficient dialogue and feedback between staff and students and to engage the wider student population in the process. [*Paragraph 3.4.1]*

For the attention of: The Head of School

For information: SRC Sabbatical Officers

Learning & Teaching Convener

Recommendation 6

The Review Panel **recommends** that, in addition to the current practices, the School should review the marketing of the programmes, including the School website, to present a more contemporary and inclusive image. The School could compare the current website with those of other institutions, such as the University of Bristol and advice should be sought from External Relations and the Equality & Diversity Unit in the first instance, but potentially also from the School of Physics & Astronomy which has a Silver Athena Swan award, where a range of initiatives have been undertaken as part of the University's Gender Action Plan. *[Paragraph 3.2]*

For the attention of: The Head of School
For information: Director, External Relations
Manager, Equality & Diversity Unit

Staffing

Recommendation 7

In view of the pressure on staff to meet their marking obligations, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School should consider using GTAs for marking at pre-Honours, and possibly Honours level where appropriate, with suitable levels of training, supervision and support. *[Paragraph 4.2.5]*

For the attention of: The Head of School

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School review the oversight and training of GTAs to ensure that more consistency in the GTA experience and consult with LEADS for guidance and advice on GTA training. [*Paragraph 4.4.2]*

For the attention of: The Head of School

There was some uncertainty as to how involved GTAs can be in marking at different levels and the current University policy was considered to be unclear on certain aspects of GTA marking. The Dean of Learning & Teaching expressed a willingness to work with Academic Services to clarify current policy documentation. *[Paragraph 4.4.3]*

For the attention of: The Convenor of Academic Standards Committee and the Head of the Senate Office.
For the attention of: The Dean of Learning & Teaching, College of Science & Engineering.

Recommendation 8

The Panel **recommends** that the PSR Convenor raises the ECDP and PGCAP feedback with the University's ECDP Lead (Prof Murray Pittock) and with the Director of LEADS in order that the feedback is acted on appropriately through the ECDP Champions in the Colleges and other appropriate ECDP committees as part of the wider governance of the ECDP programme. The Panel also **recommends** that the review of PSR that is currently underway within Academic Services, gives consideration to how issues relating to broader University initiatives (such as ECDP), but that don't lend themselves to specific recommendations that ASC might follow up on, could be more meaningfully recorded and addressed in future. *[Paragraph 4.4.7]*

For the attention of: The PSR Convener and the Manager, PSR, Senate Office

Recommendation 9

At the meeting with students, it was confirmed that staff responded informally to student feedback via email. However, there were no student summary response documents to course evaluation questionnaires, a requirement of the University's Course Evaluation policy. The Review Panel **recommends** that the Subject provides summary response

documents to course evaluation questionnaires and that these are placed on course Moodle pages as well as provided to SSLCs. [*Paragraph 3.4.3*]

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For the attention of: The Head of School

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Recommendation 10

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School encourage and assist staff to assume active roles within the accreditation bodies to contribute and influence future policy and accreditation requirements in relation to teaching and assessment in Engineering. *[Paragraph 4.2.3]*

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For the attention of: The Head of School

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Recommendation 11

The Review Panel **recommends** that the College review the staffing and recruitment practices with the School to identify ways to improve the process and reduce the impact on existing staff. There may also be the opportunity to feed into the World Changing Glasgow project on recruitment. *[Paragraph 4.3.2]*

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For the attention of: The Head of College HR
For Information: Vice Principal and Head of College of Science & Engineering
The Head of School

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For information: Ms Emma Pickard, World Changing Glasgow Transformation Team.

Recommendation 12

The staff advised that several essential processes required by the University presented challenges. These included the Tier 4 monitoring system for students and GTA recruitment. The staff indicated that although they believe their approaches to be robust, they were aware that each School has developed individual solutions with no means of sharing expertise. The team considered that as the processes and challenges in managing them were not unique to the School of Engineering, and rely on specialised knowledge, that it would be beneficial to approach them more centrally and consistently across the University. The Panel **recommends** that guidance on best practice in these matters be explored with College of Science & Engineering HR, and with the Central Services HR. *[Paragraph 4.4.10]*

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For the attention of: The Head of College, HR and Head of Central Services HR
For Information: The Head of School

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Recommendation 13

Early career staff commented to the Panel that it would be useful to have a School induction handbook and an annual calendar of events. The Head of School advised that there was such a handbook which included these headings together with a checklist and was available on the web. In view of the uneven awareness of the handbook, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School seeks input from Early Career Staff on the contents and the dissemination of the information. [*Paragraph 4.4.6*]

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For the attention of: Senior Administrator, School Office
For the attention of: The School Engagement Lead
For information: The Head of School

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TNE

Recommendation 14

Given the maturity of the TNE relationships at this point, the Review Panel **recommends** that the School takes the opportunity to consider how to reprofile this activity so as to incorporate TNE more prominently, recognising its importance as part of the School's

strategic contribution to research and teaching, and considers how to strengthen partnerships around research and teaching initiatives. *[Paragraph 6.4.1]*

For the attention of: The Head of School

Recommendation 15

The Panel would have valued more time with the TNE staff and students and, therefore, the Review Panel **recommends** that, in future, Student and Academic Services and the School, give consideration to whether the Engineering TNE activity is reviewed separately. The Panel acknowledges there is a trade-off between considering the School holistically and giving due attention to TNE but certainly given the scale of endeavour, there is a need for further time to explore and acknowledge in full, the TNE activity in the future. *[Paragraph 6.1.1]*

For the attention of: The Head of School
Transnational Education Deans
Vice Dean Glasgow College UESTC
For information: Vice Principal and Head of College of Science & Engineering

Recommendation 16

The Review Panel **recommends** that the University review the support models for the TNE students and staff to recognise the different requirements of these institutions to Glasgow and to ensure that these requirements are understood and met. Additionally, the Review Panel recommends that the School review how to achieve wider awareness of TNE partners through representation at key School committees. *[Paragraph 6.4.2]*

For the attention of: Executive Director, Information Services
For information: Transnational Education Dean
Vice Dean Glasgow College UESTC

Recommendation 17

The Review Panel **recommends** that a review of the marking process be undertaken to ensure consistency of approach in terms of explaining the grading criteria when providing feedback on assessment. [*Paragraph 6.3.1*]

For the attention of: Transnational Education Dean
Vice Dean Glasgow College UESTC
For information: The Head of School

Recommendation 18

The Review Panel **recommends** that there is a general review of the curriculum and teaching approach to address the issues identified in relation to overlapping content, opportunities for more interactive teaching and students' understanding of the material at UGS on an ongoing and formative basis. *[Paragraph 6.2.1]*

For the attention of: Transnational Education Dean
For information: The Head of School