15 April 11

University of Glasgow

Enhancement-led Institutional Review 2009-10

Year-on Response

Introduction

The intention underlying the University of Glasgow's treatment of its ELIR report has been to maximise the benefit of the exercise to the learning experience of students and to the University more broadly.

Following receipt of the definitive report, the document was analysed by the University's Senate Office. A resulting draft set of 50 individual actions was identified. This included the actions the University had identified itself in the Reflective Analysis submitted in advance of the ELIR. This list of actions was considered and approved at the annual Away Day of the University's Learning & Teaching Committee in September 2010. Learning & Teaching Committee agreed that the identified actions should be integrated into the overall Action Plan for the University's Learning & Teaching Strategy. The Learning & Teaching Strategy constitutes the University's strategy for quality enhancement. The purpose in integrating ELIR-related actions with University objectives was to align activities in a way that would maximise the meaningfulness of the ELIR to the institution, promote ownership of ELIR outcomes and subsequent progress, and help enhance the impact of the actions taken.

The Learning & Teaching Strategy Action Plan is divided into a number of Projects. Each of these corresponds with a key institutional priority, and each ELIR-related action has been co-located with associated University objectives. The nine Projects within which ELIR-related actions sit are as follows:

- Assessment & Feedback
- Graduate Attributes
- Infrastructure
- Campus Solutions (Student Record System)
- Retention
- Equality & Diversity
- Innovation in our Provision
- Staff Development
- Process Improvement

Each Project has been assigned to a senior member of staff (Project Lead) for the purposes of accountability and coordination of progress. Progress will be monitored at the highest levels. Detailed monitoring will be carried out by the Learning & Teaching Committee, which reports to the University's Education Policy & Strategy Committee (EdPSC). Both the Learning & Teaching Committee and EdPSC are convened by the Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching), the senior officer with responsibility for the associated areas of activity. EdPSC is responsible in turn to Senate, which bears overall and statutory responsibility for teaching in the University. The University's governing body, the University Court, has overall responsibility for institutional strategy. Accordingly, it receives annual reports from the Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) on progress, partly against a set of agreed Key Performance Indicators.

In compiling this year-on response, Project Leads were requested to provide a report on progress by completing a table for each action indicating:

- work accomplished to date
- relevant timescales for the implementation of change
- how the effectiveness of change is being or will be evaluated, and
- an evaluation, where relevant, of the effectiveness so far of any change instituted.

The tables for the 50 identified actions are available at:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/actionplan/

Since the University's ELIR exercise at the end of 2009, the University's academic structure has been reorganised. In place of the former nine Faculties and 50+ departments, there are now four Colleges (Arts; Medical, Veterinary & Life Sciences; Science & Engineering; and Social Sciences), embracing 19 Schools and seven Research Institutes. For further information, see http://www.gla.ac.uk/academic/. The approach taken to addressing the ELIR report below fully reflects the new structure and any implications arising there from.

The following summarises briefly the range of activity being taken forward within each Project, progress thus far, how the effectiveness of action is being assessed and, where appropriate, effectiveness to-date.

1. Assessment & Feedback

A range of activities is being pursued, most in close partnership with the Students Representative Council (SRC), focussing on improving feedback both from students on their learning experience and to students on their assessment performance. A new structure for Staff-Student Liaison Committees was established when the University restructured. A new standard student questionnaire has been introduced and automated analysis is being taken forward. A new University Assessment Policy has been introduced to assist course development and provide guidance on the timing of feedback to students. There is a strong focus on innovation in feedback in projects backed by the Learning & Teaching Development Fund. The innovative 'Student Voice' website is to be revamped, made more visible and accessible, with more direct linking to the individual student reader. Progress will be gauged by measuring user statistics, through evaluations and use of quality management mechanisms - Periodic Subject Review (PSR), National Student Survey (NSS) and First Year Student Learning Experience Survey (FYSLES). Work on assessment and feedback is bearing fruit, as indicated in improved satisfaction levels in recent survey results.

2. Graduate attributes

Activity in this area covers the University's approach to embedding graduate attributes in its provision, uptake and tools for student Personal Development Planning (PDP) and employer engagement. The University has identified and formally approved its institutional graduate attributes. A holistic approach is being taken to developing an awareness of the transferable value of study to students, particularly within non-vocational subject areas where no equivalent professional competencies model applies. The attributes are complemented by a framework of recommendations designed to support their embedding within our learning and teaching practices. One of these recommendations mandates staff to embed the attributes within all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programme and course design.

Service units are continuing to work with academic staff on a programme of activities to promote knowledge and expertise in PDP. Work here benefits from research carried out in Life Sciences and Social & Political Sciences. Work in less vocationally oriented disciplines includes the College of Social Sciences Graduate Skills Programme, which involves almost 500 students, and a pilot mentoring scheme in the College of Arts. The outcomes of this

work are helping to shape the approach in non-vocational disciplines. Increased guidance has been made available to students. A range of activities is being pursued to promote awareness and use of the PDP tool, Mahara. Employer engagement through the Club 21 programme has expanded and diversified, to include more flexible work experience opportunities for students, including the first international placement, in Japan. Work-related opportunities on campus are being established, to provide, *inter alia*, internships for students from non-vocational areas. Work is being driven by a new Work-related Learning (WRL) Action Group, which is also developing means of embedding WRL in the curriculum. A new WRL Honours course, 'Employing Arts and Humanities' is building closer employer links in the College of Arts. Effectiveness of our work is assessed through project evaluations and through the range of quality management mechanisms. The pilot activity in PDP in Arts and Social Sciences represents marked progress.

3. Infrastructure

Topics here are the enhancement of the learning infrastructure and estate maintenance, including at the Garscube Campus. A teaching infrastructure working group has been established to provide input to the Estates Strategy. This is focusing on areas including informal learning spaces. A new Technology-Enhanced Learning & Teaching Group is helping develop consistency of practice in the support of our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The Vice-Principal (L&T) sits on the steering group with responsibility for investment in the IT infrastructure. The University maintains a five-year Capital Plan that includes funding for the refurbishment of teaching accommodation that includes Garscube. The effectiveness of activity is gauged via staff and student surveys. Statistical indicators are also under development. There has been good improvement in ensuring that L&T priorities feature strongly in estates and IT developments.

4. Campus Solutions (New Student Record System)

Development of the new Campus Solutions student information system continues with the aim of enhancing our student centred approach to support, and providing quality information to the whole community in a user-friendly and robust manner. The project is on schedule. Most of the new functionality will be live by August 2011 ahead of the start of the academic year 2011-12 and the planned implementation should be completed by November 2011. New business models covering all the processes supported by Campus Solutions have been agreed including the benefits that they are expected to deliver. In time, these will be evaluated to assess the effectiveness of the new system.

5. Retention

Student retention and success continue as a key priority for the University in its new L&T Strategy 2011-15. The retention action plan is presently under review. Year 1 continuation rates have been identified as a key indicator. Good progress towards target in 2009-10 has been followed by further improvement in 2010-11. It is also hoped that recent improvement in the six-year completion figures will be sustained.

6. Equality & Diversity

The ELIR report noted that further work was required to continue the embedding of the range of equality areas with regard to learning, teaching and curriculum planning. An integrated approach is being taken to this; this reflects the implications for the University of the Equality Act 2010. There is close collaboration between the Equality & Diversity Unit (EDU) and the Learning & Teaching Centre (LTC) that shapes LTC provision, including a dedicated course within the new learning and teaching programme. Good practice resources for staff are readily available. There is a strong L&T dimension to the activity of the Equality & Diversity Committee and Equality Working Groups and reporting to EdPSC. There is also close cooperation between the EDU and Senate Office, which has responsibility for policy and the

centrally managed elements of the University's framework of quality management arrangements. As indicated in the Reflective Analysis, the programme of equality impact assessments is continuing; support for this was reaffirmed by the Senior Management Group in January 2011. Progress is assessed through consultation and feedback.

7. Innovation in our Provision

This area covers a range of activities. The ELIR report suggested consideration of a minimum level of expectation of staff use of our VLE. A Technology-enhanced L&T Group has been established to develop consistency of practice across the University. Work is at an early stage, but the ELIR suggestion will be considered. The use and development of the VLE is being closely monitored.

Our Reflective Analysis discussed our intention to develop further our processes for integrating enhancement emerging from the University community with strategic initiatives. The new Colleges are required to prepare Strategic Plans aligned with that of the University. Their constituent Schools and Research Institutes also produce planning documents which are more elaborate than was required in the former structure. A new format for College L&T Strategies has also been agreed, with submission to the central L&T Committee by May 2011. These Strategies are also aligned with the University L&T Strategy.

In addition, the opportunity provided by University restructuring was taken to review quality management processes with a view to facilitating the integration of quality management with learning and teaching planning in the Colleges and Schools to benefit enhancement. The structure and remits of College Learning & Teaching Committees, Boards of Studies and Graduate School Boards have been reviewed. Key aims of the reviews were to enhance support for postgraduate students and facilitate the ability of L&T Committees and Boards to respond to strategic priorities. The remits of the Deans for Learning & Teaching were reviewed and strengthened with respect to the breadth of their leadership roles and in the increased commitment of resource to support their activities: Deans L&T are now 50% appointments; there was no buy-out of the time for their predecessors. The role of the new College and School Quality Officers has broadened, with stronger leadership and strategic dimensions. Responsibilities in the process for Annual Monitoring have also been devolved more to School and Colleges. Report templates have been simplified (and, addressing an action prompted by the ELIR report, include a new summary report on postgraduate taught programmes at School level), and a layer of central consideration of Faculty reports has been removed, speeding up the process and helping to provide greater local autonomy in the Colleges. Student representation on the new Quality Officers Forum has also increased.

The cycle for Periodic Subject Review (institution-led subject review) was also rationalised, combining subjects within Schools wherever appropriate to support the establishment of the new academic structure. The effectiveness of the new academic governance arrangements, including those for quality management, will be evaluated. There has been positive early feedback on committee operations.

We were encouraged in the ELIR report to continue to foster staff engagement with the national Enhancement Themes. As we move to implementation of our graduate attributes initiative, links with the Themes are made through the developments at institutional, college and subject level related to the University's identified graduate attributes. To affect an increase in exposure to opportunities which develop a range of attributes, academics will be reviewing learning and teaching. In turn, through its range of provision, the LTC will encourage use of Theme materials relevant to this process. As part of this, the WRL group referred to above is already increasing engagement with the Theme on employability. Collaboration between the LTC and the Senate Office to develop more effective reporting systems for academics already engaging in enhancement activities that align with the Enhancement Themes will be undertaken.

8. Staff Development

The ELIR report invited the University to consider how staff development provision correlates with institutional strategy and how the effectiveness of the contribution of staff development is gauged. The Staff Development Service (SDS) has begun a review of its provision in support of the University's new strategic plan, Glasgow 2020: a global vision. This will review current provision of learning & development by the Staff Development Service and will consider how, going forward, the SDS will support the new University strategic plan. The aim is to align with University key result areas: enhancing the student experience, research excellence, extending global reach & reputation in the provision of learning & development for University staff. It is intended that the draft plan will be implemented by October 2011 and will be subject to evaluation, and uptake will be monitored. The ELIR report also noted that the Performance & Development Review (PDR) process provides a key vehicle for the identification of Continuing Professional Development opportunities, and that the institution intends to increase CPD offerings. Since the ELIR, the PDR process itself has been reviewed and CPD provided by the LTC has also expanded. We will maintain the Annual Learning and Teaching Conference and also support informal CPD via the projects undertaken by academic staff through the Learning and Teaching Development Fund (which is focused on both graduate attributes and learning and technology for the next academic session). The LTC will also maintain the short seminar series on learning technologies. The effectiveness of CPD will also be evaluated, though its impact can only be assessed in a timescale of two or three years. The ELIR report also noted that further promulgation of the University's view of scholarship would be of benefit, in the context of promotion criteria. The prominence of this has been increased in revised promotions guidance. In addition, a new performance framework for professorial staff has been developed that incorporates scholarship as a distinct section. This is an important sector of the academic community in terms of influencing staff behaviours. We will continue to explore further mechanisms to promote engagement in and understanding of scholarship. The University has a very good record in this area; there are regular promotions through the University Teacher track.

9. Process Improvement

This section has been sub-divided in view of the number of areas where we are taking steps to enhance our processes.

9.1 Monitoring the Impact of Strategies

The Reflective Analysis noted our intention to continue to use performance indicators and qualitative evidence on the effectiveness of our implementation of strategic objectives, and to review these measures for the Strategic Plan then under development. The new Plan, 'Glasgow 2020: a global vision', includes 19 Key Performance Indicators spanning research, the student experience, global reputation and infrastructure. The new L&T Strategy 2011-15 was approved in February 2011. The University's Colleges, Schools and Research Institutes have in recent months produced their own strategic plans outlining how they intend to help the University meet the KPIs, thus further embedding and extending the planning process. Progress with the Plan is reported annually to Senate and Court. The KPIs were themselves reviewed in the drafting of Glasgow 2020.

9.2 Student Support

The ELIR report noted the intention of implementing a new Advisory System. This was approved for implementation in 2011-12. Training has been set up and new advisers are being identified. The new system is being introduced in tandem with the Campus Solutions student information system. It is intended to arrive at the recommended Adviser: Advisee ratio of 1:25 within three years of implementation. A review of the effectiveness of the new system will be conducted in 2013-14. The ELIR report noted the opportunity advising

provides to raise the profile of PDP. This is contained in the Advisers of Studies remit; its effectiveness will be assessed as part of the overall review of the new system.

The ELIR report also refers to the intention to develop a common model for postgraduate research student progress reviews, to avoid variation in the equity of the student experience. This has been done. Additionally, the PGR Code of Practice section on Progress Review has been updated to reflect a more participative process, where students are asked to reflect on their progress and submit work in addition to the supervisor's comments on the student's progress. A review panel, which includes an academic member independent of the supervisory team, meets with the student to better assess their progress. The new approach will be assessed in 2011-12.

9.3 Enhancing Quality practice and culture

Initiatives intended to improve the effectiveness of quality management are also referred to elsewhere in this document.

As indicated in the Reflective Analysis, a process review of the External Examiner system is underway to make greater use of technology and improve working methods and efficiency. The new system will ultimately permit submission of all paperwork such as nominations, School responses, etc, electronically thereby creating a faster and more efficient process. Consistent with the conclusions of the UUK/Guild HE review of the External Examiner system, an on-line induction programme will also be introduced, giving access to related University, College and School information. Access to the VLE is also being pursued. Phase One of the revised system will be launched in April 2011 and will include on-line report submission. Phase Two is scheduled for late 2011. Feedback will be sought from Externals and University staff on system changes.

We continue to work with Schools on promoting an increasingly reflective and evaluative approach to the Self-Evaluation Report prepared for our Periodic Subject Review exercises through the LTC and Senate Office, which manages the PSR process. Guidance is being thoroughly revised to help disseminate approaches and practices used by authors of our best SERs.

Work signalled in the Reflective Analysis to track the uptake of good practice, including that identified in our annual monitoring and PSR processes is being started by the new Quality Officers Forum which, as indicated above, has a broader and more outward-looking remit than its predecessor body. The QOF will also review the quality of data produced by Campus Solutions for monitoring and review purposes. Our Reflective Analysis also committed to completing the roll-out of the review process for the Graduate Schools. During 2010-11, consideration has been given to the best means of reviewing the activities of the four College Graduate Schools that have succeeded the nine Faculty Graduate Schools as a result of institutional restructuring. It was decided that it would be premature to review a College GS in 2010-11 on the same basis of the previous Faculty reviews. Instead, a proposal that all four College GS should undergo a lighter touch review during the summer of 2011 is under consideration, and it is anticipated that a programme of College GS reviews will commence in 2011-12. To-date, the GS reviews have been beneficial, in aiding the sharing of good practice and articulation of strategic direction and in improving consistency.

9.4 Programme development and monitoring

The ELIR report found that University guidance on the selection and collation of external views in programme approval is not comprehensive and that this, alongside the variations in faculty committee structures, had the potential to lead to inconsistencies in the use of external advice when approving programmes. The report also identified a divergence between University practice in seeking the views of External Examiners in the programme development process and the guidance in the QAA *Code of Practice,* which highlights the

potential for compromising impartiality when the external contribution comes predominantly from an existing external examiner. These matters have been reviewed, and it has been agreed that current practice relating to external involvement in approval should remain unchanged, with external examiners providing advice through consultation prior to the submission of proposals to the College, rather than as formal members of approval panels. In deciding this, it was noted that the relevant section of the Code concerned both programme review as well as approval. It was readily understood that it would be inappropriate for external examiners to participate as members of review panels, which considered material that included external examiners' reports, and the University explicitly forbids the use of Externals for this purpose in its Periodic Subject Review process. However, the inappropriateness of consulting external examiners as part of the approval process was not apparent, and it was regretted that the Code did not distinguish between these different roles. It was also reaffirmed that external consultants should not be included on Programme Approval Groups, as the purpose of these is not to review the academic content of proposals. To ensure that the current procedures were fully adhered to by Schools and Colleges, current guidance on the consultation process will be expanded and more detail on consultations will be provided to College Boards of Studies and PAGs.

The ELIR report also noted that the University had begun to address a lack of consistency across faculties in the initial scrutiny of proposed new programmes and in the level of authorisation required for a proposal to proceed. The position was further considered in the context of the restructuring of the University, and it was agreed that the Colleges would implement their programme approval procedures – which vary in terms of the number of boards of studies and scrutiny arrangements prior to submission to boards of studies. It was agreed that diversity in this and the process for signing off proposals was acceptable and academically justified, given the diversity of University provision. This approach will be monitored both at College and centrally.

The ELIR report also noted that the University's PSR process (formerly, DPTLA) did not include an explicit statement on the continuing validity of programmes of study; this will be incorporated from 2011-12. The Reflective Analysis also noted the planned full roll-out of the Programme Information Project (PIP) system. This has been completed, with successive system improvements and positive feedback. The PIP will interface with Campus Solutions.

9.5 Maintaining Academic Standards

The ELIR report identified a lack of systematic guidance to boards of examiners on the exercise of their discretionary powers for borderline candidates, noting that this did not guarantee equity of treatment for degree candidates, both within boards and between boards in the same or in different faculties and encouraged the University to review this aspect of its Code of Assessment. To address this, the University has developed proposals and is consulting upon a set of criteria for Exam Boards to refer to when exercising discretion (including a note of excluded criteria) and on principles for the operation of Exam Boards when considering joint honours candidates. A revision of the Code of Assessment's discretionary bands for Honours classifications and taught postgraduate awards of Merit and Distinction across the University is also under consideration.

Our Reflective Analysis noted that we would further streamline undergraduate degree regulations, e.g., to investigate opportunities for more commonality of practice in progress regulations and other aspects of degree regulations, and that we would consider the development of a generic PGR Masters regulation, develop and implement an assessment policy and review the policy on the use of plagiarism software. These have all been undertaken.

9.6 Collaborative Provision

The Reflective Analysis and ELIR report referred to a series of actions the University has been addressing, including the development of a Code of Practice for Collaborative Provision (now entitled – Framework for Academic Collaborations); production of a comprehensive set of guidelines and procedures to facilitate the administration and approval of proposals for collaboration; and updating of the Code of Practice for Validated Provision. The Framework for Academic Collaborations, containing guidelines and procedural information for all main forms of collaboration and with details of first year monitoring requirements, a new risk assessment tool and due diligence checklist, is scheduled to be finalised by June 2011. A framework for partnership review will also be included at a later stage and will be reviewed in due course as agreements reach the end of their period of approval. The Handbook also requires that all validation partnership approval panels and all other appropriate approval panels include an external member. Procedures controlling the use of the University logo have been strengthened. The Code of Practice for Validated Provision has been updated and further updating is scheduled. A new template for annual reporting for our validated institutions was introduced in 2010-11 and has been received positively by our partners. The inclusion of a student on (re)validation panels has either been introduced or is under discussion with all validated institutions; feedback will be sought on the experience of this. The scheduled audit of practice in relation to the management of the student experience in our validated institutions has not yet been initiated.

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