UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee – 23 May 2014

Periodic Subject Review: Report of the Review of Philosophy
Wednesday 12 & Thursday 13 March 2014

Mr Ryan Reed, Clerk to the Review Panel

Review Panel:

Professor Neal Juster	Senior Vice Principal and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Convener)
Professor Peter Clark	University of St Andrews (External Subject Expert)
Mr Owen Mooney	Students' Representative Council (Student Representative)
Dr Rob Maslen	School of Critical Studies (Cognate Member)
Dr Marie Freel	Institute of Cardiovascular and Medical Sciences (Senate Assessor on Court)
Dr Amanda Sykes	Academic Development Unit (Learning and Teaching Centre)
Mr Ryan Reed	Academic Collaborations Office (Clerk to the Review)

Observers:

Professor Jim Conroy	Vice Principal (Internationalisation)
Mr Gavin Lee	Senate Office

1.   Introduction

1.1. Background Information

1.1.1.   Philosophy at the University of Glasgow has a long and distinguished history which can be traced back to the foundation of the University in 1451. In the 18th Century Glasgow had a reasonable claim to be the world's leading centre for academic Philosophy, when the Chair of Moral Philosophy was held successively by Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith and Thomas Reid.

Like most Scottish Universities, Glasgow for many years had separate departments of Moral Philosophy and Logic; these were amalgamated in 1984 into a single Department of Philosophy. In the University's restructuring in 2010, Philosophy became one of six Subject Areas in the School of Humanities, along with Archaeology, Celtic & Gaelic, Classics, HATII (Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute) and History. The School of Humanities is located within the College of Arts.

The Subject Area is housed in two adjoining houses at the end of a Victorian Terrace on Oakfield Avenue.

1.1.2.   There are currently 14 permanent members of academic staff within the Subject (13.5 FTE).

Academic Staff	Number (FTE)
Professor	3
Reader	0.5
Senior Lecturer	4
Lecturer	5
University Teacher	1
Total	13.5

1.1.3.   In addition, for the academic year 2013-4 there was a Teaching Assistant, employed on a temporary contract whilst a Senior Lecturer was on funded research leave. There were also 3 GTAs on zero-hours contracts. Another 7 GTAs were employed as atypical workers.

1.1.4. Student numbers for the academic year 2013/14 are as follows:

Level	Headcount	FTE
Level 1	502	169.4
Level 2	189	61.2
Junior Honours	79	52.8
Senior Honours	74	57.5
PGT	12	10.5
PGR	18	9.8
Total	874	361.2

1.1.5. Based on FTE student numbers the current staff to student ratio (SSR) is 26.8. This compares to a University average SSR of 15.8.

1.1.6. The review considered the following range of provision offered by the Subject:

- MA (Hons) Philosophy. This may be taken either as Single Honours, or Joint with 31 other subjects (two of these, the Joint Honours degrees with Law and Mathematics, are LLB and BSc respectively, rather than MA);
- MLitt Philosophy (General);
- MLitt Philosophy (Conversion)

1.2. Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

1.2.1. The Review Panel received a very well-constructed and reflective SER. The clarity of the report and the openness and reflection of the Subject supported the panel to undertake a meaningful and wide ranging review. Where particular issues were highlighted or referred to in the SER, the Panel made efforts to explore these in more detail during the Review visit.

1.2.2. The Panel noted throughout the review the high levels of awareness amongst both staff and students of the Periodic Subject Review process. It was evident that there had been efforts made to ensure the involvement of staff and students in the development of the SER.

1.2.3. The Panel **commends** the Subject on the quality of the SER and on the way that staff and students were engaged in its development and in the wider Periodic Subject Review. Over the course of the review staff members explained that whilst the majority of the SER had been written and edited by a small team of key staff members there had been Subject wide consultation and opportunities for input. The Periodic Subject Review had been discussed at the Staff-Student Liaison Committee and students had been made aware of the review on Moodle and had been invited via email to attend meetings that took place during the review visit.

2. Overall aims of the Subject's provision and how it supports the University Strategic Plan

2.1. Overall aims at undergraduate and postgraduate levels

2.1.1.   The overall aims of the Subject are stated (in the SER) as follows.

At undergraduate level:

(i)   to introduce students to philosophy - its content (the questions with which philosophers engage, the claims they advance), its history, and its methods;

(ii)   to equip students with the capacity not just to understand but to engage - rigorously, critically, and fruitfully – with philosophical questions and positions; and

(iii)   thereby to hone in them fundamentally important intellectual capacities of reasoning and of clear, precise, and rigorous analysis.

At postgraduate level:

(i)   promoting an understanding of distinctively philosophical questions, equipping students to enquire into these questions;

(ii)   promoting philosophical skills of argument and critical thinking and instilling personal attributes […] at a higher standard.

2.1.2.   In addition to the overall aims above, the aims of the MA (Hons) programme were clearly and explicitly articulated in the SER. However, the Panel were unable to identify a clear set of programme aims for the Subject's PGT programmes.

2.1.3.   The Panel **recommends** that the Subject review the programme aims of the MLitt Philosophy (General) and MLitt Philosophy (Conversion) programmes to ensure that these are clearly explained and available. It was suggested by the Panel that some of the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) from the MLitt programmes may be better suited as programme *aims*.

2.2. Wider aims of Subject

2.2.1.   An emphasis was placed, in the SER and within the explicit programme aims, on the role of Philosophy and Philosophical study in developing method and practice – "engaging ideas, questions, and puzzles, and reflecting on the modes of that engagement"[1] as much as its role in mastery of a body of knowledge. Philosophical education, as conceived by the Subject, aspired to "hone skills that students require both for more advanced study and for the workplace."[2]

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[1] Self Evaluation Report p.11
[2] *ibid*

2.2.2. The Panel agreed that the Subject had great potential for developing the skills and capacities of students in a way which was relevant to both further study and the workplace. However, there was limited evidence during the Review that students were aware of this potential, particularly with regards to the workplace. It was apparent that some students, particularly undergraduate students, believed that more guidance on Graduate Attributes and employability would be valuable. Undergraduate students explained that, whilst useful, the College of Arts input on employability was not as valuable as input with a greater focus on the skills developed *specifically* through the study of Philosophy.

2.2.3. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject consider how awareness could be raised of the contribution the study of Philosophy makes to the development of Graduate Attributes and employability skills. This should include consideration of providing input to students studying at all levels on the relevance of uniquely philosophical skills, and on the value of these skills in other contexts. The Panel acknowledges that the Subject had recognised the importance of this area in the SER and welcomes their plans to offer further Philosophy specific guidance to students and encourages them to continue signposting external sources of information to students.

3. An Evaluation of the Student Learning Experience

3.1. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

3.1.1. *Programme* level ILOs for the MA (Hons) Philosophy, MLitt Philosophy (General) and MLitt Philosophy (Conversion) were detailed in the SER. *Course* level outcomes were sometimes detailed on Moodle, but in many cases were unavailable.

3.1.2. Whilst the ILOs at programme level were ambitious and appropriate to the subject, there were some concerns raised by the Panel about the structure of the ILOs and the language used within them to describe what learners would achieve. In many cases ILOs did not lend themselves to assessment. In particular, the MLitt (both General and Conversion) ILOs were very general and might have been better suited to acting as programme aims.

3.1.3. The panel was concerned that the programme ILOs for the MLitt (Conversion) were not sufficiently demanding and did not describe expected levels of breadth and depth of knowledge from Masters students, particularly when cross-referenced to SCQF Level 11.

3.1.4. Course ILOs varied in both their availability and in the way they were constructed. Some course ILOs were unavailable and some were written in a way not suited to assessment.

3.1.5. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject undertake (as a matter of urgency with regard to the MLitt Conversion) a comprehensive review of all ILOs at programme and course level to ensure that:

- they are consistent with both programme and course level aims;

- ILOs are consistent with University guidance on ILO structure, language and subsequently with the principle of constructive alignment;

- ILOs are appropriate to the intended level of study and the corresponding SCQF Level.

This review of ILOs should be undertaken as part of a wider curriculum review, which is addressed separately in a later recommendation at 3.5.11.

3.1.6. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject consider how all ILOs can be made available to students, and how the Subject might raise awareness of them, so that students understand what they are expected to demonstrate at assessment.

3.2. Assessment

3.2.1. The Subject used mostly traditional methods of assessment; assessed essays and essay style examinations.

3.2.2. The weighting of assessment methods varied for undergraduate study, with sub-Honours courses being subject to a 40/60% (coursework/examination) weighting and 30/70% for all Honours courses. An exception was the Formal Logic course which was assessed entirely by examination.

3.2.3. PGT assessment varied in methodology, depending on the programme students were enrolled on.

3.2.4. MLitt (Conversion) students were assessed by examination for a 40 credit Introduction to Analytic Philosophy, they also submitted a Dissertation (60 credits), with the remainder of their credit-bearing courses (4 x 20 credits) being assessed through essays. This was an approximately 80/20% weighting (essay/examination).

3.2.5. MLitt (General) students took two Research Methods courses (40 credits combined) which were assessed through a mixture of methods including presentation, essays, critical reviews and reports. Students also took four (20 credit) 'subject courses' which were assessed through examinations, and submitted a Dissertation (60 credits). Overall, there was a balance of approximately 55/45% (essay or other method/examination).

3.2.6. Assessment integrity and standards were secured through the use of blind marking with moderation for levels 1 and 2 and Honours coursework. Double blind marking was used for Honours examinations, undergraduate dissertations and all PGT assessment.

3.2.7. The Subject commented, within the SER, on student concerns around the weighting of assessment methods. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject reconsider the balance of the assessment methods used and whether there is merit in reducing the amount of credit awarded on the basis of assessment by

examination, particularly at Honours. The Subject should explore the balance of assessment methods used in cognate subjects to determine current practice in other parts of the University.

3.2.8. The level of stress placed on students by the over use of examinations was raised in discussions with staff. In particular, the use of final examinations to award 100% of all credit within a course, or the unavailability of grades from previously assessed coursework at the time of examination, were known to have a serious impact on student welfare. The subject should take account of these issues when considering the matter of assessment weighting and ensure they are appropriately balanced against both the pedagogical and administrative reasons for using examinations.

3.2.9. The Panel **commends** the **good practice** at Honours level where the Subject provides guidance on essay writing, makes available exemplars of assessed work and contextualises assessment criteria within the subject through practical exercises.

3.2.10. There was limited evidence of guidance on assessment criteria or technique at sub-honours level, with the exception of some input as part of Philosophy 1M. The Panel **recommends** that the good practice at Honours level (3.2.9) where the Subject provides guidance on essay writing, makes available exemplars of assessed work and contextualises assessment criteria within the subject be extended to the benefit of all students. This might be through the provision of lecture input at sub-honours level, through work in seminars, and through the use of the VLE to provide exemplars.

3.3. Feedback

3.3.1. The Subject had developed a sound approach to providing formative feedback as part of all coursework assessments. The Panel received positive comments from undergraduate and postgraduate students on the level of feedback provided on assessed pieces of work. The Subject operated a feed-forward system which provided formative feedback on how performance could be improved in the future and students were directed to relevant learning materials.

3.3.2. The Panel **commends** the Subject for the level of formative feedback it provides to students and its timely availability. It was clear that there had been a concerted response to NSS scores in this area, even though they were above the College and University averages. The Subject had also responded to student feedback and had moved to an online submission, checking, marking and feedback system using Turnitin. Students submitted their work electronically and received it back with annotations, again electronically. This system was used for all students except PGT (hard copies) and Level 1 students (hard *and* electronic copies). 100% of NSS (2013) respondents studying single Honours Philosophy agreed (definitely or mostly) that they had received detailed comments on their work, and 83% agreed that this feedback had been received promptly.

3.4. Achievement

3.4.1.   The Subject provided clear information on student achievement within the SER and the Panel found no reason to be concerned about levels of student achievement.

3.4.2.   It was noted that the number of students achieving first and upper second class degrees was slightly lower than in other subjects in the College of Arts, and the number achieving lower second and third class degrees was slightly higher. However, these were reported by the Subject as being comparable to levels of achievement at other institutions, in the study of Philosophy.

3.5.   Curriculum Design, Development and Content

3.5.1.   The Review Panel, guided by the views of the External Subject Specialist, **confirms** that the programmes offered by the School/Subject Area remain current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline, and practice in its application.

3.5.2.   The Panel noted the regret of the External Subject Specialist concerning the absence of Ancient Philosophy courses offered. The Subject acknowledged that this was unfortunate, especially given the history of the subject at Glasgow. The Subject did not have the expertise currently to offer courses in Ancient Philosophy although it was suggested there *was* an appetite for these types of courses. At present there was a greater demand for other courses and the staff recruitment decisions of the Subject were informed by that immediate demand and the capacity required to meet it.

3.5.3.   The Subject offered two 20-credit courses per year at Levels 1 and 2, one in each semester. Both Level 1 courses were designed to introduce students to a range of core philosophical issues and the specific skills required in the practice of the subject.

3.5.4.   Philosophy 1M introduced students to core issues within moral and political philosophy, whilst Philosophy 1K covered a range of historical and contemporary accounts of the nature of the mind, knowledge of the external world and other topics in metaphysics and epistemology. Level 2 courses built upon the courses delivered at Level 1, with courses on more advanced moral and political issues, and on 20th century metaphysics and epistemology.

3.5.5.   The Subject used familiar, pressing and important moral issues such as euthanasia, social justice and war, or problems relating to the nature of the mind, self or world to engage students' interest whilst encouraging them to approach these topics from a new, specifically philosophical perspective. Philosophy 1K also included a section on critical thinking that sought to inculcate the central skills of argument identification, analysis and evaluation. Building on this, a course on formal logic at Level 2 was designed to further support the development of good reasoning skills.

3.5.6.   The subject offered nine Junior Honours courses: History of Modern Philosophy, Philosophy of Language, Epistemology, Political Philosophy, Formal Logic, History of Moral Philosophy, Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics, and Moral Philosophy. Each course involved at least twenty-two contact hours, including at least eighteen lectures and four tutorials. The tutorials were in groups of six, and taught either by the lecturer or by another member of staff with relevant expertise. During the review, at the Key Staff Meeting, members of staff explained that the

pedagogical rationale for the small tutorial sizes at Junior Honours was that this approach supported the transition to more independent study at Senior Honours. A small ratio of staff to students and an interactive and supportive learning environment was believed to be important at Junior Honours in particular and underpinned confidence and capability within the discipline. Therefore, although the Subject recognised the resource intensive nature of the small tutorial sizes it was believed this was a good investment of staff time.

3.5.7. There was evidence of great potential for curricular choice at Senior Honours level, where the Subject aimed to provide students with a choice of between 10 and 15 courses each session. There were 39 courses which could be offered within the Subject, according to the course catalogue. The maximum that had been on offer in any one academic year was 17. Student feedback was used to help inform decisions about which courses should be offered although, as the Subject highlighted in the SER, the choice was necessarily limited by the expertise of staff employed within the Subject at the time. The focus of all Senior Honours courses was influenced by the research interests of academic staff.

3.5.8. Unusually, the Subject did not 'cap' Senior Honours course numbers and all students could choose any of the courses on offer, regardless of numbers. The Subject recognised that this did create issues in terms of equity of workload for those staff running popular courses, although the Subject took steps to rebalance this where possible.

3.5.9. Postgraduate taught (PGT) programmes differed in structure and content. The MLitt (Conversion) students undertook an Introduction to Analytical Philosophy course (40 credits), produced a Masters dissertation (60 credits) and chose four optional courses (each 20 credits) selected from Junior and Senior Honours options. The MLitt (General) students took the compulsory Philosophy Research Methods course (40 credits), a Masters Dissertation (60 credits) and selected four optional courses (20 credits each) from two core areas of analytic philosophy. Courses were offered in Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Mind, Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy and Political Philosophy and could be offered in other areas such as Epistemology, Logic, Aesthetics and Philosophy of Maths if there was student demand. .

3.5.10. As noted in the Subject SER, the curriculum had not been subject to a comprehensive review for over a decade, with the exception of some ongoing amendments. There had also been a limited updating of learning and teaching materials such as course reading lists. This lack of curricular review was attributed to the high workload of staff and the high staff to student ratio.

3.5.11. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject undertake a comprehensive review of the curriculum at all levels, as a full review has not been conducted within the last 10 years. Whilst the currency of curriculum content is not in question, the Subject should review the content of courses to ensure the continued coherence of programmes, including progression across levels. The Subject should contact and consult with the Academic Development Unit within the Learning and Teaching Centre for advice.[3] The Panel suggests allocating some dedicated time to undertake this review, such as a staff away day or similar. It is also important

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[3] For guidance on review see:
www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/goodpracticeresources/programmeandcoursedesignandreview/ (accessed 21.3.14)

that the Subject use the opportunity of review to address other recommendations dealt with in the review report in a coordinated way.

3.6. Student Recruitment

3.6.1.　Student numbers at Level 1 were viewed by the Subject as being satisfactory, at 502 for 2013/14. This was an increase of 29% on the previous academic year. When a longer term view was taken the student number was more consistently around 400 students at Level 1, which is historically low. The Subject suggested the increase in 2013/14 could be due to a larger intake in the College of Arts.

3.6.2.　Recent changes to the regulations within the College of Arts were discussed, as the Subject believed these had the potential to impact on the choice of students to study Philosophy as a Single Honours Master of Arts degree, and *was* having an impact on possible course choices at Level 1 and 2.

3.6.3.　A student who applied to study Single Honours Philosophy would be admitted to the College of Arts and required to take a minimum of 120 credits within the College across Levels 1 and 2, with at least 80 of those credits at Level 2 should they want to study Philosophy at Honours. Students who transfer to honours Philosophy from other Colleges require 80 credits from courses offered within the College of Arts, of which at least 40 credits should be at Level 2. Similarly, and for comparison, students admitted to the College of Social Sciences are required to take 160 credits within the College; either 120 credits at Level 1 and 40 credits at Level 2, or 80 credits at Level 1 and 80 credits at Level 2, should they want to study a single honours subject within that College.

Although the awards subject to these requirements are separate - M.A Honours and M.A Honours (Social Sciences) - the Panel noted the impact of these regulations on student choice and on the renowned flexibility of the Master of Arts Degree. A concrete example of the limitations was provided by the Subject whereby a student who might wish to take Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Levels 1 and 2 would not be able to progress to single Honours Philosophy, unless they had been previously admitted to the College of Social Sciences, and therefore had not chosen to study Philosophy. The ostensible effect of the credit requirements within the new regulations was to create opportunity for transfer from Social Sciences to Arts to study at Honours, and to limit potential transfers from Arts to Social Sciences. However, at Levels 1 and 2 there were also potential restrictions on the mix of courses which could be pursued across the Colleges and the impact of this may be to limit applications to Philosophy (and possibly other subjects in the College of Arts) as a Single Honours degree.

The Panel noted that there may be a strong rationale for the recent revision of College regulations which set down minimum credit which must be achieved by students within the relevant College for progression to Honours. For example, maintaining distinctions between entry requirements for each College may have been a concern. However, the Panel also recognised the impact regulatory changes at College level were having on student choice and the flexibility of the M.A at Glasgow. The Panel **recommends** that the University, the College of Arts and the College of Social Sciences consider whether the changes to the regulations, stipulating credit requirements within the Colleges at Level 1 and 2, are appropriately balanced against student choice and programme flexibility.

3.6.4. The Subject took part in open days, with both staff and students presenting to and meeting with potential applicants.

3.6.5. Postgraduate recruitment was a concern raised by the Subject in the SER. The student numbers on PGT programmes were particularly low with only 10 (FTE) students registered across both PGT programmes; 8 on the MLitt (Conversion) and 2 on the MLitt (General). Headcount was higher due to several students studying part time. The Subject indicated that there were problems in promoting postgraduate programmes as there was such a wide potential audience for Philosophy - this made targeted communications difficult.

3.6.6. In order to enhance recruitment to PGT programmes the Panel **recommends** that the Subject give further consideration to how and where the postgraduate study of Philosophy at Glasgow might be promoted. In particular it should consider the promotion of PGT Philosophy to students within other subjects at the University and in particular to students within the College of Arts. The subject should contact the Recruitment and International Office for advice.

3.6.7. The Subject suggested that its PGT programmes were critical to the recruitment of postgraduate research (PGR) students. Data available suggested that between 2003 and 2009 the conversion rate from PGT to PGR was approximately 22%. In the current academic year, closer to 40% of PGR students had previously undertaken a PGT programme within the Subject. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject consider the development of its other routes to the recruitment of PGR students and make efforts to enhance these. The external Panel Member made reference to the high standing of the academic staff within the Subject and suggested that the Subject should be able to recruit PGR students without heavy reliance on PGT to PGR conversion. The subject should contact the Recruitment and International Office for advice on recruitment.

3.6.8. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject consider further how it may collaborate with other subjects to jointly develop interdisciplinary courses. The Subject should consider where it may beneficially collaborate with other subjects, particularly in cognate areas such as Theological and Religious Studies and Classical Studies.

3.6.9. The Panel did note attempts by the Subject to collaborate with other Subject Areas within the University in the development and delivery of courses. These attempts to collaborate had initially been positively received but had for a number of reasons failed to come to fruition. The Subject suggested that there was little incentive for some Subjects to collaborate, due to the demand for their programmes and courses, despite the fact that a joint course might be attractive and indeed useful to students. The Panel **recommends** that the University consider how it might support and incentivise the development of joint courses and programmes across Subject Areas. It recognised that on occasion professional accreditation can limit potential for this kind of collaboration.

3.6.10. The Panel noted that a small number of postgraduate and undergraduate students had been unaware of, or did not appreciate the implications of, what was seen by them as the Subject's very strong focus on analytical Philosophy prior to recruitment. The Subject may want to consider how it communicates this focus when recruiting or interviewing students, so that expectations can be appropriately managed. There also seemed to some students, who had joined Philosophy through the University Access programmes, to be a disjuncture between study at Access and Level 1. The Subject may want to consider the progression and

curricular fit between these two programmes with colleagues in the Centre for Open Studies.

3.7. Student Progression, Retention and Support

3.7.1.   The Subject identified the retention and progression of students as a priority area for development and raised a number of concerns.

3.7.2.   The Subject felt there was a low retention rate from Level 1 to Level 2. Adjusted data, which took account of those taking Level 1 courses as an option in later stages of undergraduate study in other subjects, showed that the Subject had a retention rate of 50-62% between 2010-11 and 2013-14. This rate had increased year on year. The Subject had made efforts to address this issue through providing more information to Level 1 students, at lectures and on Moodle.

3.7.3.   Progression from Level 2 to Junior Honours was also a major concern for the Subject. The Subject suggested that the quality of the learning experience and the teaching at Levels 1 and 2 was a primary means by which recruitment rates to Honours could be improved. During the review, the Panel heard from a number of Honours students who had not originally intended to take the subject at Honours. However, they felt on the basis of their experiences at Level 1 and 2 that Philosophy was set apart by the quality of teaching, the support provided *by* and the accessibility *of* staff. These factors motivated them to change their original plans and study Philosophy at Honours. It was clear that the focus of the Subject on the quality of learning and teaching was noticed and appreciated by students and this was reflected in a number of discussions.

3.7.4.   The Panel **commends** the Subject on the excellent student centred learning environment, sense of community, and the pastoral and peer support available to students. The Panel was impressed by the level of praise that students had for the staff within the Subject. Undergraduate and postgraduate students felt that both staff and students were part of a Subject community and that staff were both approachable and passionate about their subject. The Subject used 'Reading Parties' to introduce students to one another and to staff, and a range of social activities helped to cement the sense of cohesion felt by students. The Subject is fortunate to have a very active and well organised Philosophy Society which is entirely independent of the Subject and University, but which no doubt adds value to the learning experience of students within the Subject. The Subject may want to consider setting down, or formalising in some way, the key elements which create the excellent environment for students so that any good practice could be identified and shared with others.

3.8. The Quality of Learning Opportunities

3.8.1.   Teaching in the Subject is generally through lectures, supplemented by small group tutorials. At sub-honours levels, each course comprised approximately 32 lectures and 10 tutorials; in Junior Honours, there were approximately 18-20 lectures per course and four tutorials (with six students in each); in Senior Honours, each course had a minimum of 16 lectures and four seminars (though in practice most courses had 18-20 lectures). Senior Honours courses tended to be research-led and built upon the core courses offered in Junior Honours.

3.8.2.   The Subject referred to two sources of evidence available for evaluating the quality of learning opportunities: (i) feedback, especially from student surveys and end-of-course questionnaires, and (ii) comparisons with the learning opportunities presented by philosophy departments in other Scottish institutions.

3.8.3.   The Panel agreed that when measured using student feedback the Subject offered learning opportunities of a very high standard. 100% of National Student Survey (NSS) respondents studying Single Honours Philosophy responded positively to the comment 'Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course' – one of only five Philosophy Departments/Subject Areas in the UK to achieve this, and the only example in Scotland of students giving an entirely positive response to this statement in NSS. Reponses to all other teaching related questions were extremely positive, the majority attracting a 100% positive response.

3.8.4.   End of course questionnaires distributed to students by the Subject also pointed to a positive regard for the quality of teaching within the Subject.

3.8.5.   The Review Panel **commends** the Subject on the high levels of engagement and commitment of all staff in the provision of high quality teaching and the creation of valuable learning opportunities for students. The passion which staff had for their subject was relayed to the Panel by a number of students and was also apparent in direct communications with staff themselves. The Panel was in little doubt that the engagement and commitment of staff was a major asset of the Subject, which students were aware of, and on which they also placed great value.

3.8.6.   The Subject suggested that a consistent request from students, received through feedback and in staff/student meetings, was for the provision of further course choices at Honours level. The Subject made a comparison between the number of choices offered by other Scottish institutions in comparison to their level of staffing and found that the ratio of course numbers to staff was higher at Glasgow than at any other Scottish institution. As a measure of the breadth of student choice at Honours the panel agreed that the Subject Area was delivering a great deal within the constraints of the staffing resources at its disposal, and clearly making an effort to respond to student requests.

3.8.7.   The Subject made reference in the Self Evaluation Report (SER) to a number of other approaches used to provide additional learning opportunities and support to students. These approaches included the extensive use of Moodle to provide support materials and relevant external sources of information, the provision of peer assisted learning opportunities for Logic students and the running of the reading parties mentioned earlier in this report. The reading parties in particular were deemed to be extremely popular and highly valued by students and staff alike.

3.8.8.   The Panel **commends** as **good practice** the Subject's use of reading parties. Students were clear that the reading parties were of great educational value and were not seen only as an opportunity to socialise or get to know other students and staff, although this was also clearly a benefit to all involved.

A reading party was held (the cost subsidised by the Subject) early in the Junior Honours year, when the Subject transported a number of staff to a rural location for two days. Talks were given by both students and staff. There was a walk, a quiz, and informal socialising. Students reported many benefits from the events to the Subject (for example, many of the talks given formed the core of students' fourth year dissertations). For most students, the reading party was also the first

time they had seen staff talk about philosophy with one another; they picked up on the collegial atmosphere between staff, and saw that it was possible to debate - vigorously - in an atmosphere of friendship and respect.

A further reading party was held in the second semester for Senior Honours students, at which they presented papers based on their dissertations or on material studied as part of their Senior Honours courses; this allowed them an opportunity to consolidate their knowledge in advance of the final examinations. A further reading party was held for postgraduate students which was well attended by staff and students alike.

3.9. Resources for Learning and Teaching

Staff to Student Ratio (SSR)

3.9.1.   The staff to student ratio (SSR) within the Subject was well above the University average of 15.8 at 26.8 and, according to the Subject, the highest in the School of Humanities. The Subject highlighted how this impacted not only on learning and teaching activity but on the administrative responsibilities held by academic staff. A further pressure on resource was the focus on securing external funding through research. Whilst the Subject was supportive of staff pursuing grants it was highlighted that temporary replacements for full-time staff engaged in research activities could not reasonably be expected to take on all of the respective administrative responsibilities of more senior colleagues. The issue of the SSR within the subject had been raised at the time of the Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DPTLA) Review, which took place in 2007. At that point the SSR stood at approximately 30; therefore whilst progress had been made since that time it had been limited, as the current SSR of 26.8 demonstrated. Certain areas of expertise within the discipline were disproportionately affected by a high SSR, for example moral and political Philosophy courses operated under an effective SSR of 40, although a forthcoming appointment in this area would reduce this.

3.9.2.   The Panel **recommends** that the Subject, in liaison with the School of Humanities, consider how further progress might be made in reducing the staff to student ratio within the Subject Area. However, the Panel did note that the high numbers of students at Level 1 would have had a significant and negative impact on the SSR, even though the majority of teaching and assessment at that level was provided by Graduate Teaching Assistants.

Staff Workload Model

3.9.3.   At the time of the review there was no formalised workload model available within the Subject. The College of Arts was in the process of developing guidance. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject and/or School develop an explicit model and ensure this is made available to staff to promote equity and transparency. The Panel was of the view that whilst the College guidance would be useful it allowed for a significant margin of discretion at School and Subject level. Therefore, the Subject should clearly outline to staff how the guidance will be applied.

Lecture Accommodation

3.9.4.   Lecture sizes were largest at Level 1 and 2. Lectures for Levels 1 & 2 were accommodated in various lecture theatres across the campus.   The subject reported that there had been a noticeable deterioration in the provision of teaching space over recent years. Until recently the subject was allocated the same room every day for large Level 1 & 2 lectures. In the second semester of 2013/14 some courses, involving lectures over 4 days per week, were forced to hold lectures in a different location every day. In one case enrolment had to be closed to students because of an unavailability of rooms sufficient to house student numbers.

3.9.5.   The Panel **recommends** that the accommodation used for large Level 1 and 2 lectures in Philosophy be reviewed. Venues for these lectures should be sufficient to cope with the student numbers involved.   Ideally there should not be a different location for every lecture as this creates complexity for staff and students. The Subject had previously made attempts to rectify this problem and recognised the stress placed on accommodation resources generally across the University.

3.9.6.   The Panel was encouraged to hear of the positive impact of a dedicated Student Common Room within the Oakfield Avenue building. Students explained how having a relaxed space enabled peer relationships to develop and allowed for informal discussion.

3.9.7.   The Panel **recommends** that the Subject consider the possibility and resource implications of making a study space available to postgraduate students.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

3.9.8.   The subject relies extremely heavily on Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), especially to deliver nearly all of the small-group teaching and marking for Level 1 courses.   The Subject identified that the dedicated budget allocated from the School of Humanities, which it makes available from its respective allocation of resources from the College of Arts, was not sufficient to maintain the level of GTA provision required. The Subject had, in previous years, overspent. However, this was no longer an option and the 'Incentivisation Scheme' which operated within the College of Arts was being used to fund GTA provision. Given that the availability of this funding stream could not be guaranteed, an essential resource of the Subject (the availability of GTAs) was placed in a vulnerable position. Any curtailment of GTA provision beyond its current level would mean that the learning and teaching activities of the Subject would become untenable.

3.9.9.   The Panel shared the concerns of the Subject that the current tutorial sizes at Levels 1 and 2 were, from a practical perspective, too large. Those teaching in small groups – normally Graduate Teaching Assistants – described to the Panel the difficulties large tutorial groups presented in terms of providing a supportive

learning environment. Opportunities for students to engage in the type of teaching, discussion and debate essential to progress in a subject such as Philosophy had become limited due to the large numbers. At Levels 1 and 2, the Subject were aiming for 15 students per tutorial. This had increased in some cases and 17 was the standard size in the 1M groups. One of the 2M groups had 19 students. The Subject highlighted that, by contrast, History and English Literature had tutorial groups of 12 at both Levels 1 and 2.

3.9.10. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject, together with the School of Humanities and the College of Arts, consider what options are available to secure an adequate, consistent and dedicated budget for the provision of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), conducts a risk assessment relating to the continued availability of GTAs and, if necessary, put in place sufficient mechanisms to minimise the risk of over-reliance upon GTAs. In undertaking this the Subject is encouraged to reflect on the College of Arts policy on the role of GTAs.

3.9.11. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject, in liaison with Human Resources (HR), review the current individual contractual arrangements in place for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). This review should take into account guidance from HR on the point at which GTAs should be placed on fractional contracts of employment, rather than zero hours or atypical contracts. The Subject should liaise with GTAs on this issue, seeking their views and suggestions. It was the view of the Panel that the Subject was under the false impression that the total worked hours of any GTAs should be limited so as not to exceed a specified earnings cap – whereas Corporate Human Resources had clarified that this was not the current University policy. The priority was to ensure that workers were on the most appropriate type of contract.

3.9.12. The Panel **recommends** that the College HR Manager should clarify with Corporate HR the position on 'earnings caps' and ensure this position is effectively communicated to Schools and Subjects.

3.9.13. The Panel **recommends** that the amount of training formally provided to Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), and embedded in the policies and processes of the Subject, properly reflects the guidance issued by the Learning and Teaching Centre. A minimum of two half-day training opportunities should be provided to hourly paid teaching staff. The Panel did recognise that the Subject provided informal support and guidance to GTAs and some more formal training and mentoring through observations and feedback.

Administrative Support

3.9.14. The Subject raised concerns, which were reemphasised at the key staff meeting during the review visit, that the reorganisation and relocation of administrative functions and staffing were having a detrimental impact on the student experience and on the time used by academic staff to resolve administrative issues. Members of staff suggested they had to deal with enquiries from students which in the past would have been dealt with by members of administrative staff located within the Oakfield Avenue building. Transportation of exam scripts and other documents between Oakfield Avenue and the School's administrative centre on University Avenue was being undertaken by members of teaching staff including GTAs, with time and workload implications. There was also concern that communications between staff and administrators had become increasingly difficult due to a lack of face-to-face and informal contact.

3.9.15. The Panel noted the concerns of the Head of School Administration about securing effective administrative support for a large number of academics and students with limited resources and staffing. It was suggested that the colocation of School administrative staff to University Gardens had a number of efficiency benefits and also ensured that staff coordinated their work and could communicate effectively.

3.9.16. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject continue to liaise with the Head of School Administration on these issues and suggests that options to alleviate issues created at Subject level be explored in further detail. The situation should also be reviewed in light of the forthcoming appointment of 2 additional members of administrative staff at School level.

4.   Maintaining the Standards of Awards

4.1.1.   The Panel had a number of concerns in this area, particularly around the use of the Programme Information Process (PIP), and was concerned that a number of courses and programmes had not been subject to the appropriate approval processes at College level or by the Academic Standards Committee.

4.1.2.   There were programmes being delivered which at the time of review, according to available specifications and based on discussions with the Subject, did not meet the relevant credit requirements leading to the specified University Award. The MLitt Conversion programme was in part comprised of 80 credits of courses (4 x 20 credits) at Honours level, with no formal differentiation in terms of the level of the learning outcomes or assessment. Therefore only 100 credits of the MLitt Conversion programme were at SCQF Level 11, rather than the requisite 150. Whilst the Subject stated that students undertaking the Honours options as part of the MLitt Conversion were assessed to a higher standard, there was no formal evidence of differentiation of assessment. It became apparent after the Review visit that transcripts for students who have been awarded the MLitt Conversion show that the courses undertaken do not meet the requirements of the award of MLitt. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject, as a matter of urgency and alongside the recommendation at 3.1.5, develop formalised courses, approved through PIP, which have appropriate ILOs at SCQF level 11 and appropriate assessment to form part of the MLitt Conversion programme. Whilst it is acceptable for MLitt students to share teaching with Honours students they must be enrolled on courses at the appropriate level and with an appropriate credit value to ensure that the requirements for the award of MLitt are met.

4.1.3.   The Panel **recommends** that alongside a curriculum review the Subject ensure all programmes and course specifications are current and complete, and that all courses are detailed in full through the Programme Information Process (PIP) and are therefore included in the course catalogue. No programme specifications were available online for any of the current taught postgraduate programmes. Programmes were, however, showing in MyCampus and appearing on student transcripts perhaps indicating that the official approval process had not been followed correctly. The Panel **recommends** that the Academic Standards Committee explore whether any action is required to ensure that all course and programme specifications are complete and that all courses and programmes are subject to the proper approval processes.

4.1.4.   The Panel was content that the Subject's use of assessment, internal moderation processes and External Examiners was effective in securing the standards of awards, notwithstanding the comments at 4.1.1 – 3.

5. Assuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Students' Learning Experience

5.1.1. The Subject was very responsive to the comments and views of students and was proactive in using a number of methods to collect information on how the student learning experience could be improved.

5.1.2. The use of questionnaires was widespread at all levels and for both individual courses and complete programmes. The Subject also made good use of NSS data to focus its efforts in enhancing the student experience.

5.1.3. Students were invited as a matter of course to the Subject Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC), convened by the Director of Learning and Teaching. The LTC was the only committee considering student issues at a subject or programme level; there was no other staff/student committee. According to the SER there were a sufficient number of students who attended course specific meetings, and many course specific issues could be dealt with there. Any matters arising at course level that had a wider relevance could be brought to the LTC as needed.

5.1.4. The Panel recognises that students were satisfied with this approach, but would encourage the Subject to review whether a separate staff/student committee might be established. The Subject should consider the Guidelines on the Operation of Staff-Student Liaison Committees. Another advantage of having a dedicated committee may be that, with more time available, what were previously considered course specific issues could be discussed in the round and therefore raise awareness of any common trends which might effectively be addressed at programme or subject level. Students would also be afforded the opportunity to chair meetings.

5.1.5. The Panel recognised the high levels of informal communication and feedback between postgraduate students and staff.

5.1.6. The Panel noted the Subject's intention to explore ways to inform students more quickly of responses to student feedback and encourages the Subject to pursue this. The Panel suggests that the Subject consider using Student Voice as widely as possible for this purpose.

6. Perceived Strengths and Areas for Improvement in Learning and Teaching (referencing both good practice and recommendations for improvement)

6.1. Summary of Strengths/Good Practice

- High levels of engagement and commitment from all staff.

- High quality learning and teaching.

- The Subject's use of reading parties was identified as good practice.

- Good practice at Honours level where the Subject provides guidance on essay writing, makes available exemplars of assessed work and contextualises assessment criteria within the subject through practical exercises.

- Excellent student centred learning environment.

- High levels of detailed and timely formative feedback was provided to students.

- A strong sense of cohesion and community within the Subject Area.

- Good pastoral and peer support available to students.

- An active, well organised Philosophy Society which is entirely independent of the Subject and University, but which no doubt adds value to the learning experience of students within the Subject.

- A high quality, reflective Self Evaluation Report (SER) which was developed in consultation with staff and students.

6.2. Areas for Improvement

- Setting and maintaining the standards of awards.

- Consistent use of University systems for course design and approval should be ensured.

- A review of the current curriculum across all levels is required.

- More frequent coordinated review of the curriculum is required in the future.

- The quality, availability and awareness of intended learning outcomes (ILOs) should be improved.

- The staff to student ratio (SSR) is high.

- The balance of undergraduate assessments, particularly at Honours is heavily weighted towards examination.

- Only limited evidence of guidance on assessment criteria or technique at sub-honours level.

- Awareness of graduate attributes and employability developed through the study of Philosophy should be improved.

- The current accommodation arrangements for Level 1 and 2 lectures are unsatisfactory.

- The provision of Graduate Teaching Assistants should be placed on more certain terms financially.

- More effective advertising of PGT programmes is needed.

- Diverse routes to the recruitment of PGR students should be explored.

- Collaboration on joint course development with other subjects should be considered.

- Formal training for GTAs should be embedded in policy and process.

6.3. Commendations

Commendation 1

The Review Panel **commends** the Subject on the high levels of engagement and commitment of all staff to the provision of high quality teaching and the creation of valuable learning opportunities for students. The passion which staff had for their subject was relayed to the Panel by a number of students and was also apparent in direct communications with staff themselves. The Panel was in little doubt that the engagement and commitment of staff was a major asset of the Subject, which students were aware of, and on which they also placed great value. *[Paragraph 3.8.5]*

Commendation 2

The Panel **commends** as **good practice** the Subject's use of reading parties. Students were clear that the reading parties were of great educational value and were not seen only as an opportunity to socialise or get to know other students and staff, although this was also clearly a benefit to all involved. *[Paragraph 3.8.8]*

Commendation 3

The Panel **commends** the **good practice** at Honours level where the Subject provides guidance on essay writing, makes available exemplars of assessed work and contextualises assessment criteria through practical exercises. *[Paragraph 3.2.9]*

Commendation 4 (3.7.4)

The Panel **commends** the Subject on the excellent student centred learning environment, sense of community, and the pastoral and peer support available to students. The Panel was impressed by the level of praise that students had for the staff within the Subject. Undergraduate and postgraduate students believed that they felt both staff and students were part of a Subject community and that staff were both approachable and passionate about their subject. The Subject used 'Reading Parties' to introduce students to one another and to staff, and a range of social activities helped to cement the sense of cohesion felt by students. The Subject is fortunate to have a very active and well organised Philosophy Society which is entirely independent of the Subject and University, but which no doubt adds value to the learning experience of students within the Subject. The Subject may want to consider setting down, or formalising in some way, the key elements which create the excellent environment for students so that any good practice could be identified and shared with others. *[Paragraph 3.7.4]*

Commendation 5

The Panel **commends** the Subject on the quality of the Self Evaluation Report (SER) and on the way that staff and students were engaged in its development and in the wider Periodic Subject Review. Over the course of the review staff members explained that whilst the majority of the SER had been written and edited by a small team of key staff members there had been Subject wide consultation and opportunities for input. The Periodic Subject review had been discussed at the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (also the Subject Learning and Teaching Committee) and students had been made aware of the review on Moodle and had

been invited via email to attend meetings that took place during the review visit. *[Paragraph 1.2.3]*

Commendation 6

The Panel **commends** the Subject for the level of formative feedback it provides to students and its timely availability. It was clear that there had been a concerted response to NSS scores in this area, which were above the College and University averages, but lower than the scores in other areas of the survey for Philosophy. The Subject had also responded to student feedback and had moved to an online submission, checking, marking and feedback system using Turnitin. *[Paragraph 3.3.2]*

6.4. Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject, as a matter of urgency and alongside the recommendation at 3.1.5, develop formalised courses, approved through PIP, which have appropriate ILOs at SCQF level 11 and appropriate assessment to form part of the MLitt Conversion programme. Whilst it is acceptable for MLitt students to share teaching with Honours students they must be enrolled on courses at the appropriate level and with an appropriate credit value to ensure that the requirements for the award of MLitt are met. *[Paragraph 4.1.2]*

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

For information: **Assistant Director, Senate Office, Convener of College Board of Studies, Dean of Graduate Studies .**

Recommendation 2

The Panel **recommends** that alongside a curriculum review the Subject ensure all programmes and course specifications are current and complete, and that all courses are detailed in full through the Programme Information Process (PIP) and are therefore included in the course catalogue. No programme specifications were available online for any of the current taught postgraduate programmes. Programmes were, however, showing in MyCampus and appearing on student transcripts perhaps indicating that the official approval process had not been followed correctly. The Panel **recommends** that the Academic Standards Committee explore whether any action is required to ensure that all course and programme specifications are complete and that all courses and programmes are subject to the proper approval processes. *[Paragraph 4.1.3]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject, Senate Office, Convener of ASC, Clerk of ASC**

For information: **Convener of College Board of Studies, Dean of Graduate Studies**

Recommendation 3

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject undertake a comprehensive review of the curriculum at all levels, as a full review has not been conducted within the last 10 years. Whilst the currency of curriculum content is not in question, the Subject should review the content of courses to ensure the continued coherence of programmes, including progression across levels. The Subject should contact and consult with the Academic Development Unit within the Learning and Teaching Centre for advice.[4] The Panel suggests allocating some dedicated time to undertake this review, such as a staff away day or similar. It is also important that the Subject use the opportunity of review to address other recommendations dealt with in the review report in a coordinated way. *[Paragraph 3.5.11]*

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

For information: **Academic Development Unit**

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[4] For guidance on review see:
www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/goodpracticeresources/programmeandcoursedesignandreview/ (accessed 21.3.14)

Recommendation 4

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject undertake (as a matter of urgency with regard to the MLitt Conversion) a comprehensive review of all ILOs at programme and course level to ensure that:

- they are consistent with both programme and course level aims;

- ILOs are consistent with University guidance on ILO structure, language and subsequently with the principle of constructive alignment;

- ILOs are appropriate to the intended level of study and the corresponding SCQF Level.

This review of ILOs should be undertaken as part of a wider curriculum review, which is addressed separately in a later recommendation at 3.5.11. *[Paragraph 3.1.5]*

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

For information: **Academic Development Unit**

Recommendation 5

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject review the programme aims of the MLitt Philosophy (General) and MLitt Philosophy (Conversion) programmes to ensure that these are clearly explained and available. It was suggested by the Panel that some of the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) from the MLitt programmes may be better suited as programme *aims. [Paragraph 2.1.3]*

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

For information: **Academic Development Unit**

Recommendation 6

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject consider how all ILOs can be made available to students, and how the Subject might raise awareness of them, so that students understand what they are expected to demonstrate at assessment. *[Paragraph 6.1.6]*

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

Recommendation 7

The Subject commented, within the SER, on student concerns around the weighting of assessment methods. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject reconsider the balance of the assessment methods used and whether there is merit in reducing the amount of credit awarded on the basis of assessment by examination, particularly at Honours. The Subject should explore the balance of assessment methods used in cognate subjects to determine current practice in other parts of the University. *[Paragraph 3.2.7]*

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

Recommendation 8

There was limited evidence of guidance on assessment criteria or technique at sub-honours level, with the exception of some input as part of Philosophy 1M. The

Panel **recommends** that the good practice at Honours level (3.2.9) where the Subject provides guidance on essay writing, makes available exemplars of assessed work and contextualises assessment criteria within the subject be extended to the benefit of all students. This might be through the provision of lecture input at sub-honours level, through work in seminars, and through the use of the VLE to provide exemplars. *[Paragraph 3.2.10]*

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

Recommendation 9

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject consider how awareness could be raised of the contribution the study of Philosophy makes to the development of Graduate Attributes and employability skills. This should include consideration of providing input to students studying at all levels on the relevance of uniquely philosophical skills, and on the value of these skills in other contexts. The Panel acknowledges that the Subject had recognised the importance of this area in the SER and welcomes their plans to offer further Philosophy specific guidance to students. It also encourages the Subject to continue signposting external sources of information to students. *[Paragraph 2.2.3]*

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

Recommendation 10

The Panel noted that there may be a strong rationale for the recent revision of College regulations which set down minimum credit which must be achieved by students within the relevant College for progression to Honours. For example, maintaining distinctions between entry requirements for each College may have been a concern. However, the Panel also recognised the impact regulatory changes at College level were having on student choice and the flexibility of the M.A at Glasgow. The Panel **recommends** that the University, the College of Arts and the College of Social Sciences consider whether the changes to the regulations, stipulating credit requirements within the Colleges at Level 1 and 2, are appropriately balanced against student choice and programme flexibility. *[Paragraph 3.6.3]*

For the attention of: **Director of Senate Office, Head of College of Arts, Head of College of Social Sciences**

Recommendation 11

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject in liaison with the School of Humanities consider how further progress may be made in reducing the student to staff ratio within the Subject Area. *[Paragraph 3.9.2]*

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

For information: **Head of College**

Recommendation 12

The Panel **recommends** that the accommodation used for large Level 1 and 2 lectures in Philosophy be reviewed. Venues for these lectures should be sufficient to cope with the student numbers involved.   Ideally there should not be a different location for every lecture as this creates complexity for staff and students. The Subject had previously made attempts to rectify this problem and recognised

the stress placed on accommodation resources generally across the University. *[Paragraph 3.9.5]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject, Director, Estates and Buildings (Timetabling)**

Recommendation 13

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject, together with the School of Humanities and the College of Arts, consider what options are available to secure an adequate, consistent and dedicated budget for the provision of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), conducts a risk assessment relating to the continued availability of GTAs and, if necessary, put in place sufficient mechanisms to minimise the risk of over-reliance upon GTAs. In undertaking this the Subject is encouraged to reflect on the College of Arts policy on the role of GTAs. *[Paragraph 3.9.10]*

For the attention of: **Head of College**

For information: **Head of Subject, Head of School**

Recommendation 14

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject, in liaison with Human Resources (HR), review the current individual contractual arrangements in place for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). This review should take into account guidance from HR on the point at which GTAs should be placed on fractional contracts of employment, rather than zero hours or atypical contracts. The Subject should liaise with GTAs on this issue, seeking their views and suggestions. It was the view of the Panel that the Subject was under the false impression that the total worked hours of any GTAs should be limited so as not to exceed a specified earnings cap – whereas Corporate Human Resources had clarified that this was not the current University policy. The priority was to ensure that workers were on the most appropriate type of contract. *[Paragraph 3.9.11]*

For the attention of: **Head of Subject, Head of School, College HR Manager**

Recommendation 15

The Panel **recommends** that the College HR Manager should clarify with Corporate HR the position on 'earnings caps' and ensure this position is effectively communicated to Schools and Subjects. *[Paragraph 3.9.12]*

For the attention of: **College HR Manager**

Recommendation 16

In order to enhance recruitment to PGT programmes the Panel **recommends** that the Subject give further consideration to how and to whom the postgraduate study of Philosophy at Glasgow might be promoted. In particular it should consider the promotion of PGT Philosophy to students within other subjects at the University and in particular to students within the College of Arts. The subject should contact the Recruitment and International Office for advice. *[Paragraph 3.6.6]*

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

Recommendation 17

The Subject suggested that its PGT programmes were critical to the recruitment of postgraduate research (PGR) students. The Panel **recommends** that the Subject consider the development of its other routes to the recruitment of PGR students and make efforts to enhance these. The subject should contact the Recruitment and International Office for advice on recruitment. *[Paragraph 3.6.7]*

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

Recommendation 18

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject consider how it may collaborate with other subjects to jointly develop interdisciplinary courses. The Subject should consider where it may beneficially collaborate with other subjects, particularly in cognate areas such as Theological and Religious Studies and Classical Studies. *[Paragraph 3.6.8]*

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

Recommendation 19

The Panel did note attempts by the Subject to collaborate with other Subject Areas within the University in the development and delivery of courses. These attempts to collaborate had initially been positively received but had for a number of reasons failed to come to fruition. The Subject suggested that there was little incentive for some Subjects to collaborate, due to the demand for their programmes and courses, despite the fact that a joint course might be attractive and indeed useful to students. The Panel **recommends** that the University consider how it might support and incentivise the development of joint courses and programmes across Subject Areas. It recognised that on occasion professional accreditation can limit potential for this kind of collaboration. *[Paragraph 3.6.9]*

For the attention of: **Senate Office, Vice Principal (Learning and Teaching)**

Recommendation 20

The Panel **recommends** that the amount of training formally provided to Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), and embedded in the policies and processes of the Subject, properly reflects the guidance issued by the Learning and Teaching Centre. A minimum of two half-day training opportunities should be provided to hourly paid teaching staff. The Panel did recognise that the Subject provided informal support and guidance to GTAs and some more formal training and mentoring through observations and feedback. *[Paragraph 3.9.13]*

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

For information: **Academic Development Unit**

Recommendation 21

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject continue to liaise with the Head of School Administration on the issue of the location of administrative staff and suggests that options to alleviate issues created at a Subject level be explored in further detail. The situation should also be reviewed in light of the forthcoming

appointment of 2 additional members of administrative staff at School level. *[Paragraph 3.9.16]*

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

For information: **Head of School Administration, College Secretary**

Recommendation 22

The Panel **recommends** that the Subject consider the possibility and resource implications of making a study space available to postgraduate students. *[Paragraph 3.9.7]*

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