

**UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**

**Academic Standards Committee – Summer Powers 2015**

**Periodic Subject Review: Report of the Review of Urban Studies  
held on 4 and 5 March 2015**

**Mrs Ruth Cole, Clerk to the Review Panel**

**Review Panel:**

Professor John Briggs	Clerk of Senate and Vice Principal, Convener
Professor Alex Marsh	University of Bristol, External Subject Specialist
Dr Jane MacKenzie	Academic Development Unit, Learning and Teaching Centre
Ms Jess McGrellis	Students' Representative Council, Student Panel member
Professor Andrew Cumbers	Adam Smith Business School, Cognate member
Professor George Baillie	Institute of Cardiovascular and Medical Sciences, Senate Assessor on Court
Mrs Ruth Cole	Senate Office, Clerk to the Panel

**1. Introduction**

*Urban Studies: Background information*

- 1.1 Urban Studies is located in the College of Social Sciences, as one of five subject areas in the School of Social and Political Sciences.
- 1.2 The subject area offers an undergraduate degree in Social and Public Policy,<sup>1</sup> and a number of postgraduate programmes in Public Policy, Housing, Planning and Real Estate.
- 1.3 The majority of postgraduate taught provision is professionally accredited.
- 1.4 In the REF 2014, Urban Studies was ranked joint first in the UK. The National Student Survey (NSS) 2014 also placed the Public Policy degree joint top in the UK, with an overall satisfaction rating of 96%. The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2014 recorded an overall satisfaction rate of 80%.
- 1.5 The majority of Urban Studies staff are based in a terrace of Edwardian houses in Bute Gardens at the Gilmorehill campus. A range of teaching accommodation across the campus is allocated for the different programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2014-15 the previous MA (Soc Sci) (Hons) Public Policy was re-named MA (Soc Sci) (Hons) Social and Public Policy. The degree is referred to as Social and Public Policy throughout this report.

1.6 Student numbers for 2014-15 are as follows:

<b>Students</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>FTE</b>
Level 1		223
Level 2		50
Junior Single Honours	12	12
Junior Joint Honours	8	4
Senior Single Honours	3	3
Senior Joint Honours	13	7
Undergraduate Total		299
Postgraduate Taught	155	

*Staffing numbers*

1.7 Urban Studies has 20.6 FTE teaching and research staff. Ten further Urban Studies researchers undertake some teaching.

*Range of provision*

1.8 The Review Panel considered the following range of provision offered by Urban Studies:

*Undergraduate*

MA (Social Sciences) (Hons) Social and Public Policy  
 MA (Social Sciences) (Hons) Social and Public Policy joint with another subject

*Postgraduate*

MSc City & Regional Planning  
 MSc City Planning & Regeneration  
 MSc City Planning and Real Estate Development  
 MSc International Planning Studies  
 MSc International Real Estate  
 MSc International Real Estate and Management  
 MSc Real Estate  
 MSc Real Estate and Regeneration  
 MSc/PGDip Housing Studies  
 MSc Public and Urban Policy  
 MSc Public Policy and Management [with service teaching from Management]  
 MSc in Urban Transport  
 MRes in Public Policy Research  
 MRes in Urban Policy Research

*Context of current PSR*

- 1.9 The previous review of Urban Studies was the Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DPTLA) review, which took place in March 2010. The review had concluded that Urban Studies provided high quality teaching to students from a diverse range of experiences and backgrounds. A particular feature of the review was the recent expansion in postgraduate provision.

*Self Evaluation Report*

- 1.10 The Self Evaluation Report (SER) for the current review was prepared by the two Heads of Subject and the Director of the Undergraduate Programme. Staff were invited to reflect on the key strengths and weaknesses of the subject area, and those members of staff who met with the Review Panel confirmed that they had all had the opportunity to see the draft SER and provide comments. Students were consulted in a number of ways with a focus on seeking their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the subject area.
- 1.11 The Review Panel considered the SER to be exemplary: it effectively highlighted examples of innovative practice and was reflective, openly acknowledging issues of on-going challenge and identifying areas for further enhancement. The Panel **commends** this.

*Review visit*

- 1.12 During the one and a half day visit (4-5 March 2015) the Review Panel met with: The College Dean (Learning & Teaching) Dr Moira Fischbacher-Smith; the Head of the School of Social and Political Sciences, Professor Chris Carman; the two Heads of Subject, Professor Moira Munro (Teaching) and Professor Ya Ping Wang (Management). The Panel also met with 19 members of Urban Studies staff (including 3 early career staff), 3 Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), 5 postgraduate students and 4 undergraduate (pre-Honours) students. It was regrettable that no Honours students attended the meeting with the Panel as this meant that the Panel was unable to explore students' experiences of the latter stages of their undergraduate study at Glasgow.

## **2. Context and Strategy**

- 2.1 The Review Panel identified two of the most prominent features of the PSR to be:
- the wide-ranging review undertaken by Urban Studies of its postgraduate and undergraduate provision in 2012 and 2013 respectively; and
  - the significant work underway in connection with a number of international collaborative teaching initiatives.

In the course of the review, the Panel also noted a number of issues related to Learning and Teaching which were to some extent inter-related and would benefit from an over-arching vision. (These issues are discussed in detail in the report.) The Review Panel therefore **recommends** that, on publication of the University's Learning & Teaching Strategy 2015-2020, Urban Studies develop a coherent learning and teaching strategy, articulating its vision for undergraduate and postgraduate provision, and addressing such issues as widening access, internationalisation, and their recruitment strategy both to the University and to the latter stages of the undergraduate programme.

*Relationship between School and Subject area*

- 2.2 The Review Panel discussed with the Head of School the relationship between the School and Subject. Information flow relies largely on the standard committee structures, including the School Learning and Teaching Committee and the MA

(Social Sciences) Teaching Committee. The Head of School receives committee minutes from meetings held at the subject level in order to keep abreast of current issues.

- 2.3 The Review Panel explored with the Head of School the extent to which different subject areas saw themselves as having distinct identities. Various ways of softening the divisions were being considered, such as the development of courses with input from more than one subject area and students being allocated dissertation supervisors from outwith their own subject area.

*Dissemination of good practice*

- 2.4 The Review Panel was impressed by the innovative approaches to learning and teaching in Urban Studies, pursued particularly by a number of key staff. It was also noted that Urban Studies had previously delivered some of its postgraduate teaching in concentrated blocks and this had left a legacy of a range of teaching approaches. The Panel was interested to know how knowledge about such practice was disseminated. The Head of School referred to the School's Learning & Teaching Committee being the main mechanism for dissemination through the representatives of the different subject areas in the School. There was also now a standing item on the agenda of School Executive meetings for consideration of aspects of learning and teaching, along with discussions of student feedback.
- 2.5 At the meeting with key staff, the Review Panel heard about the plan to introduce an Urban Studies learning and teaching forum as Urban Studies management and staff meetings did not allow sufficient time for discussion of learning and teaching practices. The Head of Subject (Teaching) observed that in the course of drawing together the SER she had discovered innovative approaches to teaching of which she had previously been unaware. Staff who met with the Panel advised that there was much informal sharing of good practice through shared teaching, and their experience was that there was a sense of collegiality in the conversations and the sharing of ideas. There was also a strong record of dissemination beyond the subject area (e.g. through contributions at the University Learning & Teaching conferences) as well as at conferences outwith the University.
- 2.6 The early career staff who met with the Review Panel spoke about the sharing of good practice through contacts with subject area colleagues, but aired some concern about the informal nature of this. They noted that they would value the introduction of a more formal mechanism. This view was echoed by the GTAs. The early career staff also said that they would value the opportunity for peer observation of teaching. This had been identified in the SER as a possible area for future development. Although they attended formal scheduled meetings, early career staff located outwith Bute Gardens felt that they could be missing out on the informal contacts and the general collegiality of Urban Studies.
- 2.7 The Review Panel **recommends** that Urban Studies institute a formal approach to the dissemination of good practice through the proposed Learning and Teaching Forum and develop other mechanisms to develop and promote a broad-based culture of teaching enhancement.

### **3. Enhancing the Student Experience**

#### **3.1 Admissions, Retention and Success**

##### *Admissions*

- 3.1.1 The SER highlighted the challenge of attracting applicants to Social and Public Policy, as the subject was not taught in schools. This was one of the issues addressed in the recent review (see para 4.1.1 below). One change arising from that review was the re-naming of the degree from Public Policy to Social and Public Policy, the hope being that the new title would be better understood, and more attractive to applicants. The subject area was now working with Modern Studies sub-departments in schools to raise awareness of the degree. The Panel also heard that a number of recruitment events would be taking place later in the year. There had been an increase in the number of first years taking Social and Public Policy in 2014-15. In part this was due to a number of students on the re-structured Master of Education (with Teaching Qualification) being required to take options from the School of Social and Political Sciences, but staff also believed that the recent marketing work had had an impact.
- 3.1.2 The Review Panel heard from the postgraduate students a range of reasons for their having chosen to study at Glasgow. Factors mentioned included accreditation, the international dimension to programmes, the flexibility which allowed them to tailor their programme of study, cost, and the opportunity to visit and speak to a member of staff before the start of the programme.

##### *Number of Honours students*

- 3.1.3 The Review Panel explored the issue of undergraduate numbers dropping off sharply from first year to second year and then from second year to Honours. In 2014-15 there were only 20 and 16 students in Junior Honours and Senior Honours respectively (combined number for single and joint Honours). The Head of Subject (Teaching) spoke about how most students came to the Urban Studies courses as Politics or Sociology students and that it was hard to shift that identity. For most of the students in first year, Social and Public Policy was their third subject so there would be a low expectation that they would carry on into second year or Honours. At the time of the review visit, information sessions about taking Social and Public Policy to Honours were imminent. The drop-off in numbers after first year was therefore not an issue of poor retention, but rather of students not altering their initial intentions.
- 3.1.4 Undergraduate students who met with the Panel spoke about not having a clear understanding of what Public Policy was before they started the course, but they were impressed by the enthusiastic teaching, the applied nature of the subject and they particularly enjoyed the fieldwork. When asked about what would influence their choice of Honours subjects, the students referred to the personal and supportive approach of the teaching staff. They mentioned that they had had almost no contact with current Social and Public Policy Honours students and that such contact would have been very helpful in finding out about taking the subject to Honours degree level.

- 3.1.5 It was noted that there was now greater flexibility allowing students who took Public Policy for the first time in second year to progress to Honours if they achieved an A or B grade, though the undergraduate students who met with the Review Panel were not all aware of this.
- 3.1.6 From the 2015-16 session, the number of students on Honours courses would be increased with the arrival of an incoming cohort from China (see para 6.1 below). Staff welcomed this as they believed that having a larger number of students would enrich the Honours programme.
- 3.1.7 The Head of Subject (Teaching) explained that in reviewing the undergraduate programme there had been discussion with current students about the identity of the degree and its name. In 2014-15 there had been a rise in the number of students registering for the new second year courses (2013-14: 2A 45; 2B 44; 2014-15: 2A 48; 2B 52), and it was hoped that this would continue in future years. In the course of the PSR visit the Review Panel heard positive feedback about the way that the new first year courses had been received and it was hoped that this might have an impact on the number of students choosing to continue with the subject. The Head of Subject (Teaching) also noted that they planned to explore with current first and second years the reasons behind their decisions about which subject(s) to continue with.

*Students from other subject areas*

- 3.1.8 The Panel noted that as a result of the review of the undergraduate curriculum a new course had been introduced: Work, Welfare and the Politics of Reform. This was an Honours course for students on the Social and Public Policy degree but it was hoped that it would be attractive to other students in the School, such as those studying Sociology and Politics, which both currently had high student numbers.
- 3.1.9 The Panel noted that the advising system was currently under review in the College of Social Sciences but that the adviser role could be important in raising students' awareness of subject choices that they might not have otherwise considered.

*Widening access*

- 3.1.10 The Review Panel noted that Urban Studies had a strong record in widening access, with a history of offering part-time study at postgraduate level. However, figures available to the Panel suggested that this was less of a feature more recently. The Head of Subject (Teaching) reflected on the possible reasons for this, noting that numbers on the postgraduate Housing programmes had fallen, and historically these had tended to be taken by non-traditional students. The fall in numbers was thought to be associated with the sponsor organisations having less funding available to support staff through their studies. Another specific example, although relating to a small number of students, was the link with the Centre for Inclusive Living (see para 3.2.1 below). Changes in the University's entrance requirements could also have had an impact and this was not within the control of Urban Studies.

*Degree outcomes*

- 3.1.11 The Review Panel noted that the University was currently focusing on the 'value-added' factor in terms of the final degree classification achieved by students in relation to their entry tariff. The School of Social and Political Sciences did not perform well in this regard but final outcomes in Urban Studies were stronger than the School norm.

## 3.2 Equality and Diversity

### *Lack of accessible accommodation*

- 3.2.1 As noted in the DPTLA 2010, it was regrettable that accessible accommodation was not always available for Urban Studies teaching. The Review Panel was saddened to read in the SER that this continuing situation had compromised the ability of Urban Studies to accommodate students with disabilities, e.g. Housing Studies students sponsored by the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living. (See **Recommendation** at paragraph 4.4.9.)

## 3.3 Supporting Students in their Learning

- 3.3.1 The undergraduate students who met with the Review Panel commented positively on the close contact that they had with staff in Urban Studies, in contrast with their contact with staff in other subject areas where the classes were larger. The postgraduate students expressed their appreciation of the time that staff made available to support them. Contrasting with what they had experienced themselves, or heard about at other institutions, they considered that Urban Studies staff were willing to provide additional support and guidance and were very responsive to issues raised by e-mail.
- 3.3.2 The Review Panel **commends** Urban Studies for its supportive community where staff are perceived to be responsive to students and to be generous in sharing their time and expertise.

### *Class sizes*

- 3.3.3 In the SER it was noted that some postgraduate level classes were very large because of the number of core classes that were common to a range of programmes. There was a tension between, on the one hand, the need to run courses efficiently and, on the other, to provide a high quality student experience. The Panel noted that in the PTES 2014, only 56% of students believed that there was sufficient contact time with staff to support effective learning. At postgraduate level all tutorials were run by core staff rather than by GTAs which meant that it was difficult to provide as many tutorials and break-out sessions as the students wanted.
- 3.3.4 Some of the postgraduate students who met with the Review Panel spoke of their surprise at the large class sizes. They described having felt lost at the start of the programme and unsure of how to get to know their class colleagues. They said that once the smaller group teaching began they started to get to know each other and that they did now feel settled and part of the postgraduate community. The Head of Subject (Teaching) told the Review Panel that in the next session it had already been planned to have early small group sessions for the different programmes to address this concern. The postgraduate students in public policy noted that their classes had a maximum size of approximately 25 and that this was a good number for breaking into group work and yet big enough that there was a diverse group for stimulating class discussions.

### *Attendance*

- 3.3.5 Attendance at lectures, particularly pre-Honours, was sometimes low. The undergraduate students who met with the Review Panel raised this as an issue,

commenting on the fact that there was no monitoring of attendance. They found this hard to understand as they felt that the lectures were very useful. At the key staff meeting it was acknowledged that at pre-Honours there was often a significant drop-off in attendance between the first and second half of courses. The Panel noted that there was no easy answer to this as setting formal attendance requirements could bring its own problems including administrative workload.

#### *Good academic practice/plagiarism*

3.3.6 The Review Panel heard that Urban Studies staff worked hard to ensure that students developed good academic practice. This took on a particular importance given the mix of backgrounds of the students in the subject area. Postgraduate Housing students had typically been out of study for a considerable period so refresher sessions on good academic practice were given in advance of assessment submission. The Head of Subject (Management) commented on the international mix of students in Urban Studies as a whole and the importance of alerting them to differences in academic practice required at the University of Glasgow in contrast to what may have been the practice at their previous educational providers. He added, however, that many of their students were of a high calibre so on arrival already had a good awareness of the issue. The Head of Subject (Teaching) told the Panel that she was the subject area's plagiarism officer, and she had seen only two cases of plagiarism in the current session. It was noted that in the previous session there had been a series of problems associated with Turnitin, which had been a source of considerable frustration.

3.3.7 The postgraduate students who met with the Review Panel confirmed that there had been a strong emphasis on good academic practice on the programme. This had been covered at induction and there had been very useful workshops on academic writing skills delivered by the Student Learning Service. The undergraduate students also reported that there had been a lot of emphasis on good academic practice with specific coverage of this in lectures and tutorials.

3.3.8 The Review Panel **commends** Urban Studies for its evident success in communicating to students key messages in good academic practice.

#### *Social activities*

3.3.9 The postgraduate induction programme included a drinks reception, which was always well attended. Current students were also invited to attend the Real Estate, Planning and Regeneration Alumni Association. The postgraduate students spoke of having got to know each other through attendance at classes rather than through organised social events. They were aware of film nights but commented that there were sometimes clashes with events being held outwith the subject area. The students had organised various events themselves including a fieldtrip to London. Staff had been sufficiently impressed with this initiative that they planned to encourage the next cohort to do something similar.

3.3.10 In the SER it was noted that at the Staff Student Liaison Committee, undergraduate students had requested more social activities and that this was now being taken forward with two students having agreed to take on the organisation.

### **3.4 Student Engagement**

#### *How the Subject engages students in their learning*

3.4.1 One of the aims of the recent reviews was to find ways of involving students more in their learning. It was clear to the Review Panel that the direct application of their studies to contemporary 'real world' issues was a very significant factor used by Urban Studies to achieve engagement. The Panel was interested to learn about the



Service Learning courses that were available to Honours students. Students completed voluntary placements, applying their academic learning and experiencing public policy in the real world (examples of past placements cited in the SER were the Scottish Refugee Council, nursing homes and Special Education schools). Undergraduates who met with the Panel spoke about their motivation to do something worthwhile, and their belief that the Social and Public Policy degree opened up a number of possibilities in this regard. They saw it as the beginning of something that they would do 'for life' rather than just being a subject to study at University.

- 3.4.2 The GTAs discussed with the Review Panel the importance of encouraging participation in tutorial activities, by setting preparation work in advance and by introducing a range of different activities within the tutorials. They also noted that on-line forum groups had recently been set up for each tutorial group and it was hoped that these would become a useful tool for increasing student engagement. While attendance at lectures was variable, the GTAs commented that attendance at tutorials was usually good.

#### *Fieldtrips*

- 3.4.3 The Review Panel was interested to learn about the various fieldtrips used in Urban Studies. On the course 1B, Understanding Glasgow in a Globalised World, students worked in groups to prepare for fieldwork in Glasgow, selecting from a choice of pairs of neighbourhoods to study, with the students then presenting their findings to their peers in tutorials.
- 3.4.4 At postgraduate level the course Regenerating Cities involved a series of visits to Govan (the Glasgow South West Regeneration Agency) throughout the duration of the course, enabling an in-depth understanding of the various issues affecting the area, with input from a number of current practitioners. In Strategic Real Estate Management, students engaged with the issues arising from the diverse estate of the University itself. The courses Sustainable Housing Development and Designing Places also involved fieldtrips.
- 3.4.5 The Review Panel **commends** the means of promoting student engagement with 'real world' issues used by Urban Studies, such as field trips and Service Learning courses.

#### *Graduate Attributes*

- 3.4.6 Staff explained that pre-Honours the general approach to graduate attributes was the development of critical thinking skills, engagement in current issues, analysis, debate and presentation skills, with an emphasis on case studies, using guest lecturers to talk about real world examples. Recent speakers had included representatives from the Human Rights Commission and the Child Poverty Action Group. Exposing students to such speakers also alerted students to possible future employment destinations.
- 3.4.7 The Review Panel heard that students were required to develop a range of skills through the various teaching activities and assessments. The undergraduate students who met with the Panel noted that they were required to take part in some groupwork and presentations but they were not particularly aware of this being linked with graduate attributes. The Panel noted that awareness of graduate attributes was likely to be greater for Honours students, none of whom was present at the meeting.
- 3.4.8 At the meeting with key staff, the Panel's attention was drawn again to the Service Learning options which had a strong focus on developing graduate attributes. Students were required to undertake critical reflection on their experience on

placement, completing a self-assessment and then reaching agreement on a grade through negotiation with the course coordinator.

#### *Employability*

- 3.4.9 Recent figures showed 84% of Urban Studies graduates to be in work or full-time education six months after graduation (50% managerial/professional).
- 3.4.10 The Head of Subject (Teaching) described to the Review Panel a series of workshops that were delivered for postgraduate students in preparation for seeking employment following graduation. Students had the opportunity to attend assessment days and interviews and to meet prospective employers and alumni, which could be helpful for network building. The postgraduate students told the Panel that these activities and events were valuable but that it would be more useful to run the sessions earlier in the year, to optimise their usefulness in relation to applications for jobs starting in the autumn. The students referred to circulars advertising job opportunities but the view was that they tended to be relevant to students on the Housing and Planning programmes with less information for those studying Public Policy.
- 3.4.11 In many assessments, at undergraduate and postgraduate level, the nature of the exercise was similar to that which students would be required to undertake in their chosen field of work. The postgraduate students expressed a willingness to be involved in more group work, in preparation for the team-working that would be important once in employment. Their view was that there were rich opportunities for this: given the diversity of the student body, they would be working with students from different cultures, nationalities, educational backgrounds and prior life experiences. When this view was discussed with key staff, they noted that there was a tension between this and past experience, as students had previously expressed the view that assessment based on groupwork was unfair if some group members did not contribute fully.
- 3.4.12 The postgraduate programmes had a strong vocational focus and it was a feature of Urban Studies that practitioners were often involved in teaching students about current issues and debates in the relevant fields of employment, and led practical sessions in which key skills were taught (e.g. a practising surveyor working with Real Estate students).

#### *Internationalisation*

- 3.4.13 In recent years Urban Studies had seen an increase in the number of international students and this was expected to continue, particularly at undergraduate level with the anticipated arrival of the first cohort of undergraduate students from Nankai, China in the autumn of 2015 (see paragraph 6.1 below). The Review Panel was interested to hear about how staff managed students with very different educational backgrounds and how a diverse student body was encouraged to integrate.
- 3.4.14 The Head of Subject (Teaching) spoke about the efforts made at induction to ensure that international students understood expectations in terms of critical engagement with lecture material, wider reading and the articulation of the students' own ideas.
- 3.4.15 The GTAs discussed with the Panel the various ways in which they tried to encourage all students to fully engage with the work. Within tutorials they divided students into smaller groups, encouraging all to participate and generally by the end of the series of tutorials the students were willing to participate in whole-group discussions. Setting work to prepare in advance of tutorials was also considered to be an effective way of encouraging participation.

- 3.4.16 The Head of School spoke about the recent appointment of a member of staff who had a special focus on the Nankai students, to address the challenges associated with their adjustment to the expectations of the University of Glasgow.
- 3.4.17 The Head of Subject (Teaching) believed that the diverse backgrounds of Urban Studies staff contributed very positively to the subject area having a sensitive and supportive approach to students from many different backgrounds.
- 3.4.18 The postgraduate students who met the Review Panel commented positively on the diversity of their peer group, noting that this made for a stimulating learning environment.

*International experience for Glasgow students*

- 3.4.19 The Review Panel noted that a small number of students from Urban Studies completed a year abroad during Honours. In the SER it was stated that study abroad was now more actively promoted to undergraduates than in the past. The Honours Convener encouraged students to consider this, and in the current session there were students studying in Hong Kong and Brazil. The Head of School told the Panel that he was seeking the support of College for a partial administrative post to support student mobility.

The Review Panel **recommends** that Urban Studies develop a strategy for increasing the number of home undergraduate students who participate in study abroad.

*Internationalisation of the curriculum*

- 3.4.20 One of the objectives of the recent reviews had been to increase internationalisation of the curriculum, and this opened up the opportunity for developing skills of comparative policy analysis. Examples included the introduction of two new postgraduate courses International Urban Challenges and Global Cities.
- 3.4.21 The Panel heard from the postgraduate students that, in considering whether to apply to Glasgow, the international element had been attractive on the International Real Estate programme, as they believed that having the broader global perspective was now important in terms of employability. The students also commented that the international aspect in fact only related to one course which was less than they had anticipated, although they enjoyed being able to develop case studies of their own choice which could include examples from their home country.
- 3.4.22 The Review Panel heard about other ways in which an international experience was encouraged in Urban Studies. The postgraduate Asian Cities fieldtrip was optional but had a substantial cost and only a small number of students were able to take advantage of the opportunity. A new course on Indian cities was also currently under consideration. The Head of School referred to a recent bid for support for an exchange trip to Canada. This had been turned down because of the level of funding required and the fact that it was non-credit bearing.
- 3.4.23 The summary of undergraduate course changes in Appendix 3 of the SER referred in a number of places to the introduction of international case studies. The Review Panel had an interesting discussion with the undergraduate students regarding the international focus of the Social and Public Policy pre-Honours programme. They said that lecturers covered various international examples but it was not always clear how these fitted in with the core issues of the course. In relation to the new course 1B, Understanding Glasgow in a Globalised World, a view was expressed that it was unclear where the 'global' theme had gone. On the other hand, there was recognition of the need to focus closely on a specific example (Glasgow) before then applying the knowledge to other contexts. At the meeting with key staff, it was noted that there

had not yet been the opportunity for staff to reflect on the success of the revised curriculum, but that these comments would be considered.

## 4. Enhancement in Learning and Teaching

### 4.1 Learning and Teaching

#### 4.1.1 Curriculum Design

The Review Panel was interested to hear about the impact on the curriculum of the review that Urban Studies had undertaken over a period of two years, focusing first on postgraduate teaching (2012) and then on undergraduate teaching (2013), with the revised courses being offered for the first time in 2013-14 and 2014-15 respectively. In each case, clearly articulated aims for the reviews had been drawn up, which were set out in the SER. Staff away days had been held and then a small group took forward the work, with on-going consultation with staff, students and external examiners. As noted in the SER the review was undertaken on the subject area's own initiative, as feedback from students and external examiners at the time had been positive.

4.1.2 The Panel was pleased to note the GTAs' view that the new first year undergraduate courses in particular were much improved with a clearer coherence and that they appeared to have been more successful in engaging the students, including those who were taking courses in Social and Public Policy as their third subject. (It was the GTAs who delivered the tutorials in first year.) The SER included a helpful Appendix which provided an overview of the changes to the undergraduate curriculum.

4.1.3 The postgraduate review was undertaken within the constraints imposed by accreditation. The Head of Subject (Management) noted the UK orientation of the professional bodies and the requirement to cover a core curriculum. However, the increasing importance of the global dimension, combined with increasing numbers of international students, meant that on the accredited programmes there was now a greater international dimension to the curriculum.

4.1.4 One of the most significant changes to delivery of the postgraduate programmes was the move away from intensive block teaching to more regular half day teaching. This arose partly in response to administrative issues but also reflected the view that there were benefits for students (especially international) in being able to assimilate material more gradually.

4.1.5 The Review Panel **strongly commends** Urban Studies for initiating a comprehensive review of postgraduate and undergraduate provision and for implementing wide-ranging changes, noting early evidence to suggest positive impact.

#### *Research-led teaching*

4.1.6 The Review Panel was interested to hear how the notable strength of research in Urban Studies impacted on teaching. The Head of Subject (Teaching) referred to the fact that many courses were taught by multiple members of staff, and this enabled staff to teach to their specialisations, particularly on Honours options. Staff with heavy research commitments generally had lighter teaching loads. Policy and practice in the fields covered by Urban Studies developed rapidly and it strengthened the teaching to have active researchers who were able to respond quickly to current issues. At

postgraduate level, the Head of Subject (Management) noted that student demand was for the teaching to be research-led.

- 4.1.7 The Review Panel wondered whether students were aware of the research undertaken by Urban Studies staff and to what extent they were learning about the research process. The postgraduate students told the Panel that they were aware of on-going research in relation to the areas covered in their courses. Usually this came from discussions led by the staff member, though sometimes guest lecturers were invited to speak on their own area of expertise. The students said that it was not always clear how this material tied in with the course as a whole. The Head of Subject (Management) referred to the challenge for those teaching the courses to bear in mind the range of different backgrounds of the postgraduate student body, both in terms of their discipline and their prior learning, and thus to make the different parts of the course coherent. Having much material available now on Moodle meant that it was easier for staff teaching on the same course to ensure that the different sessions were complementary.
- 4.1.8 The postgraduate students knew that they could find out more about the research by looking at the staff website. They also stated that their dissertation supervisors had expertise in the relevant field and appeared to have good knowledge of current debates.
- 4.1.9 The undergraduate students referred to the fact that a number of different lecturers were used on one course. They enjoyed having the diversity of approach and clear subject expertise of the different members of staff, which reflected their research interests. However, there was sometimes overlap in what was covered in different lectures and they also experienced a lack of coherence about how the lectures fitted together. At the key staff meeting there was some reflection on this, noting that it was the course coordinator's responsibility to carry the vision for the course as a whole and to ensure coherence across it. There would be reflection on this at the end of the session through the annual monitoring process. Staff told the Panel that at the outset of a course certain themes were identified and there was an expectation that to some extent students should identify those themes throughout the course and make the relevant connections.
- 4.1.10 In view of comments made by both undergraduate and postgraduate students regarding a lack of clarity in relation to the place of guest lecturers and the overlap of material covered by different lecturers, the Panel **recommends** that Urban Studies ensure that there are robust mechanisms in place to deliver a coherent and integrated curriculum, while continuing to incorporate the pertinent contributions from active researchers and practitioners in relevant areas.

## **4.2 Assessment and Feedback**

- 4.2.1 *Range of assessment methods*
- 4.2.2 Undergraduate courses were generally assessed by a combination of coursework and end of course exam, whereas postgraduate courses were almost entirely assessed through coursework, with details of the assessments being issued at the beginning of each course.
- 4.2.3 It was noted that the recent review had offered the opportunity to develop some more creative assessments. As noted above (paragraph 3.4.8) students were actively involved in the various stages of the assessment process on Service Learning courses.
- 4.2.4 The undergraduates who met with the Review Panel referred to an imminent assignment which was required to be submitted in report format rather than as an

essay. While they expressed a lack of confidence about how to complete the task, they acknowledged that it would be a useful exercise and could see that guidance was available in the course guide and that relevant information had been given in lectures. The Panel also noted that on the Honours course Making Public Policy students were required to prepare a briefing document for a politician on a specific policy issue, reflecting the nature of task that might typically be required of a Social and Public Policy graduate.

- 4.2.5 At the meeting with postgraduate students a comment was made that it was good to be assessed through assignments rather than through exams, as this reflected the requirements of the world of work and they felt there was a good mix of assessments that were essays and more technical exercises.

*Engagement with the Code of Assessment*

- 4.2.6 Almost all work was assessed using alphanumeric grades of Schedule A. In the SER it was noted that in a small number of courses where work involved numerical calculations, percentage scores were converted to Schedule A grades as required by the Code of Assessment.

*Feedback received by students on assessed work*

- 4.2.7 The undergraduate students who met with the Review Panel said that feedback on assessed work was generally helpful and if they requested more detail it would be provided.
- 4.2.8 The postgraduate students reported that they found feedback on assessments useful but they were not always sure how they could have improved on their grades. Some markers provided very detailed feedback but they felt that the comments from others did not always clearly relate to learning outcomes and for a whole essay might consist of a short single paragraph of comment. The Panel's view was that while thorough feedback was to be commended, it was important for the subject area to have an overview of what was being provided, as voluminous feedback raised expectations in students that the same amount of feedback should be provided by all staff. At course team level it should be possible to establish a norm for feedback.
- 4.2.9 The SER outlined the subject area's use of peer review on some undergraduate courses, noting that positive feedback from students had led to the decision to use this more widely in the next session, introducing it into course 1A Foundations of Welfare. The SER also described the use of peer review on the Real Estate Finance and Investment programme where feedback was given on an essay plan poster.

*Timeliness of return of feedback*

- 4.2.10 In the PTES 2014, the rating for the statement 'feedback on my work has been prompt' was 28%. In 2013-14 there had been a particular issue with marking, which had now been addressed. At postgraduate level the Head of Subject (Teaching) acknowledged that particularly on the larger courses there was a considerable challenge in getting assessments marked and returned to students in good time, although there had been a recent push to ensure that this was done. Staff were notified of their marking well in advance and a timetable for postgraduate hand-in dates was circulated at the start of the session. Urban Studies used a four week return period, which did not comply with the norm of three weeks laid down in the University's Assessment Policy, but even four weeks presented a considerable challenge. The Head of Subject (Teaching) stated that there was a view amongst staff that marking took considerably longer than indicated in the workload model. In the current session there had been a problem with 90 essays having been submitted

at the end of semester 1 which coincided with the marker being away on a research visit.

- 4.2.11 The postgraduate students commented to the Panel that they were less frustrated by the late return of work if the comments were detailed and helpful, and so long as feedback was returned in time to benefit from it when preparing the next submission. The Head of Subject (Teaching) noted that they were considering the rescheduling of some assessments next year to take this into account. One student commented on the usefulness of feedback that had been provided by another subject area, which included generic feedback relating to the submissions of the class as a whole and gave an indication of where the student was placed in relation to the rest of the class.
- 4.2.12 The Head of School also noted that the School was trying to take more of an overview of marking activity with a view to standardising some of the procedures across the different subject areas.
- 4.2.13 Satisfaction with the timeliness of feedback at undergraduate level was rated at 76% in the NSS 2014, which was higher than the College average of 55% but below the institutional benchmark of 80%. The undergraduate students who met with the Review Panel said that they had experienced a delay in the return of marked work because of industrial action, but their experience in Urban Studies had been no worse than in other areas. Staff told the Panel that the University's three-week turnaround period for the return of assessed work was complied with.
- 4.2.14 The Review Panel **recommends** that Urban Studies implement a turnaround time for assessment feedback on postgraduate courses of three weeks in accordance with the University's Assessment Policy. Recognising the difficulties already identified by Urban Studies in achieving a four-week turnaround time, the Panel notes that this may require careful planning regarding the allocation of marking, awareness of competing commitments of markers, contingency planning, and adopting a norm as to the levels of feedback to be provided.

### 4.3 Engaging and Supporting Staff

#### *Early career support*

- 4.3.1 The Review Panel met with a group of early career staff. They spoke of Urban Studies being welcoming and colleagues being supportive and willing to provide assistance. They recognised that in the early stages of their work their teaching workloads were protected, and that the loads were expected to increase with time. In the SER it was noted that these arrangements were in compliance with the University's requirements. However, the early career staff were unclear about the detail of this and what the norms for workload were at the different stages. They did not know who was responsible for deciding what additional work should be taken on and when, and whether if they were asked about additional teaching duties they were expected to agree. They said that they could discuss specific issues with their mentors as they arose, but they felt that this was a relatively informal relationship and that the mentor was not the appropriate person to take an overview of workload. Although they did not think that this situation had caused problems, they expressed the desire to have greater clarity. They were aware of the workload model but had not seen it and did not know how it operated.
- 4.3.2 The early career staff told the Panel that they enjoyed the PGCAP and felt that the staff teaching it were excellent and that participation on the programme had significantly improved confidence in their own teaching. They had also found it helpful for meeting new staff from other areas of the University.

### *Support and training for GTAs*

- 4.3.3 The Head of Subject (Teaching) told the Review Panel that although there were only six GTAs in Urban Studies, they were a strong group who made a very positive contribution to the teaching of first and second years. They had all completed the statutory training.
- 4.3.4 The Review Panel met with three of the GTAs. Their view was that there was a disconnect between them as a group and the rest of the teaching staff in Urban Studies. Before the start of a course they were involved in a one-hour meeting with the convener. They also received some guidance on what should be covered in tutorials. They geared the tutorials to build on the relevant lecture material. Their view was that it was not always clear what they were expected to cover or how this related to the relevant exam questions that would be set at the end of the course.
- 4.3.5 The GTAs said that, as a group, they shared amongst themselves ideas and resources, but felt that there was little in the way of oversight by other staff and no one main point of contact for them, although they knew that they could approach the course coordinator if there was a particular problem. They reflected that their experience of teaching would have been very different if they had not had such a positive and constructive relationship with each other. They felt that this was something that staff should be aware of particularly when new GTAs were appointed.
- 4.3.6 The GTAs noted that they had not been directly involved in the recent review of teaching and they felt that, given their experience in leading tutorials, they had useful views on what would work well with the students. They would have welcomed the opportunity to have broader involvement though recognised that this would have needed additional funding. While they were positive about the new courses, supporting course 1B Understanding Glasgow in a Globalised World had been particularly challenging for them and had required a lot of preparation time. At the end of the year there was usually some form of reflection on how the courses had gone. They noted that while they were paid for preparation time, the time allocated was generally far less than was required in practice. They also fielded a lot of queries from students either by e-mail or in person and felt that this important part of their work was not recognised in terms of remuneration and perhaps not even known to colleagues. In general they felt that there were issues relating to the way that they were paid and more generally to the message that this sent in terms of respect for their work.
- 4.3.7 The Head of School explained to the Review Panel that the School Executive had considered the possibility of introducing the role of senior GTA. However, across the various subject areas of the School there was resistance to this idea with some anxiety about it in fact creating additional work. While it was recognised that the GTAs were a strong group, the budget was very constrained and that limited the extent to which the School could fund their involvement in broader activities. As it was, the School paid GTAs more in terms of preparation time than any other School in the University.
- 4.3.8 The Head of Subject (Teaching) noted that GTAs were first markers for coursework, with the course coordinator acting as moderator. The GTAs told the Review Panel that they found this useful though they did not receive much feedback on their marking. One of the GTAs had been commended by an external examiner for giving excellent feedback on coursework. The GTAs again commented on the time that was formally allocated for marking which they felt was significantly less than the time it



actually took, particularly as they recognised the importance of first years receiving detailed and informative feedback.

- 4.3.9 The Review Panel **recommends** that a formal management structure be established to support the performance and development of GTAs and early career staff engaged in learning and teaching and assessment, to address issues including:
- (GTAs) the identification of a key member of staff to whom to address general issues of concern; appropriate recognition of their contribution to the work of Urban Studies; succession planning.
  - (Early career staff) management of workload.

#### 4.4 Resources for Learning and Teaching

##### *Workload model*

- 4.4.1 The Head of School explained to the Review Panel that the School workload model had been developed from the original Urban Studies model and that it was overseen by the School Executive. The fact that there remained weaknesses in the model was acknowledged.
- 4.4.2 At the meeting with key staff the view was expressed that the model did not appropriately reflect the work for programme directors in providing on-going support for students, particularly for postgraduates coming from a wide range of backgrounds. The view was also expressed that it did not accurately reflect the time required for marking, and that the new requirement to provide feedback on exam performance was not included. The staff said that where there were real pressure points, colleagues did offer to help and take on additional work, reflecting the collegiate nature of the subject area.
- 4.4.3 The Head of Subject (Teaching) told the Review Panel that they tried to be aware of overloading, and that there was some flexibility in the allocation of teaching and marking. Staff sometimes taught outwith their own specialisms, but on the postgraduate programmes the requirements of accreditation limited that flexibility. Currently there was particular pressure on the teaching of Real Estate although it was hoped that College investment might be available to assist. In Urban Studies, staff took research leave for one semester in every 10, whereas the College norm was one in every six. It was felt that taking research leave any more frequently created too much pressure on the teaching.
- 4.4.4 The role of Head of Subject was currently shared by two members of staff, with Professor Munro responsible for the Urban Studies teaching programmes and Professor Wang responsible for overall management and for international developments. The two Heads told the Panel that they believed the arrangement worked well and that they worked closely together.

##### *Administration*

- 4.4.5 Urban Studies, along with other parts of the University, had been negatively impacted by administrative issues at the University level over the review period, including the introduction of the MyCampus student record system and problems associated with the operation of Central Room Bookings (see paragraph 4.4.7 below). The view expressed by staff was that this had impacted not only on their workload but had also had a direct impact on the student experience.

- 4.4.6 More locally, the Review Panel noted that the Head of School Administration was currently reviewing the full range of administrative processes in operation in the School's five subject areas, with a view to standardising processes and enabling the School centrally to have a more comprehensive overview of various activities such as marking. The Head of School was also keen to introduce practices employed successfully elsewhere in the College, such as the feedback form in use in the Business School, subject to overcoming resource constraints.

#### *Teaching Accommodation*

- 4.4.7 The SER referred to problems with teaching accommodation. In the meeting with the Review Panel, the postgraduate students referred to a three hour class which had been interrupted twice by the need to change rooms. The SER also noted the shortage of computer labs big enough to accommodate the larger PGT student groups.
- 4.4.8 The undergraduate students told the Review Panel that in their view the single issue that had caused most dissatisfaction on the course had been the standard of teaching accommodation. For example, in one classroom there had been no tables and on another occasion the class had been disrupted by on-going building work. Tutorial groups had also met in a lecture theatre, the layout of which was inappropriate for group discussion. It was also noted in the SER that while there had been an encouraging increase in student numbers in 2014-15 on introduction of the revised undergraduate curriculum, the first year class 1B Understanding Glasgow in a Globalised World was full in terms of the capacity of the teaching accommodation.
- 4.4.9 The Review Panel **recommends** that action be taken to address the issues relating to teaching accommodation identified in this review which have either prevented the delivery of teaching or have resulted in an environment which is not conducive to effective learning and teaching. [See full recommendation at the conclusion of the report.]

## **5. Academic Standards**

### *External Examining*

- 5.1 In the SER it was noted that exam boards were treated as a valuable opportunity for reflection with the views of the external examiner sought as to areas of good practice and areas for future enhancement. On the postgraduate Housing and Real Estate/Planning programmes this involved a practising professional.

### *Student Feedback*

- 5.2.1 The postgraduate students who met with the Review Panel knew who their student representatives were and were aware that the reps were active on the programme. One example cited was where there had been a clash of submission deadlines and the rep had requested a delayed submission deadline for one of the assessments. This had been agreed. The students generally felt that staff were responsive and that it was always worth raising any issues of concern.
- 5.2.2 At the meeting with undergraduate students one class rep was present, who reported that there had not been a lot of feedback from the students and the impression was that they were broadly happy with the way the courses were running. One issue that had been raised was the students' request to have lectures recorded. This had not been taken forward. Senate policy is currently that recording of lectures is a matter for each subject area. The undergraduate students noted that when the issue of

inadequate teaching accommodation had been raised by the students in semester 1, it had been sorted out for semester 2. They also cited the example of the submission date for a piece of coursework being only a week apart from the date of a presentation and, on request, the submission deadline was deferred.

- 5.2.3 The Staff Student Liaison Committee at postgraduate level was student-led. At the first meeting of each session the students were asked if they wished to convene the group. Usually they did, and in the current session it had been decided to have a rotating chair. It was felt that this created a positive dynamic.
- 5.2.4 Key staff told the Panel that feedback from annual monitoring and from external examiners' reports was posted on Moodle and discussed at SSLC meetings.
- 5.2.5 Besides the formal mechanisms for obtaining feedback, at the key staff meeting it was noted that in smaller classes it was easier to respond to the areas of difficulty being experienced by students, and staff were committed to being responsive when issues were raised.

#### *Subject Benchmark Statements*

- 5.3 The Review Panel was interested to know whether the recent review had been constrained by the Subject Benchmarks. The Heads of Subject and key staff had not found this a problem as the benchmarks were flexible and were able to accommodate revisions arising from changes in the external environment (e.g. the increasing demand for internationalisation of the curriculum).

#### *Quality Assurance*

- 5.4 The Panel was satisfied that quality assurance procedures operated in line with University policy and were applied effectively.

#### *Accreditation requirements*

- 5.5 Across the range of postgraduate provision, accreditation was provided by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH). Accreditation required the involvement of external academic staff and professionals. Aside from providing validation of the programmes being delivered, accreditation had broader benefits arising from the ongoing relationship between the University and professional bodies, which led to a number of opportunities (visiting speakers, conferences, up to date employment information).

## **6 Collaborative provision**

- 6.1 Urban Studies was embarking on a major new collaborative venture. From the beginning of session 2015-16 a cohort of undergraduate students from Nankai University, Tianjin, China, studying for a BSc in Urban Management, would be coming to Glasgow for their third out of four years of study to take mainly Honours courses. Some new courses were being developed for them but it was also hoped that some Glasgow students would take these courses. A cohort of between 25 and 30 was expected each year, and a member of staff had been recruited with a remit that included managing the relationship with the Nankai students. Part of the challenge was to achieve integration of the Nankai cohort with the Glasgow students.
- 6.2 At postgraduate level, Urban Studies had developed the MSc in Urban and Regional Planning which was one of three programmes to be delivered through the joint graduate school, again with Nankai. From the beginning of 2015-16, two members of staff from Urban Studies at a time would travel to China to teach in blocks on the programme. Four courses had been developed specifically for the programme but existing courses would also be used. The Review Panel noted the practical challenge

of this mode of delivery, both in delivering the teaching and providing on-going support to students once the teaching staff returned to Glasgow. The SER also identified the issue of differences in the structure of postgraduate programmes in China, raising the question of how easy it would prove for students to undertake exchanges with Glasgow.

- 6.3 Two other collaborative projects were being developed, with Sun Yat-Sen University in China and National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan, both with a focus on student exchanges using existing teaching provision.

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

### **7.1 Key strengths**

- A supportive and positive learning environment.
- Learning and teaching that is enriched by strength in research and rooted in engagement with real world issues and experiences.
- In terms of nationality, culture, disciplinary background and life experience, a diverse community of staff and students, a diversity which enriches the teaching and, very broadly, the student experience.
- Commitment to the University's agenda for internationalisation and the development of collaborative provision.

### **7.2 Areas for improvement**

- Aspects of the management of early career staff and GTAs
- Timeliness of feedback on assessment particularly at postgraduate level
- Dissemination of good practice in learning and teaching.

## **Conclusion**

The Review Panel enjoyed a constructive engagement with the subject area of Urban Studies, which was facilitated in large part by a reflective and positive approach, adopted by staff and demonstrated in the SER.

The Review Panel, guided by the views of the External Subject Specialist, confirmed that, at the time of the Review, programmes offered by Urban Studies were current and valid in light of developing knowledge in the discipline, and of practice in its application.

## **Commendations**

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

Commendation 1

The Review Panel considered the SER to be exemplary: it effectively highlighted examples of innovative practice and was reflective, openly acknowledging issues of on-going challenge and identifying areas for further enhancement. The Panel **commends** this. [*paragraph 1.11*]

#### Commendation 2

The Review Panel **commends** Urban Studies for its supportive community where staff are perceived to be responsive to students and to be generous in sharing their time and expertise. [*paragraph 3.3.2*]

#### Commendation 3

The Review Panel **commends** Urban Studies for its evident success in communicating to students key messages in good academic practice. [*paragraph 3.3.8*]

#### Commendation 4

The Review Panel **commends** the means of promoting student engagement with 'real world' issues used by Urban Studies, such as field trips and Service Learning courses. [*paragraph 3.4.5*]

#### Commendation 5

The Review Panel **strongly commends** Urban Studies for initiating a comprehensive review of postgraduate and undergraduate provision and for implementing wide-ranging changes, noting early evidence to suggest positive impact. [*paragraph 4.1.5*]

## Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made to support the Subject in its reflection and to enhance provision in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. The Review Panel recognises that several of the recommendations relate to issues that the subject area itself had highlighted for further development in the course of the review or in the SER. The recommendations have been cross-referenced to the paragraphs in the text of the report to which they refer and are grouped together by the areas for improvement/enhancement and are ranked in order of priority within each section.

### For the attention of Heads of Subject

#### Recommendation 1

In the course of the review, the Panel noted a number of issues related to Learning and Teaching which were to some extent inter-related and would benefit from an over-arching vision. The Review Panel therefore **recommends** that, on publication of the University's Learning & Teaching Strategy 2015-2020, Urban Studies develop a coherent learning and teaching strategy, articulating its vision for undergraduate and postgraduate provision, and addressing such issues as widening access, internationalisation, and recruitment both to the University and to the latter stages of the undergraduate programme. [*paragraph 2.1*]

Action: Heads of Subject

For information: Head of School

## Recommendation 2

The Review Panel **recommends** that a formal management structure be established to support the performance and development of GTAs and early career staff engaged in learning, teaching and assessment, to address issues including:

- (GTAs) the identification of a key member of staff to whom to address general issues of concern; appropriate recognition of their contribution to the work of Urban Studies; succession planning.
- (Early career staff) management of workload.

[*paragraph 4.3.9*]

Action: Heads of Subject

For information: Head of School

## Recommendation 3

The Review Panel **recommends** that Urban Studies implement a turnaround time for assessment feedback on postgraduate courses of three weeks in accordance with the University's Assessment Policy. Recognising the difficulties already identified by Urban Studies in achieving a four-week turnaround time, the Panel notes that this may require careful planning regarding the allocation of marking, awareness of competing commitments of markers, contingency planning, and adopting a norm as to the levels of feedback to be provided. [*paragraph 4.2.14*]

Action: Heads of Subject

For information: Head of School

## Recommendation 4

The Review Panel **recommends** that Urban Studies institute a formal approach to the dissemination of good practice through the proposed Learning and Teaching Forum and develop other mechanisms to develop and promote a broad-based culture of teaching enhancement. [*paragraph 2.7*]

Action: Heads of Subject, Convener School Learning and Teaching Committee

For information: Head of School

## Recommendation 5

In view of comments made by both undergraduate and postgraduate students regarding a lack of clarity in relation to the place of guest lecturers and the overlap of material covered by different lecturers, the Panel **recommends** that Urban Studies ensure that there are robust mechanisms in place to deliver a coherent and integrated curriculum, while continuing to incorporate the pertinent contributions from active researchers and practitioners in relevant areas. [*paragraph 4.1.10*]

Action: Heads of Subject

For information: Head of School

#### Recommendation 6

The Review Panel **recommends** that Urban Studies develop a strategy for increasing the number of home undergraduate students who participate in study abroad. [paragraph 3.4.19]

Action: Heads of Subject, College Mobility Officer and Dean of International Mobility

For information: Head of School

### **For the attention of the Vice Principal Learning and Teaching**

#### Recommendation 7

The Review Panel recommends that action be taken to address the issues relating to teaching accommodation identified in this report which either prevent the delivery of teaching or have resulted in an environment which is not conducive to effective learning and teaching:

- The lack of accessible teaching accommodation which has compromised the ability of Urban Studies to accommodate students with disabilities thus undermining established relationships (e.g. Students sponsored by the Glasgow Centre for Inclusive Living taking the Housing Studies programme).
- Tutorials being timetabled in lecture theatres, the layout of which inhibited discussion amongst the group.
- Classrooms in which there were no tables.
- Three hour teaching sessions being interrupted by the need to change location.

[paragraph 4.4.9]

Action: Vice Principal Learning and Teaching

For information: Heads of Subject, Head of School