



Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

Review of History held on 13 March 2015

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the Subject area of History. *Periodic Subject Review* is an internal subject review focused on the quality of provision as experienced by students. The review looks at the range of programmes, course content, the teaching methods employed, assessment, facilities and much more.

The full report of the review is available publicly at:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_419596_en.pdf

Further information about the PSR process can be found at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/gea/periodicsubjectreview/>

Italicised words are explained in a glossary below.

Conclusions

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

This Review has identified that attention should be given to the diversification of assessment methods and making the development of *transferable skills* more explicit to students.

The Review Panel observed a successful, dedicated and hard-working Subject that provided a very strong student-focused environment. The Panel was extremely impressed with the focus on, and enthusiasm for, face-to-face delivery of teaching with small numbers of students and the one-on-one support given to students. It was evident that, with the numbers of students, this required a substantial commitment from staff, but it was evidently very beneficial to the student experience.

Key Strengths (Commendations) ¹

Enhancing the Student Experience

- Strong sense of community, and the dedication of the staff in providing a rewarding and supportive student experience
- The intensive contact teaching with small numbers of students per class, despite the challenges of high student numbers
- The Subject's responsiveness to student feedback

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching

- The very strong feedback provided to UG students, and the resulting *NSS* scores
- The strong focus on and commitment to research led teaching at all levels and the matching of depth and range of knowledge with staff experience
- The way *GTA*s and supported and integrated as part of the team including the extent to which involved in course and assessment design

Areas to be improved or enhanced

Enhancing the Student Experience

- *Graduate Attributes* are made more explicit to students through ensuring that they are embedded in course delivery and are regularly flagged at appropriate points throughout the curriculum.
- Conduct a feasibility study with a view to development of credit bearing work based learning/ placements.
- The development of an approach to ensure issues of *Equality and Diversity* are embedded in course design and delivery.

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching

- The current requirement for UG course assessment to consist of minimum 60 percent unseen final exam and a maximum of 40 percent for other modes of assessment, to be discontinued in favour of an assessment regime which has less reliance on final exams, to ensure that a range of assessment methods, are engaged across the curriculum as a whole programme, driven by *learning outcomes*.
- Build on the work already done as part of the *LEAF* project and existing good practice to map courses, programmes and progression so that course development is coherent and allows for the curriculum to foster diversity of pedagogic and learning practices.
- Develop initiatives to enhance learning and teaching through the use of technology.
- Continue to adopt and progress a workload model and recognise that this is currently being taken forward by the College.

¹ Numbers refer to the paragraphs in the full report that contain the relevant discussion.

- Put in place procedures for a formal induction event including provision of a handbook for all new staff across the School to introduce them to relevant School and University procedures.

Glossary of terms/acronyms used

Equality and Diversity

The University has a statutory responsibility for complying with a range of equalities legislation, currently covering six strands of equality, including: age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation.

Graduate Attributes

[Graduate attributes](#) are the skills, knowledge and qualities or attitudes developed by individuals through their programme of study that they will use to contribute effectively in work or other aspects of society in the future.

Graduate Teaching Assistant or GTAs

Graduate Teaching Assistants, Tutors and Laboratory Demonstrators are students, usually research students, who assist with teaching in the form of tutorials, labs and other activities that are part of undergraduate programmes in the subject/school. They are paid an hourly rate by the University.

Intended Learning Outcomes or ILOs

Intended Learning Outcomes or ILOs describe what all students should be able to do or demonstrate, in terms of particular knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes when they successfully complete the course or programme that the ILOs relate to.

LEAF project

“Leading Enhancement in Assessment and Feedback” (LEAF) project which examines collaborative approaches to enhancing efficiency in assessment and feedback to students. This project had been initiated by Universitas 21 and runs across a number of subjects and institutions, including Edinburgh, Nottingham and Birmingham.

National Student Survey (NSS)

The NSS is a national initiative that has been conducted annually since 2005. The survey asks students in their final year of a programme to provide feedback on their student learning experience. There are 22 questions in all, this can be found at: <http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/>

Periodic Subject Review or PSR

The University has a six yearly cycle of review of the Subjects/Schools within it. The PSR is one of the main ways by which the University assures itself of the quality of the provision delivered by Subjects/Schools.

Transferable Generic Skills

Skills which can be applied in a variety of different contexts: e.g. Communication (oral, written and the ability to summarise); Self-motivation (time management), self-regulation and self-assurance; Team-working; etc.