



Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

Review of the Academic Development Unit held on 7 December 2015

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the Academic Development Unit (ADU). 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_484828_en.pdf

Further information about the PSR process can be found at:

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

Conclusions

The Review Panel, guided by the views of the External Subject Specialist, 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.

The ADU staff had clearly built a very successful and highly valued relationship with participants through their work. This suggested a respectful and student-centred approach to learning. The ADU was very responsive to requests for support, but the Panel considered there was scope for more direct engagement between the ADU and Colleges and Schools. Schools, in general, required greater involvement with activity and outcomes of the PGCAP, ensuring skills being learnt were highlighted, being made use of, and disseminated.

The Panel concluded that it would be of benefit for the ADU to consider rationalising some of their provision and having a more formal relationship with Schools and Colleges might help to address some of the ADU workload issues, as well as developing the learning and teaching community.

Key Strengths (Commendations)¹

- The clear commitment of the ADU to provide a supportive environment, providing a high level of support to participants outside of class. [Paragraph 4.3.1]
- The flexibility provided for assignment submission deadlines, taking into account work commitments. Flexibility was essential to accommodate the working patterns of academic staff. [Paragraph 5.1.4.3]
- The effective feedback mechanisms in place. [Paragraph 4.5.1]
- The level of feedback provided [Paragraph 5.1.6.2]
- The feed-forward approach to feedback and the quickness of return of feedback. [Paragraph 5.1.6.3]
- The ADU's integration and use of Intended Learning Outcomes throughout the programme, with explicit references made to ILOs at each session in marking and feedback. [Paragraph 5.1.2.2]
- Distinction between assessment *for* learning and assessment *of* learning [Paragraph 5.1.4.1]
- The range of practice-based assessment methods used [Paragraph 5.1.4.2]
- The co-creation of ILOs for the MEd dissertation between supervisor and MEd participants. [Paragraph 5.1.2.1]
- The good use of and effective responses to External Examiners. [Paragraph 6.1.2]
- All staff within the Unit had undertaken University Equality and Diversity training. [Paragraph 4.2]

Areas to be improved or enhanced

- Bring to the attention of the Deans (Learning and Teaching) that consideration be given to including participation on the PGCAP as part of School workload models. In addition, recognition of teaching excellence should commence at the beginning of staff careers with progression charted throughout career development. Excellent teaching should be reviewed as part of P&DR. [Paragraph 4.3.2]
- Human Resources establish a formal process that automatically registers relevant new employees to the University on the PGCAP at commencement of appointment, and that it informs the ADU and the relevant School of all new registrations. [Paragraph 4.1.1]
- Although acknowledging the preference to teach in local space, recommends that consideration be given to using alternative, larger University accommodation to allow for an increase in participation rates and the potential to rationalise delivery of the programme. [Paragraph 4.1.2]
- Considers re-designing an online PGCAP to accommodate participants based overseas. The revised version should not be to recruit a new market but to support staff based overseas. [Paragraph 7.1]

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

- Consult with Deans of Learning and Teaching regarding the possibility of Schools taking more responsibility for supporting staff locally, establishing more formal partnerships with the ADU and to discuss how this might work in practice. [Paragraph 3.1.3]
- More formal links be developed between the ADU and Schools, to encourage a community of learning and teaching practitioners, maximising PGCAP and MEd alumni contacts. [Paragraph 4.3.2]
- ADU staff should be full members of all College Learning and Teaching Committees; that Colleges should engage on a formal and more regular basis with the ADU and that the Unit should be able to advise the College on learning and teaching matters. The Panel further recommended that the Unit develops a more formalised process of engagement with Learning and Teaching practitioners across the University and this should be discussed with Deans of Learning and Teaching as highlighted above. [Paragraph 3.1.4]
- Re-evaluate its priorities and establishes a long-term vision of the role of the ADU within the University. [Paragraph 3.2.1]
- Explore opportunities for the rationalisation of provision of non-credit bearing activity as this impinged on the time available for credit-bearing delivery. [Paragraph 5.2.2.3]
- Consider the balance of workload and effort required to continue to offer the MEd and whether there was potential for linkage with the School of Education to provide the MEd as joint provision. [Paragraph 4.1.4]