



Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

Review of the English Literature held on 17 March 2016

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the subject area of English Literature. *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_484832_en.pdf

Further information about the PSR process can be found at:

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

Italicised words are explained in a glossary below.

Conclusions

The Panel was impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff and students, and with the firm focus on excellence in teaching and support for students. The student groups were enthusiastic and positive, and a credit to the Subject.

The Panel, guided by the views of the External Subject Specialist, confirmed that, at the time of the Review, the programmes offered by the Subject were current and valid in the light of knowledge and practice within the subject area.

The Subject demonstrated a number of strengths, as well as an awareness of the areas requiring improvement. The most substantive of these are reflected in the commendations and recommendations below.

Key Strengths (Commendations)¹

Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their learning

- Providing such an open, friendly and supportive environment for its students [Paragraphs 3.1.6 and 4.3.9].
- The great efforts to keep material engaging and, to support this, offered a wide range of reading and discussion groups, 'work in progress' seminars, competitions and guest speaker events. These were valued very highly and it was apparent from the meetings with students that they substantially enhanced the student experience. [Paragraph 5.1.4].
- The interesting range of learning and teaching methods, and staff commitment to these, which clearly has the effect of engaging students with the material and enhancing their enjoyment of the subject [Paragraph 4.4.1].
- Commitment to the development of creative writing in the curriculum [Paragraph 3.1.1].
- Commitment to small-group teaching despite the challenges presented by this [Paragraph 3.1.3].
- The care taken to ensure *the Widening Participation Summer School* is as interesting and encouraging as possible, and that appropriate support is in place for Summer School students transitioning to full-time study [Paragraph 4.1.2].
- An annual information event was held for students interested in pursuing their Junior Honours year abroad, and a dedicated *Moodle* page set up. Support was given to interested students throughout the process, and those going abroad were invited to speak to the new applicants about their experience on returning. [Paragraph 4.4.11].

Areas to be improved or enhanced

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Assessment and Feedback

- Take steps to ensure that all students delivering assessed presentations receive feedback on the presentation, in line with the Subject's statement that feedback on presentations will be provided within one week [Paragraph 5.2.5].
- If the Subject intends to pursue the use of Autonomous Learning Groups, clear guidance is given to students to ensure they understand the benefits, structure and requirements of such groups in order to promote engagement. Moreover, a consistent approach is required from staff in explaining and actively supporting the practice of ALGs if the benefits are to be fully appreciated and realised. [Paragraph 4.4.3].
- Make contact with the *Learning & Teaching Centre* for guidance on using *Aropä* to facilitate student peer assessment [Paragraph 5.2.6].

Enhancing the Student Experience: Graduate Attributes

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

- The work being undertaken at Honours level with regard to the embedding of *graduate attributes*, and raising students' awareness of graduate attributes, be implemented at all levels of provision. This work should be undertaken during 2016-17 and be implemented fully by 2017-18 [*Paragraph 4.4.10*].

Enhancing the Student Experience Student support

- Formally organise an event for students approaching Honours, at which course conveners provide information about their courses, in order to assist students in selecting their Honours options [*Paragraph 4.3.2*].
- Make contact with the Widening Participation team to discuss support for students joining study from the Summer School [*Paragraph 4.1.2*].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Support for GTAs and Early Career Staff

- The Head of Subject and Head of School raise with the Head of College and Human Resources the issue of the profound disquiet being expressed by staff participating in the Early Career Development Programme (ECDP), so that consistent advice and guidance can be provided to those staff members and their mentors [*Paragraph 5.3.3*].
- Discuss with the School/College the various issues relating to payment of GTAs for preparation and marking time, and the timeliness of payment, with Human Resources, in order that GTAs are fully supported in their preparation and are paid on time [*Paragraph 5.3.10*].
- Liaise with the Learning & Teaching Centre in order to ensure access to support for scholarship is provided for staff on Teaching Fellow contracts, and that induction and mentoring for these staff is also provided [*Paragraph 5.3.5*].
- Given the amount of teaching undertaken by GTAs, the University's 'Equality and Diversity Essentials' online course be mandatory for GTAs, and that the GTAs are paid for the time taken to complete the course [*Paragraph 4.2.2*].
- Give GTAs the opportunity to register for First Aid training and any other training course relevant to the provision of pastoral care, and investigate the feasibility of introducing a dedicated Moodle site for its GTAs to gather and consult resources, and discuss teaching [*Paragraph 5.3.8*].

Context and Strategy

Vision

- Form a clear vision for its future shape and direction, aligned to the School's and College's strategic plans for the future and capitalising on the ambition articulated by staff in relation to internationalisation, PGT and cross University collaborations [*Paragraph 3.1.5*].

Range of provision: PGT

- Hold an event (such as a Subject away-day or facilitated workshop) to discuss the possibilities for the development of PGT provision and the management of student numbers and develop an approach to this that is sustainable and fits with the School and College targets and priorities [*Paragraph 4.1.5*].

Glossary

Aropä

Aropä is a web-based system designed to support peer review activities in which the teaching team sets their students an assignment. Students submit their assignment, and then comment on the submissions from their peers. Once this review process is complete, students read the comments their peers have made on their own submission, and, if desired they can then be asked to comment upon that feedback. In this way students learn through completing the assignment, commenting on others' work and reading the feedback on their own work to reflect on their own learning and on what is required of them. Aropä can be used with class sizes from the very small to the largest in the University and it automates many of the time- and labour-intensive processes that can be required with peer assessment.

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.

Learning and Teaching Centre

The Learning and Teaching Centre is a University Service whose role is to “help implement and develop the University’s Learning and Teaching strategy, identify, assess and disseminate new developments and good practice which serve to enhance the student learning experience, and will work with colleagues throughout the University to bring about change”.

Moodle

Moodle is the University’s supported Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

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.

Postgraduate Taught or PGT

Postgraduate Taught refers to taught programmes at postgraduate level, usually Masters.

Summer School

The University of Glasgow organises an annual six week Summer School which is designed to help students prepare for university study. Students attend two academic subjects and study skills.

Widening Participation

The objective of widening participation is to develop, implement, co-ordinate and monitor initiatives which further: the increased recruitment of students to Higher Education from those areas and groups where there is low participation; the provision of educational support for all students once they have entered the University in order to improve student retention and to facilitate the successful completion of students' programmes of study; and the flexible provision of learning opportunities. More information can be found at the Widening Participation at <http://www.gla.ac.uk/wideningparticipation/>.