



## Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

### Review of the Accounting and Finance held on 3 March 2017

#### Report Summary

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The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the subject area of Accounting and Finance. *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\\_549189\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_549189_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.

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#### Conclusions

The Review Panel concluded that the Subject of Accounting and Finance is committed to enhancing the quality of teaching provision across its programmes. There is a strong sense of community amongst the student body, particularly at undergraduate level. This is due, in part, to the successful implementation of a variety of measures, (including annual *induction* sessions at the beginning of each academic year and an applicant visit day for students with unconditional offers) to ensure that students are well supported throughout their undergraduate studies. The Subject has also taken effective steps to support and develop their staff. These steps include generous research leave entitlements, substantial conference support funds, and reduced teaching workloads for early-career staff. Furthermore, the Panel recognises the excellent student employment figures for Accounting and Finance graduates and the close links with *accrediting* bodies that has helped to enhance employability.

## **Commendations, Key Strengths and Good Practice<sup>1</sup>**

Commendations are presented separately from examples of good practice, with the former being used to identify innovative and exemplary activities for wider dissemination.

### **Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their Learning**

- Transitional support provided to undergraduate students between school and university, and between each year of study [3.3.7].

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Engaging and Supporting Staff**

- The Subject's efforts to induct and integrate *Graduate Teaching Assistants* (GTAs) into the Subject's teaching community and in particular the development of a formal application process (with interviews and CVs) for GTAs [4.4.3]

The Review Panel identified the following key strengths and areas of good practice.

### **Context and Strategy: Strategic Approach to Enhancing Learning and Teaching**

- *Research-led teaching*, and the Subject's efforts to promote courses that are both research informed and critically engaged [2.4.2].

### **Enhancing the Student Experience: Admissions, Retention and Success**

- Commitment and success in *Widening Participation*, particularly with regards to the recruitment of Scottish students from areas of multiple deprivation [3.2.2].

### **Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their Learning**

- Sense of community and collegiality at undergraduate level [3.4.2];
- Acting and reflecting on student feedback, particularly in relation to the closure of feedback loops and the development of a '*feedback calendar*' [Paragraph 3.4.6]

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Study Abroad**

- Efforts to widen the breadth of course options available to undergraduate students [4.1.1].

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Engaging and Supporting Staff**

- Support for early-career staff and the development of local measures such as generous conference support funds and reduced teaching workloads to promote research and career development [4.4.1];
- Providing staff with the freedom to select their teaching options [4.4.2].

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers refer to the paragraphs in the full report that contain the relevant discussion.

## **Areas to be improved or enhanced**

The Review Panel made a number of recommendations where it identified opportunities for further enhancement.

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Assessment and Feedback**

- Provision of additional assessment literacy support to ensure that students understand, from the outset, what is expected of them for all forms of assessment [4.2.1];
- That all postgraduate taught dissertations should be double or second-marked in order to comply with the University's Guidelines on *Moderation and Second Marking* [4.3.3].

### **Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their Learning**

- More critical writing and language support should be provided for international students, and that existing support offered by the University (such as the *English for Academic Study Unit*) should be promoted more widely by the Subject [3.3.1];
- The postgraduate *induction* session should be repeated later in the academic year to remind students about the academic and pastoral support available to them [3.3.5];
- Postgraduate students to be provided with information and support in the preparation of their research proposals at an earlier stage of the research methods course [3.3.2];
- Exploration of a means of offering greater access to *advising support* at postgraduate level [3.3.3];
- The availability of the Adam Smith Business School's Mandarin-speaking mental health officer to be more widely advertised to students at induction sessions and throughout the year [3.3.4].

### **Enhancing the Student Experience: Student Engagement**

- The development an action plan similar to subject's response to *National Student Survey* (NSS) for *Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey* (PTES) results highlighting areas for enhancement [3.4.3];
- Further recruitment of *Student Class Representatives* in order to enhance communication between students and staff, particularly at postgraduate level. Early consultation with the *Students' Representative Council* [3.4.1].

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Study Abroad**

- Greater efforts be made to embed *internationalisation* into the curriculum consistently across all Accounting and Finance courses [4.1.2].

### **Context and Strategy: Strategic Approach to Enhancing Learning and Teaching**

- Continued modernisation of the curriculum to reflect the changing professional landscape of Accounting and Finance, specifically in relation to IT and digital technologies, to ensure that students are best prepared for future developments in the profession [2.4.3].

## *Glossary*

### **Accreditation**

Accreditation is a 'seal of approval' given to a programme by a professional body, association or other organisation. It has potential benefits for students, such as a recognised fast-track route for graduates seeking professional status or exemption from certain professional examinations.

### **Advising Support**

Members of the University community who provide advice and information to students with a view to enhancing their learning experience and professional development.

### **English for Academic Study (EAS) Unit**

The English for Academic Study (EAS) Unit supports students and staff whose first language is not English. Provision includes: pre-sessional courses for students who want to study at the University of Glasgow (and elsewhere); in-sessional classes and other support for current students; Teacher Development and Training courses from introductory to masters level and beyond; and other courses and consultancies by special arrangement in academic, business and general English. In addition, they support University subjects and schools by providing advice on English language tests and levels, and through support for staff and students.

### **Feedback Calendar (Assessment)**

Assessment feedback calendars are an administrative improvement to course documentation to communicate specific details of what kinds of assessment will be used e.g. formative, summative, by staff or peers, etc. and when feedback on assessment will be given, and is provided to students at the start of term.

### **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

### **Induction**

Induction is a series of events planned by the University, Colleges, Schools, Subjects and the Student's Representative Council to welcome new students and provide them with information to prepare them for their studies and the forthcoming year at University. Events usually take place during the first week of the academic year.

### **Internationalisation**

Internationalisation is a key strategic priority for the University. The University's Internationalisation Strategy contains six interconnected themes aimed at enhancing the global reach and reputation of the University (student experience, research and knowledge transfer, partnerships, alumni, local engagement and staff). The University's web pages contain a range of resources and guidance to support staff in achieving the University's [Internationalisation Strategy](#). This includes information for students and staff engaged in international initiatives, international staff working in Glasgow and staff working overseas.

### **Moderation/Second Marking**

Moderation and Second marking describes the process of where assessments are marked a second time and the two marks compared. The purpose is to ensure the marks awarded are fair, reliable and consistent. The second marking may be done 'blind' or 'seen' and may be done on all of the class's work or on just a sample. Where the markers agree, the marks are confirmed or verified; where they disagree the marks are moderated or changed either by agreement between the two markers or by a third person.

### **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.

### **Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES)**

Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) is an on-line survey for postgraduate students to feedback about their experiences of their taught postgraduate programmes. The responses help inform the University about the experience of taught postgraduates to improve future support and are also used nationally to help advise policy and help improve learning and teaching of taught postgraduates across the sector.

### **Research-led Teaching**

Research-led Teaching can mean different things in different disciplines. Broadly speaking, the term refers to the ways that the current research of staff can positively influence and support student learning and promote the development of research skills and attributes in students.

### **Student Class Representative**

Student Class Representatives are elected by groups of students to represent their views and opinions in meetings at school, college or University level. There are many activities where the input of student representatives provides valuable feedback to the University on the quality of the student experience.

### **Students' Representative Council (SRC)**

The SRC's main responsibility is to represent all students of the University, and is a student-led organisation, run by a council, which includes 30 student members and an executive formed by sabbatical and non-sabbatical officers. All registered students of the University have the right to vote and can stand for elections, which usually take place in October and March every year. Furthermore, the SRC runs a free, impartial and confidential Advice Centre, which can help you with anything from academic matters to housing, financial and welfare advice.

## **Widening Access or 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/>.