University of Glasgow

Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

Review of the History of Art held on 22 February 2017

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the subject area of History of Art. *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_549191_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 Review Panel concluded that History of Art demonstrates a clear commitment to excellence in learning and teaching. Despite significant challenges relating to increased student numbers and staffing changes, the Subject has continued to place the quality of the student experience at the heart of its concern. It has embraced the challenges of re-modelling its Level 1 and 2 curriculum, continues to enhance its *Postgraduate Taught* (PGT) provision, many aspects of which are unique within Europe, and places great value on *research-led teaching*. Against this background, History of Art has sought to engage with new *pedagogical* strategies and innovative practices, which continue to set the Subject apart from other Scottish Art History departments. The Review Panel was particularly impressed by the quality and dedication of staff and their commitment to providing a highly enriching learning experience for students.

Commendations, Key Strengths and Good Practice[1]

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: Admissions, Retention and Success

- The delivery and content of the Methodology of Art Junior Honours core course, which was highly praised by the students the Panel met with [3.1.8];

- The use of the annual Postgraduate *Symposium* as a means of fostering common identity and purpose across its *PGT* community [3.1.13];

- The very high levels of satisfaction reported by the *PGT* students it met with [3.1.13].

Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their Learning

- The Subject's engagement with the wider community and, in particular, its efforts to bring professional expertise to bear on student learning through work *placements*, its guest lecturer programme and its partnership working with external art organisations [3.3.6].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Engaging and Supporting Staff

- The introduction of a Teaching *Forum* as an excellent example of innovative practice in Learning and Teaching [4.1.9];
- The Subject's reflective and knowledgeable approach to student support taken by History of Art's *Graduate Teaching Assistants* (GTA) [4.4.11].

Context and Strategy: Strategic Approach to Enhancing Learning and Teaching

- The Subject's comprehensive *Self-Evaluation Report* (SER) and its strong engagement with the *PSR* process. There was clear evidence that staff and students were highly committed to the Subject's next phase of development under the new Head of Subject [2.4.5].

The Review Panel identified the following key strengths and areas of good practice. These are listed **in order of appearance** in this report:

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

 Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Curriculum Design

- The emphasis on the value of generic and *transferable skills* across its curriculum. [paragraph 2.4.3]

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

Enhancing the Student Experience: Admissions, Retention and Success

- The clear sense of progression which existed between the Level 1 and 2 curriculum. [4.1.1].

Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their Learning

- The range of professional expertise provided by staff [3.1.2].

- The introduction of guidelines regarding the supervision and review of drafts of dissertations. [paragraph 3.1.9]

Enhancing the Student Experience: Student Engagement

- The opportunities provided by the Centre for Textile Conservation and Technical Art History (CTCTAH) [3.1.3].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Learning and Teaching

The emphasis placed by the Subject on *research-led teaching* [3.1.12].

Areas to be improved or enhanced

The Review Panel makes a small number of recommendations where it sees opportunities for the Subject to further enhance its provision, but these are made against the Panel's overall view that History of Art continues to be a highly successful academic unit.

Enhancing the Student Experience: Student Engagement

- A review of student feedback mechanisms within the Subject, to ensure that actions/outcomes arising from student feedback via *Staff Student Liaison Committee* (SSLC) are clearly identified and reported back to students promptly, and also that SSLC minutes are made available to students via *Moodle* and/or *Student Voice* [3.4.4].

Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their Learning

- An annual review of all its course handbooks with the aim of:
  - Ensuring all information in handbooks, and in particular that relating to *Intended Learning Outcomes* (ILO), *Programme Specifications* and guidance regarding *assessment criteria* and weighting of units of assessment is clear,

up-to-date and consistent with all other sources of information available to students; and

- Ensuring students have a clearer understanding of relevant policies and regulations relating to the University's *Code of Assessment* [3.3.9].

Enhancing the Student Experience: Equality and Diversity

- The Subject continues to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that its learning spaces and all learning opportunities, for example, field trips and work placements are accessible to disabled students, in accordance with the University's *Equality and Diversity Policy* and the *Equality Act 2010* [3.2.1].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Assessment and Feedback

A review of its procedures in relation to feedback on assessment, this review to have particular regard to the following matters:

- the quality, consistency and timeliness of feedback to students;

- the adoption of the University *Workload Model* to help staff plan workloads ensuring that time for marking is recognised and built into staff timetables at appropriate points;

- the setting of deadlines for student assignments which ensure that, where possible, 'bunching' of assignment deadlines is avoided; and

- the implementation of a strategy to consolidate the use of *Assessment Blueprinting* within the Subject – this exercise to be conducted with the support of *Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service* (LEADS) [4.2.4].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Postgraduate Taught Provision

- Development of a strategic approach with regard to its PGT portfolio through reflection of the overall vision for the Subject, the distinctive nature of its existing provision and emerging opportunities such as those linked to the Kelvin Hall and Hunterian Museum developments [3.1.11].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Curriculum Design and Development

- A review of the content and delivery of the Research Methods course, which should include an evaluation of other models for similar courses offered in the University, for example in English Literature, and be cognisant of the role of Course Convener [3.1.14].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Study Abroad

- The Review Panel **recommends** that History of Art takes steps to more actively promote study abroad opportunities within the Subject, with a view to meeting the *University's strategic objectives* [4.1.7].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Engaging and Supporting Staff

- Implementation of the University *Workload Model* and a review of timetabling arrangements for early career staff, such that adequate protected time is made available to them to undertake commitments related to *Early Career Development Programme* (ECDP) and *Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice* (PgCAP) [4.3.1];

- The Subject:

  - clarifies, and gives greater recognition to, the role of Course Convener such that *GTA*s are provided with more structured and systematic support; and

  - more clearly defines the Course Convener's role in supporting the management of courses and course teaching staff within the Subject.

  - increases recognition of the role of Course Convener which might also benefit staff wishing to participate in the University's *Recognising Excellence in Teaching* (RET) framework [4.4.11];

- A review of the following:

  - the role and responsibilities of *GTAs*, such that these are more clearly defined, particularly with regard to the content and delivery of seminars for which *GTAs* are responsible; and also the extent to which *GTAs* may engage with students on pastoral matters;

  - The existing level of provision for *GTAs* in the following areas with a view to this being increased; subject-specific training; guidance on the University *Code of Assessment and Marking Scheme*; opportunities for staff/student feedback; recognition/payment for seminar preparation time; *peer observation* and office space [4.4.11]

For noting:

The Subject is invited to provide a report on progress regarding the relocation and centralisation of the School administration at a new site in Gilmorehill, by the end of May 2018 [4.4.12].

Glossary

Assessment Blueprinting

Assessment blueprinting is a process of looking at the assessment in each course, in terms of the whole programme and assessment in other courses. The process aims to ensure programmes fulfil a range of requirements in terms of aims and outcomes, whilst reducing teaching and assessment overloads (for both staff and for students), making teaching and assessment more effective overall.

Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria are statements that explain how a student's achievement will be evaluated against a learning outcome.

Code of Assessment/Marking Scheme

The University's Code of Assessment (implemented 2002-03) is designed to provide a fair and rational means of assessing students' performance. It provides instructions to staff on how assessment should be designed and carried out. It sets out verbal descriptions of each of the eight grades from A to H. Students' work is judged against these descriptions in terms of how well they have met the stated intended learning outcomes of the course or other assessed component and the corresponding grade is awarded. A guide to the Code of Assessment for students is available from the Senate Office website at: http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_275332_en.pdf . A guide to the Marking Scheme is available at: http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_450640_en.pdf.

Early Career Development Programme (ECDP)

The Early Career Development Programme is a development framework to support career progression for staff, which focuses on core developmental activities aligned to relevant promotion criteria. The framework includes Learning Themes developed through analysis of the relevant promotion criteria and in consultation with a range of stakeholders and a range of development activities. The Framework structure also supports all ECDP participants seeking out learning opportunities that may be relevant to their own discipline and can support the completion of a particular element within the ECDP Development Framework.

Equality act (2010)

The **Equality Act 2010** requires the University, in the exercise of our functions, to give due regard to the need to

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act extends to cover the rights of staff and students (including prospective staff and students) and protects against discrimination under nine **protected characteristics**. These are: Age; Disability; Gender re-assignment; Marriage and civil partnership; Pregnancy and maternity; Race; Religion or belief (including lack of belief); Sex; and Sexual orientation.

Equality and Diversity Policy

The University aims to create a supportive and inclusive environment where everyone can reach their full potential and have a real choice to participate in and contribute to our activities and processes, without prejudice and discrimination. It is committed to a culture where respect and understanding is fostered and the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances will be positively valued.

http://www.gla.ac.uk/humanresources/policies/a-g/equalitypolicy/

Forum

A forum is a meeting or medium where ideas and views on a particular issue can be exchanged.

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.

Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service (LEADS)

LEADS 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).

Pedagogical

Pedagogical refers to anything that a person uses to learn or teach.

Peer Observation

Colleagues observe fellow peers in order to identify different types of activity and provide feedback and support as necessary.

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.

PGCAP

The Academic Development Unit provides two credit bearing programmes for academic members of staff: the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) and the MEd in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (online).

Postgraduate Taught or PGT

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

Programme Specifications

Programme specifications are documents that aim to provide the core factual information about a programme of study to a range of stakeholders, including students or potential students, e.g. Level of award, number of credits, programme aims, intended learning outcomes, etc.

Recognising Excellence in Teaching Scheme (RET)

Recognising Excellence in Teaching is the University of Glasgow's Continuing Professional Development framework, which aims to provide development opportunities as well as professional recognition of expertise in teaching and supporting learning. There are four categories of recognition: Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow and staff can apply via a structured programme of support consisting of workshops, peer groups and teaching observations that assist participants to write their application.

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.

Self Evaluation Report (SER)

A Self Evaluation Report is a document prepared by the Subject(s)/School in advance of a PSR Review. Its purpose is to provide the Review Panel with an insight into the Subject(s)/School's view of itself, its strengths and areas it would wish to develop. It is normally prepared by the Head of School in conjunction with other staff but students should also be offered the opportunity to comment on whether or not it reflects the Subject(s)/School they know.

Staff:Student Liaison Committee or SSLCs

Staff:Student Liaison Committees are Subject/School committees which provide a formal opportunity for Student Representatives to discuss matters with, and give feedback to their subject area.

Student Voice

Student Voice is an online forum for students and their student representatives to communicate and discuss their learning experience. It exists to promote discussion, engagement between students, their representatives and academic units, and to allow academic units to demonstration action in response to student feedback. All UofG students automatically have access to Student Voice via the MyGlasgow Student Portal.

Symposium

A symposium is a conference or meeting to discuss a particular subject.

Transferable 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

Workload Model (Staff)

A workload model is a means of describing the workload of all members of staff and should be used by Schools to ensure that staff workloads are manageable and allocated fairly with different types of work appropriately distributed.

University's Strategic Objectives

The University Strategy (2015-20) aims to provide students and staff with the support, development, infrastructure and environment needed to further the University's ambition. This involves transforming the way we work and improving the interactions with each other (students/ partners) and growing our reputation, so that: 1) students regardless of background, are given an education that prepares them to go into the world and make change happen 2) research conducted positively impacts on the health, wealth and cultural wellbeing of the world, and 3) we engage with the city of Glasgow and the global community.