

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 30 May 2008

**Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:
Responses to the Recommendations Arising from the Review of
Celtic held on 2 February 2007**

Mrs Catherine Omand, Clerk to the Review Panel

May 2008

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The Review Panel highly commends the Department for the overall quality of its provision, and for its conscientious approach to the student experience and to teaching in general, at all levels. Staff were enthusiastic, approachable and responsive to students. However, the Review Panel was extremely concerned over the high workloads that placed some staff under significant and sustained pressure. The Panel recognises that such problems often occur in small departments but considered the workloads prevented effective staff development. The Review Panel proposed that student numbers could be increased, both home and overseas students, which would raise the Department's profile and enhance their case for additional staffing thereby supporting the Dean and HoD to address workload issues.

The inadequate accommodation greatly concerned the Review Panel and it requests that the Director of E&B meet with the Dean as a matter of priority to address staff accommodation and the provision of appropriate dedicated teaching space for them.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The Panel requests that the Dean and the Director of Estates and Buildings consider the provision of dedicating teaching and office space to the Department, as a matter of priority. (*Paragraph C.6.1*). The Panel wishes to be updated on this action within 6 months.

Action: Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Divinity
Director of Estates and Buildings

Response:

Awaited

Recommendation 2:

The Panel requests that a formal and systematic timetable of quality assurance procedures be established to review teaching and assessment, research and course monitoring in a structured and scheduled approach, and that these systems be embedded by the start of the next academic session (07/08). (*Paragraph E.3*) The Panel wishes to be updated on this action within 6 months.

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

The Department has considered this recommendation very carefully. In recognition of the need to embed systematic procedures of quality assurance within the Department, we have established a new formal framework within which Departmental programmes of teaching, learning, research and assessment can be reviewed and monitored effectively. This has involved the formalisation of existing informal procedures and the establishment of some new procedures, all of which feed into a newly established end-of-session Annual Course and Programme Monitoring (ACPM) meeting, scheduled to take place shortly after the annual Board of Examiners' meeting. This will ensure the timely completion of Annual Course Monitoring (ACM) forms, with only statistical information relating to repeat examinations to be added at the end of the Summer. Changes and new formal procedures include:

- new induction courses at the beginning of each academic year (September) for GTAs run by staff (with input from the Learning and Teaching Centre as necessary), providing guidance on individual courses, assessment procedures and student feedback
- the development of new information packs for GTAs containing tutorial exercises, notes for tutors, marking scheme(s), model answers, anonymised assessed coursework with feedback
- the further development of existing centralised Departmental spreadsheets for the recording of attendance and submission of coursework (so that potential problems can be identified as early as possible)
- the establishment of new feedback fora through Moodle, which will be reported to Staff-Student Liaison Committees, Departmental and ACPM meetings
- the regularisation of already established student focus groups in the penultimate week of a course's duration
- the timely production and circulation of Staff-Student Liaison Committee minutes to all students (see Response to Recommendation 3 below)
- major matters arising from Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings to be fed into Departmental and ACPM meetings
- the possibility of having students present at certain parts of relevant Departmental meetings is under consideration
- the production of brief summary synopses of student feedback questionnaires for individual courses which will feed into the annual course monitoring process, including the ACPM meeting
- the formalisation of lecturers' self-review of individual courses which will feed into the annual course monitoring process, including the ACPM meeting

- the establishment of post-course GTA focus meetings to review courses taught and the convenorship of relevant courses
- ensuring the maintenance of appropriate quality assurance files for the purpose of future quality audits
- Our innovative Honours Dissertation course, which provides research guidance and training for our Honours students, is monitored periodically. Recent and planned developments associated with this course include: the introduction of PDP; more explicit tuition and guidance on presentation skills and plagiarism (see Responses to Recommendations 11 & 23).
- The Department's system of reviewing biannually the progress of its postgraduate students has recently been adopted as the Faculty norm. We have introduced further modifications to the monitoring process, chiefly in the proformas filled out by students in preparation for the reviews.

Recommendation 3:

The Panel recommends that feedback from Staff/Student Liaison committees is formalised and distributed to all students within an appropriate timescale. (*Paragraph E.2*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

Having considered this recommendation the Department has regularised the following procedures:

- The Department aims to prepare the minutes of Staff-Student Liaison Committees and send these to staff and class representatives for comment within 24 hours of meetings. We aim to finalise the minutes and post them on the relevant Moodle sites and Departmental Notice boards within one week of the SSLC meetings.

Recommendation 4:

The Panel recommends that the Department review the number of courses available and examine whether or not there is flexibility in the design of courses, particularly at Level 1 and 2, to increase student self-directed learning, and consider whether the level of team teaching could be reduced to decrease the teaching contact hours of some staff. (*Paragraph C.6.2*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

The Department has given careful consideration to this recommendation, and in so doing has made the following decisions and changes:

- We have reviewed the number of courses we offer and concluded that any cut-backs in provision would have serious ramifications for our UG income streams at Levels 1 and 2, and, moreover, would impact on the feasibility of our Honours programmes, with implications for the number of Honours and therefore postgraduate students we would attract.

- In consultation with the Dean, it has been decided, if we are to maintain the broad range of our current provision, that the most obvious way to address the teaching workload, particularly that of the former Head of Department, associated with the most productive part of our curricula, is the creation of a new medieval post. This new post has been prioritised in both Departmental and Faculty strategic plans (see Response to Recommendation 6) and a decision is expected before the end of April.
- We increased our use of GTAs this session at every level including Honours. This was possible due to the Department's success in attracting internal and external funding for teaching buy-out (see Response to Recommendation 5). If such activity is to be sustained the Department will require an increase to its GTA budget.
- We have cut back very slightly on the number of Honours courses available in any given year, while retaining sufficient student choice and breadth of courses.
- When very small numbers of students sign up for a particular Honours course, we have begun, where practicable, to encourage students to take cognate courses with larger cohorts of students.
- We have increased the number and types of formative assessments on Moodle in a number of our Level 1 and 2 courses (Gaelic and Celtic Civilisation), and have plans to develop new student self-directed learning Moodle exercises over the coming Summer and next session. We are also considering increasing the number of summative assessments available through Moodle.
- The Department wishes to note that the second essay in Celtic Civilisation 1A and 1B aims to give students the chance to pursue a topic that interests them and is related to, but slightly beyond, the curriculum, thus facilitating a degree of personal research and self-directed learning.
- With student self-directed learning in mind, we are considering replacing from next session the first essay in Level 1 Celtic Civilisation courses with a factually oriented gobbet-like exercise, thus encouraging students to learn more about crucial concepts, terms, issues and artefacts (cf. Response to Recommendation 11).
- While recognising the time commitment involved, the Department wishes to assert the pedagogic (for students) and intellectual (for staff) benefits of team teaching, which is also an ideal means of 'bench-marking' and sharing best practice, especially when this involves cooperation with colleagues from other departments. We acknowledge that team teaching can be resource intensive; however, this form of teaching implicitly entails a degree of peer observation of teaching, which is called for in Recommendation 24 below. Nevertheless, with Recommendation 4 in mind, the levels of team teaching, which involved the simultaneous presence of two members of staff, were reduced this session, and operated only in the case of one Honours course, i.e. in the Celtic Place-names course which involved a research assistant from one of our AHRC-funded projects teaching alongside a lecturer in History; this ensured that appropriate mentoring and monitoring of teaching occurred (cf. Recommendations 19 & 24). Complementary team teaching was, however, continued in a number of courses, for instance, where we would normally have offered two Honours courses in Semester 2 on modern Scottish Gaelic literature, only one course was offered, which was team-taught but in complementary fashion by the two lecturers concerned; this provided students with a suitable curriculum while at the same time reducing staff workloads.

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- We plan to utilise complementary team teaching judiciously in future as an effective means of reducing rather than increasing staff workloads, and enhancing the student experience.

Recommendation 5:

The Panel recommends that the Department consider further use of GTAs and Language Assistants throughout the curriculum, provided appropriate support is given. (*Paragraph C.6.10*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

In response to this recommendation, the Department made more use of an increased number of GTAs and also a former Language Assistant. One GTA taught part of an Honours course for the first time, and some research overhead income was used to employ a GTA on a contractual basis to deliver Level 1 teaching on the Celtic Civilisation programme and a new Honours course in his area of expertise. All GTAs met regularly with, and were supported by, relevant staff members (cf. Recommendation 19). It is important to note that the increased use of GTAs was made possible by the availability of additional internal and external income awarded to the Department for the purpose of teaching buy-out from the PDP initiative, RAE Panel-related money, and from *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* [‘the Gaelic Language Board’] for a new Gaelic language initiative. An augmented GTA budget would be needed to sustain this increased use of GTAs in future years.

Recommendation 6:

The Panel recommends that the Department produces a business plan following discussion with IPS, for introducing the MLitt, and that on the basis of additional income; it puts a case to the FMG for additional staffing. (*Paragraph C.5.5*)

Action: The Head of Department and the Dean

Response Head of Department::

The Department took the following action in relation to this recommendation:

- Having liaised with IPS and the Dean, the Department produced a robust business plan for a new post, built around the introduction of a new taught MLitt in Celtic Studies. The conservative estimates made in the financial business plan show that this new course is financially viable and sustainable. The MLitt has been approved by Senate’s Programme Approval Group. The new post has been included in the Faculty’s budget plan and a final decision on the post will be made by SMG in late April.

Response Dean:

The business plan has been produced, and the case for additional staffing is in the Faculty budget projection for 2008-9. We hope to proceed to appointment in the near future.

Recommendation 7:

The Panel recommends that the Department introduce personal development plans for staff to ensure that staff have the opportunity to develop their research interests and scholarship throughout their academic career. (*Paragraph C.6.5*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

The Department considered this recommendation carefully and reached the following conclusion. The Department feels strongly that the P&DR process, now in its second year, adequately facilitates personal development planning as it considers short, medium and long-term objectives of staff members.

Recommendation 8:

The Panel recommends that the Department further promotes the use of Moodle and Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) package to support learning, enhancing the student experience without increasing teaching loads. (*Paragraph C.6.3*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

The Department noted with gratification the Panel's approval of its use of VLE and Moodle and the encouragement given to students to discuss and raise questions in this forum. In response to this recommendation the Department can report as follows:

- Moodle operates for all of our Level 1 and 2 courses and for an increasing number of our Honours courses (currently 8 of these), including core options such as *Sgilean Cànain* ['Language Skills'] and the Dissertation course. We can therefore report that our use of Moodle affects all of our UG students (cf. Response to Recommendation 20).
- The Department regularly develops, enhances and promotes the use of Moodle at all levels. All members of staff except one member, who was on maternity leave, attended a bespoke Departmental Lunch workshop event organised by the Learning and Teaching Centre (Dr Deneka MacDonald and Mr Dave Scotson) in February 2007, which explored advanced capabilities of Moodle intended to enhance our existing provision (cf. Response to Recommendation 20). A number of staff, including the Head of Department, have attended further Moodle workshops since then.
- The Department was awarded funding from the Faculty of Arts (from funds made available by Professor Andrea Nolan, VP Learning, Teaching & Internationalisation) for staff buy-out in order to develop a Moodle site to support the Honours module 'Fourteenth-century Wales: The World of Dafydd ap Gwilym and Iolo Goch' (cf. Response to Recommendation 20).
- We have decided for the time being to concentrate on developing language materials for Moodle rather than the older CALL package (see next point).
- The Department intends to take full advantage of a new Scottish Funding Council initiative (to be announced soon) which will provide funding at a national level for the development and enhancement of Gaelic language learning materials. It is likely that this initiative will provide opportunities to develop CALL and related resources at a national level. This SFC initiative will enable staff to devote time to the development of new materials relevant to VLE, which, in the long term, will support student self-learning and potentially reduce teaching loads in some areas.

Recommendation 9:

The Panel recommends that the Department promotes Celtic Civilisation amongst cognate Level One students, and increases the profile of this programme and other programmes within the Faculty, ensuring that all Faculty Advisers of Studies are fully aware of what the programmes involve and that they understand that they are available to non-Gaelic speakers. (*Paragraph C.5.1*)

Action: The Head of Department
Chief Adviser of Studies

Response Department:

In recognition of the need to increase the profile of Celtic Civilisation and in response to this recommendation, the Head of Department wrote on 9 September 2007 to all Principal Advisors of Studies and all Advisors of Studies in the Faculty of Arts outlining the Department's three programmes and providing concise information packs on each. This followed on from a similar email communication from Dr Heather Lloyd (6 September). The letter highlighted the fact that Celtic Civilisation and the other two programmes were available to non-Gaelic speakers. This will be repeated in future years. The Department will endeavour to make individual contact with new advisers of studies as they come on stream to inform them of programmes on offer within the Department, and Dr Heather Lloyd has indicated that she will periodically inform the Department of new advisers.

Response Chief Adviser of Studies

In the late summer Advisers of Studies in Arts routinely receive up-to-date information about the various courses available to their first-year and other advisees in the forthcoming session, and this includes an amount of informative material from the Celtic Department. In the light of recommendation 9, the Chief Adviser of Studies emailed Advisers specifically to draw their attention to the courses available in the Celtic Department, highlighting the fact that they are available to non-Gaelic speakers and that Celtic Civilisation may be of special interest to those taking cognate subjects. Chief Advisers in the other general faculties were also contacted with the suggestion that they should obtain documentation on courses from the Celtic Department for circulation to their own Adviser teams.

Recommendation 10:

The Panel recommends that contact with schools be re-instated to promote the three undergraduate degree programmes (Gaelic, Celtic Studies and Celtic Civilisation) and that they establish a relationship with the recently opened Gaelic High School. (*Paragraph C.5.2*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

In response to this recommendation we have taken the following action and decisions:

- The Department has had productive meetings and communications with staff members of RAPS (most notably with Rory McDiarmid and more recently with Fiona Andrews) to discuss ways in which we might promote our three

undergraduate degree programmes. With the assistance of RAPS we have begun to compile a new database containing information on all students who were made conditional and unconditional offers across our three programmes last year. Based on this initial dataset RAPS are endeavouring to provide us with a list of UK schools attended by UK domiciled students. This will enable us to carry out targeted marketing and recruitment drives.

- In consultation with RAPS and Corporate Communications we intend to design new information leaflets to be sent to schools in order to promote our three programmes and to enhance recruitment. The inclusion from 2010–11 of a mandatory Scottish section on the Higher History examination provides further opportunities for the Department to market its Celtic Civilisation programme to prospective students.
- We have arranged for RAPS to inform us of students with interests in Celtic and Gaelic Studies who have registered to attend one of the twenty or so University ‘Afternoon Visits’. We have increased the number of ‘drop in’ opportunities for such students.
- We have discussed with RAPS the possibility of organising in the future a Department of Celtic Open Day.
- We have arranged for members of staff to deliver talks at future University’s Open Days, the first one being scheduled for 19 June 2008.

We have a very good working relationship with the recently established *Sgoil Ghàidhlig Ghlaschu*:

- A member of staff has been involved in the training of its teachers in advanced Gaelic language skills.
- Teachers from the School have visited the Department to talk to our students about career opportunities (see Response to Recommendation 22).
- Senior students of the School have been invited to attend our recently established and successful *Cuirm-cheist* [‘Gaelic Quiz’], funded by *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* [‘the Gaelic Language Board’].
- Future initiatives involving Gaelic-medium schools and units which we have considered include the organisation of a school pupil-centred study day within the Department focusing on materials covered in Higher examination curricula.

Recommendation 11:

The Panel recommends that the Department considers use of a wider range of assessment, and offers some additional tuition on presentation skills. (*Paragraph C.3.2*)

Action: The Head of Department /
Director of the Learning and Teaching Centre

Response:

The Department has given careful consideration to this recommendation. The Department feels that the Panel was excessively drawn to the use of essays in Celtic Civilisation courses and that due recognition was not given to the wide range of assessment types used on the Gaelic side of the curriculum. Nevertheless, in consideration of this recommendation, we have implemented, or propose to implement, the following changes:

- We have increased the variety of assessment types (both formative and summative) available through Moodle.
- With student self-directed learning in mind, from next session we are considering replacing the first essay in Level 1 Celtic Civilisation courses with a factually oriented gobbet-like exercise, thus encouraging students to learn more about crucial concepts, terms, issues and artefacts (cf. Response to Recommendation 4).
- We have introduced presentations to our Gaelic conversation classes, and plan to introduce presentations to Level 2 Celtic Civilisation courses.

In recognition of the need to provide tuition on presentation skills, we propose:

- to improve our practice by providing better guidance and outlining expectations with regard to class presentations; this will involve the production of more explicit criteria for the assessment of presentations based on existing feedback sheets.
- to introduce a component on presentation skills to Level 2 Celtic Civilisation
- to introduce a new component on presentation skills to the Honours Dissertation course. As well as ‘capturing’ all Honours students, this will have the advantage of preparing Honours students for the various presentations required of them in their Honours years, including the Dissertation course itself.

These latter plans will be further discussed and taken forward during the next session as it was not feasible to implement them during the current year due mainly to staff leave. These plans will be implemented as part of changes to these courses dictated by changing academic structures.

We can also report that:

- The Head of Department has discussed with the Director of the Learning and Teaching Centre, Lorna McEachan, the actions we have taken and propose to implement, and agreed that contact will be made with Dr Sarah Mann, Head of the Academic Development Unit, should the Department require any further support in broadening the range of assessments used in our programmes.

Response Director of Learning and Teaching Centre:

The Director of the Learning and Teaching Centre and the Head of Department of Celtic have discussed the action the Department has taken in relation to this recommendation and agreed that should the Head of Department need any further support in relation to widening the range of assessments used, he will contact Dr Sarah Mann, Head of the Academic Development Unit.

Recommendation 12:

The Panel recommends that, if essay-writing is to continue as the main form of assessment, the Department ensure that procedures are in place (such as changing essay titles on a yearly basis) to avoid student-to-student plagiarism. (*Paragraph C.3.2*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

The Department gave careful consideration to this recommendation and can report as follows:

- The Department recognises the intrinsic value of essays as an important means of developing key transferable skills of our students.
- Essay titles are altered on a yearly basis on the Gaelic side of the curriculum in order to reduce the likelihood of student-student plagiarism. Conveners of individual courses will keep a record of essay titles from year to year.
- Attention has always been given in Celtic Civilisation 1 to the rotation of essay topics and titles over a 3–4 year period in order to reduce the likelihood of student-student plagiarism. Conveners of individual courses will keep a record of essay titles from year to year.
- We are considering replacing the first essay in Level 1 Celtic Civilisation with a more factually based exercise (see Response to Recommendation 11).
- The question of essay topics and titles in Celtic Civilisation is under discussion as part of the reorganisation of these courses and their assessment in order to adapt these to the new academic structures.
- Given the relatively smaller numbers taking Level 2 Celtic Civilisation courses, it is possible for lecturers and tutors to guide and direct students to sufficiently different themes each year while answering similar broad-based or generic questions, thus avoiding student-student plagiarism.

Recommendation 13:

The Panel recommends that the Department promotes the fact that it attracts a substantial number of native-speaking Gaelic speakers to enhance recruitment. (*Paragraph C.5.3*)

Action: The Head of Department/
Director of RAPS

Response:

The Department has considered this recommendation carefully and can report as follows:

- We have had a number of productive meetings and communications with staff members of RAPS (with Fiona Andrews and Rory McDiarmid) to discuss ways in which we might promote and improve our existing track record in attracting substantial number of native-speaking Gaelic speakers (cf. Response to Recommendation 10). RAPS has agreed to cover all transport and accommodation costs as well as expenses of a member of our staff to attend appropriate Higher Education Conventions when these occur in the Highlands and Western Isles.
- We have contacted the Scottish Qualification Authority who have kindly provided us with the names of all schools and units where Gaelic Highers are being sat this year. This information will enable us to focus our marketing and recruitment strategies in areas with existing demand for Gaelic-medium education.

- The publicity associated with the appointment and post of a new Gaelic Language Officer (see Response to Recommendation 21) will contribute substantially to our promotional efforts to attract even more Gaelic speakers to the University of Glasgow and its Department of Celtic.
- We plan to highlight the substantial numbers of native Gaelic speakers in the Department through our new t4 website, which will contain statements and testimonials in Gaelic from current and past students, including some prominent public figures (see also Response to Recommendation 22).

Response Director of Recruitment and Participation Service:

Rory McDiarmid (Recruitment Officer - Recruitment, Admissions and Participation Service/RAPS) met with Roibeard O'Malalaigh & Aonghas MacCoinnich on Thursday 10th January 2008 to discuss ways in which RAPS can assist the Department of Celtic Studies with increasing student numbers across their three main degree programmes; Gaelic, Celtic Studies & Celtic Civilisation.

The department stressed that there was a lot to be positive about following on from the departmental review but that with increasing competition from UHI in the Highlands as well as Aberdeen & Edinburgh the department acknowledged the need to become more proactive about recruitment.

At the moment the department recruits students mainly from Scotland, especially for the Gaelic language programme but has a more diverse student body represented in Celtic Studies & Celtic Civilisation where the teaching has more of a cultural and historical focus.

The department felt it could do more to attract native gaelic speakers to the language programme. It was suggested that members of the department would be happy to attend Higher Education Conventions with a UK Recruitment Officer in the north of Scotland and Highlands & Islands. UK Recruitment agreed that they could advise the department of suitable events such as the Wick & Shetland HEC's.

The department also felt it would be worthwhile to target schools in the area with promotional material. RAPS advised that the department should contact Corporate Communications for a design & that RAPS could assist in the consultation process before the design went to print. RAPS agreed to help the department pull together a list of suitable schools to target based on location and application figures. RAPS suggested that the leaflet should list the selling points of the department; the only independent Celtic department in Scotland etc and also some of the career paths associated with the degree programmes; teaching, broadcasting (BBC).

The department was keen on the idea that Gaelic should be seen as a 'modern' language in the same way that French & German are. It was suggested that UK Recruitment could take a small supply of Celtic course brochures to HEC's and where appropriate give information to students about the courses. The fact that Gaelic can be taken up at Glasgow without any prior study of the subject was seen as an advantage and could be marketed as an interesting third choice subject for an Arts faculty applicant interested in pursuing any of the modern languages. Similarly Celtic Studies/Civilisation would also appeal to History/Classics students.

RAPS advised the department of Afternoon Visits on campus. As students register an interest in particular subjects, it was agreed that if someone registers for a Celtic courses, the department can make someone available to meet with students. This would be from 4-5pm after the scheduled Arts faculty meeting.

Long term, the department would try to organise a 'Celtic Department Open Day' but this was unlikely to happen this year due to funding. RAPS advised that they could assist with this if required.

Recommendation 14:

The Panel recommends that the Department continue to liaise with the Library to ensure that appropriate numbers of course textbooks are available in the University library. (*Paragraph F.4*)

Action: The Head of Department/
Director of Library

Response:

In response to this recommendation we have taken the following action:

- The Department has liaised with the Principal Assistant Librarian, Richard Bapty. We have set in train a process whereby our reading lists will be analysed in terms of usage and demand, and new or second-hand copies of high-demand items will be obtained. We have already begun with the larger Level 1 and 2 courses, and will work our way towards reviewing in a similar manner reading lists for our Honours and PGT courses over the next few months.
- In order to address logjams involving high demand Celtic Studies material close to essay deadlines we have extended our use of the Library's digital service for providing online access to course materials. We have directed students via tutorials and coursebooks to alternative secondary literature. We have also liaised closely with Smith's Bookshop to ensure that sufficient new and second hand materials are available for students.
- We also plan, in line with future University policy, to increase the number of staff publications available via *Enlighten*. (A publication of a member of staff of the Department, *Language in Pictland*, is the most frequently consulted item on *Enlighten*.)

Response Director of Library:

Response awaited

Recommendation 15:

The Panel recommends that the Department seek support from the Faculty to address high teaching loads, without affecting the high quality student learning experience. (*Paragraph C.6.2*)

Action: The Head of Department/ Dean

Response Head of Department:

In response to this recommendation the Department can report as follows:

- With the support of the Dean and the Faculty Office, the Department put together a package, with judicious use of research overheads and other funds, which enabled us to appoint two temporary lecturers for parts of the current session in order to help us cope with staff leaves (the previous Head of Department, who was entitled to research leave having completed four years of

service as HoD, and the maternity and research leave of another member of staff). This has guarded against excessively heavy working loads for some staff during the current session.

- The Dean and Faculty Officer have agreed to a modest increase in the Department's GTA budget from next session. This will support a very modest increase in the use of GTAs (cf. Response to Recommendation 5) thus ameliorating staff workloads to some degree.
- In consultation with the Dean, it has been decided that the most obvious way to address the teaching workload (particularly that of the former Head of Department) is the creation of a new medieval post. This new post has been prioritised in both Departmental and Faculty strategic plans (see Response to Recommendation 6).

Response Dean:

The Department has been encouraged to review its delivery modes, which have been extremely contact-intensive, and to come to a realistic compromise with its aspirations towards providing a high quality learning experience. The new appointment should assist this.

Recommendation 16:

The Panel recommends that Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) should be made more explicit and since expectations change, the ILOs / assessment methods should be revised to ensure that assessment meets ILOs. (*Paragraph C.2.1*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

The Department gave due consideration to this recommendation. We have reviewed our assessments and ILOs and are both confident and satisfied that they are appropriate to individual courses. Some changes are, however, envisaged due mainly to the implementation of new academic structures.

Recommendation 17:

The Panel recommends that aims, objectives and ILOs should be established prior to the introduction of any new course. (*Paragraph C.2.1*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

The Department gave due consideration to this recommendation. This recommendation was implemented with the planning and development of a new Honours course on Literacy in the Medieval Celtic Countries, and new courses associated with the proposed MLitt in Celtic Studies.

Recommendation 18:

The Panel recommends that the Department liaise with the Directors of the Recruitment, Admissions and Participation Service (RAPS), and the

International & Postgraduate Service (IPS) to identify viable student markets in order to recruit more students. (*Paragraph C.5.4*)

Action: Director of RAPS and IPS
The Head of Department

Response Director of Recruitment and Participation Service

See response to Recommendation 13 above.

Response Director of International and Postgraduate Service

Meetings have taken place with both the Director of IPS and the Senior International Officer with responsibility for recruitment in the US and Canada and the US-based recruitment officer to discuss the marketing of celtic programmes. A follow-up meeting will be conducted in June when the US-based recruitment officer next visits Glasgow.

Response Head of Department:

The Department gave careful consideration to this recommendation and would draw attention to the strong record the Department has in attracting international students. Over the past 5 sessions, an average of 37% of all UG Visiting International (non-EU) Students enrolled in the Faculty of Arts in any given year took Celtic courses. It follows that the Department of Celtic, the smallest in the Faculty of Arts, punches well above its weight in attracting UG international students. The Department of Celtic is therefore in a very strong position indeed to develop its international recruitment. In response to the Panel's recommendation the Department has taken the following action:

- We have had a series of useful meetings and communications with representatives from RAPS (Fiona Andrews and Rory McDiarmid) and also IPS (Sharne Procter, Ian Thomson and Scott Mazuzan) to take this recommendation forward.
- We have compiled a database of Departmental staff's international academic contacts and passed these to IPS.
- We have created the new office of Departmental International Marketing and Strategy Officer in order to develop and implement our international recruitment strategy.
- With support and input from RAPS, IPS and the Faculty of Arts, and by means of WebSURF, we have begun to compile a Departmental database of our current and past overseas students and their country of origin. The information gathered so far has enabled us to identify existing potentially rewarding student recruitment opportunities. However, some basic improvements are needed to the University's centrally held information before we can further develop our international strategy. Current systems cannot apparently very easily provide us with certain basic levels of information, including the names of the home institutions of our overseas students. It is hoped that the new student record systems, currently under consideration as part of the Student Lifecycle Project, will provide the required fine-grained data which we require to support our international recruitment strategy.

Recommendation 19:

The Panel recommends that an induction programme be introduced for new members of staff to ensure that probationary staff have a manageable workload and are supported adequately. (*Paragraph C.6.5*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

With valuable input from staff who have recently completed probation, the Department has had initial valuable discussions regarding the likely shape of an induction programme, sustainable workloads, support and mentorship of future probationary staff. The three-month temporary lecturer employed during Semester 1 was fully supported by Departmental staff.

Recommendation 20:

The Panel recommends that the Department develops more learning opportunities within the virtual learning environment, MOODLE. (*Paragraph C.3.5*)

Action: The Head of Department/
Director of Learning & Teaching Centre

Response Head of Department:

The Department was disappointed that the panel had not commended it for work already undertaken in this area, and that it has not recommended continuity of ongoing work and its further development. Feedback from students in questionnaires and in Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings consistently confirms that the Department of Celtic's use of VLE and Moodle in particular is highly valued and appreciated, and, moreover, in the view of students at least that it surpasses that of other Departments in the Faculty of Arts. In response to this recommendation, the Department can report as follows:

- Moodle sites operate for all of our Level 1 and 2 courses and for an increasing number of our Honours courses (currently 8 of these), including core options such as *Sgilean Cànain* ['Language Skills'] and the Dissertation course. Therefore our use of Moodle affects all of our UG students (cf. Response to Recommendation 8).
- The Department was awarded funds from the Faculty of Arts (from funds made available by Professor Andrea Nolan, VP Learning, Teaching & Internationalisation) for staff buy-out in order to develop a Moodle site to support the Honours module 'Fourteenth-century Wales: The World of Dafydd ap Gwilym and Iolo Goch' (cf. Response to Recommendation 8).
- We organised with the Learning & Teaching Centre a Departmental Lunch workshop event (attended by all staff except one who was on maternity leave) which explored advanced capabilities of Moodle intended to enhance our existing provision (see Response to Recommendation 8).
- We regularly monitor and develop our Moodle provision. During the current session, we have introduced formative quizzes to Moodle for courses at all levels; in the case of the Celtic Civilisation suite of courses, these new quizzes link directly to specific parts of the summative final examinations. Some summative language exercises have been introduced to all Gaelic language classes (except Gaelic 2A).

- We are currently liaising with colleagues in the Learning and Teaching Centre and with colleagues in the Faculty of Arts to explore ways in which we can introduce voice recordings to Moodle for our language based courses.

Response Director of Learning and Teaching Centre:

Staff from the Department and from the Learning and Teaching Centre met on 21 February 2007 to demonstrate ways in which the Department could use Moodle and to provide an opportunity for questions and answers. The following departmental staff attended the session led by Dr Deneka MacDonald and Mr Dave Scotson of the Learning and Technology Unit within the Learning and Teaching Centre:

Prof Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (current Head of Department)

Prof Thomas O Clancy (Professor of Celtic/former Head of Department)

Ms Janet MacDonald (Graduate Teaching Assistant)

Dr Sheila Kidd (Lecturer)

Dr Michel Byrne (Lecturer)

Ms Carol Smith (Departmental Secretary)

Ms Bronagh Ní Chonail (Lecturer)

Dr Aonghas MacCoinnich (Native Language Assistant and Lecturer)

Staff from the Department have also attended Moodle workshops run by the Learning and Teaching Centre and are aware of the online guidance available to them at

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/learningandtechnology/moodle/moodlehowtos/>

Recommendation 21:

The Panel recommends that the Department positions itself to take full advantage of opportunities offered by the new Gaelic legislation. (*Paragraph F.6*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

The Department is fully aware of the opportunities offered by recent Gaelic legislation and related national developments, and has taken the following action:

- Following meetings with the Dean and the Principal, the Department has put forward a convincing case for the establishment of a Gaelic Language Officer post at the University of Glasgow — the first post of its kind ever to exist in any of the traditional Scottish universities. Funding has been provided by the Faculty of Arts to fund a scheme lasting 3 months, which will gather information on similar initiatives in Irish and Welsh universities, and also prepare a bid to *Bòrd na Gàidhlig* for a pioneering GLO pilot scheme at Glasgow. The activities of the GLO will enable Glasgow to act within the spirit of recent Gaelic language legislation and the recently published *National Plan for Gaelic*, while promoting and raising the profile of Gaelic at the University of Glasgow.
- A member of our staff has joined the newly established Higher and Further Education Advisory Committee of *Bòrd na Gàidhlig*, which places the Department at the heart of governmental decisions affecting the Gaelic language

in Higher Education and our discipline. This has already begun to bear fruit (see next point).

- Recent legislation has encouraged the Scottish Funding Council to develop a Gaelic language policy which is to be supported by funding of c. £250k per annum for the development of Gaelic language resources. Glasgow's Department of Celtic is well placed to benefit from this, and we are currently liaising with SFC and considering ways in which we can take full advantage of this new scheme from next session; the scheme is expected to be publicly announced and launched before the Summer.

Recommendation 22:

The Panel recommends that students be made aware of career opportunities.
(*Paragraph C.5.8*)

Action: The Head of Department in liaison with the Director of the Careers Services

Response:

The Department has met with Jane Weir and Archie Roy of the Careers Service to discuss how the Department of Celtic could make its students more aware of employability and career options. The initiatives we discussed, which would be given more detailed consideration next session, included:

- the organisation of a Careers Fair with input from students themselves, incorporating a networking lunch, which would be preceded by a training awareness event, all of which would be supported by the Careers Service
- work experience opportunities facilitated partly by Departmental alumni contacts
- the establishment of a Careers Advisory Committee, whose membership would include employers (e.g. BBC, Education, etc.) and alumni, who could provide advice as 'mentors' to our students on career paths and opportunities, as well as advice on the organisation of career-related events
- how employability might be embedded within our curricula.

In response to this recommendation the Department has taken the following action and decisions:

- The Department has initiated a series of visits to the Department by representatives of the main employers of our Gaelic graduates, most notably the BBC and Gaelic-medium schools. This has raised the awareness of career opportunities amongst our Honours students in particular.
- As part of the migration towards t4 and the upgrade of our website, we are planning to create innovative interactive Departmental Alumni web pages as part of our Departmental website, which will enable graduates to keep in touch with one another and with the Department. This will also enable us to record the career destinations of our graduates, and will facilitate the organisation of future career-related events, including possibly a Careers Fair, within the Department. We have liaised both with the Careers Service and the Development and Alumni Office in order to take this forward. We have scheduled meetings with the Development and Alumni Office to consider ways in which we can develop Celtic-related pages as part of the University's *GU World* online facility.

Recommendation 23:

The Panel recommends that the Department liaise with Dr Catherine Steel (Associate Dean) to explore the possibilities to embed PDP within the curriculum. (*Paragraph C.5.7*)

Action: Head of Department and Dr Catherine Steel.

Response:

The Department has given careful consideration to this recommendation, and has taken the following action and decisions:

- A meeting was held in August 2007 with Professor Steel to discuss the Faculty's position and future objectives with regard to PDP, and in particular, funding possibilities to implement PDP-related initiatives. As a result the Department submitted in late August 2007 a proposal, which sought to embed PDP within the Junior and Senior Honours curriculum by adding a PDP-dimension to the now Faculty-required dissertation assignment. The triple bid (£1,500) was successful, thus enabling the Department with full staff involvement to take steps towards encouraging, offering and supporting PDP-centred opportunities for Honours students within the Department. This pilot scheme will be reviewed in Spring 2009, when the first cohort of students should have undertaken and completed a number of reflective tasks across their Junior and Senior Honours years. The Department is therefore actively focusing on PDP and employability.
- Following on from the PG Away Day reported in the Self-Evaluation Report, we have made further progress with embedding PDP within Departmental PG training. We have established a new series of PG presentations, which provides our PGs with the opportunity of delivering trial-runs of forthcoming conference papers and receiving constructive feedback from staff on content and presentation; this has had a positive impact on the standard of our PG conference papers.
- The experience of our PDP pilot will inform the embedding of PDP at other levels both within the Department and more broadly within the Faculty of Arts. In particular, it could inform how the Arts Faculty will embed PDP and employability within its PG skills training programme.
- A number of further initiatives are currently under discussion, including:
 - a national PG-run conference under the supervision of staff and with the support of Robert's Skills money, which would enable PGs to gain valuable experience in many of the principles related to PDP and employability
 - the opportunity for our PGs to contribute to the editing process of our new journal, *Aiste: Rannsachadh air Litreachas Gàidhlig / Studies in Gaelic Literature*.

Recommendation 24:

The Panel recommends that the Department approach the Learning and Teaching Centre for guidance to develop a programme of peer observation of teaching (POOT). (*Paragraph C.6.5*)

Action: The Head of Department

Response:

The Department has given due consideration to this recommendation, and has taken the following action and decisions:

- While the Department is open to the idea of POOT (which, given the collegiality and good working relations which exist among staff in the Department, would work particularly well), we have not rolled out a POOT programme this session for the following reasons:
 - the workload issues highlighted in the Self-Evaluation and DPTLA reports
 - two members of staff were on leave (research and maternity), which left extra teaching and administrative burdens on a number of staff
 - pressures and deadlines associated with the RAE exercise, including the completion of a Departmentally edited collection of essays and the launch of our new literary journal *Aiste: Rannsachadh air Litreachas Gàidhlig / Studies in Gaelic Literature*.

We have initiated discussions with the Director of the Learning and Teaching Centre, Lorna McEachan, with a view to developing a suitable POOT programme for implementation during session 2008–9.

- We have commenced on a small scale the process of teaching observation and review, beginning for the most part with staff observation of GTAs, although some peer review of staff teaching also took place in one Honours course.

Prepared by: Janet Fleming, Senate Office

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