

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 29 May 2009

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and  
Assessment: Responses to the Recommendations Arising  
from the Review of Department of Economics held on  
Thursday 24 January 2008

Ms Jane McAllister, Clerk to the Review Panel

***Conclusions and recommendations***

**Conclusions**

The Review Panel commends the Department on its awareness of its strengths and weaknesses and its willingness to address issues as they arise and, although a number of recommendations have been made, they are made to enhance the quality of the student experience, and the management of teaching and learning. The Panel was impressed by the Department's rapid recovery from a time of intense change and its development into a thriving department, and congratulates the Head of Department whose success in leading the Department to its current position was borne out by the high regard with which staff spoke of him.

**Recommendations**

The recommendations interspersed in the preceding report are summarised below. It is important to note that the majority of these recommendations refer to tasks or issues identified by the Department for action either prior to the Review or in the SER. Some of these actions are already in hand.

The recommendations have been cross-referenced to the paragraphs in the text of the report to which they refer. They are grouped by the areas for improvement/enhancement noted above and are ranked in order of priority.

**Assessment and Feedback**

***Recommendation 1:***

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department review the current assessment of Level 1 and consider broadening the range of assessment methods used to reduce the focus on examination and help students acquire and develop a range of skills detailed in the programme ILOs. The Panel also **recommends** that existing interactive activities, such as problem solving scenarios (see paragraph 4.2.1), be extended to further develop enquiry-led learning at Levels 1 and 2. [*paragraph 4.3.5, 4.1.2 and 4.2.1*]

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

***Response:***

Drawing on the work of its Assessment Working Group, the Department has reviewed assessment for undergraduate teaching as a whole, with a view to ensuring that (a) all programme ILOs are assessed; and (b) students are exposed to an appropriate range of assessment methods (and corresponding formative feedback) from Level 1 onwards.

With regard to Level 1 and Level 2 in particular, we have implemented the following changes:

The former Economics 1 course has been split into 1A and 1B.

In Economics 1A we have:

- Introduced 3 differentiated short assignments designed (a) to provide early formative feedback reinforced at regular intervals, and (b) to develop and summatively assess a range of knowledge and skills. Submission and grading via Moodle also encourages development of IT skills. The two best grades achieved over 3 assignments contribute to the course result. This allows students to aspire to improve their performance over the semester and also to disregard a disappointing result which could encourage a negative attitude towards the course.
- Introduced a requirement to complete weekly, self-assessed multiple choice exercises on Moodle in order to allow students to take early action if their score indicates that they do not have an adequate understanding of the material covered in the course in the preceding week.
- Introduced a group presentation with formative feedback from tutors and a penalty for non-completion in order to develop teamwork and oral communication skills.
- Reduced the weight of the end-of-course exam from 100% to 75% of the overall assessment.

While it is too early to draw meaningful conclusions, a comparison of results between 2008/09 and the previous year does show an improvement in student performance following the introduction of coursework. The pass rate has increased from 92.4 to 95.9% (includes an increase in B grades and decrease in D grades). The percentage of students achieving C or above increased from 75.2% to 81.5%.

In Economics 1B we have:

- Introduced an innovative, problem-based group project, which aims to develop students' appreciation of the choices and compromises that have to be made when mobilising data in order to address a real-world problem and encourages them to acquire and develop a wide range of transferable skills, which include working as a member of a group, leadership, organisation and time management, oral communication, interpersonal relations, negotiation, constructive criticism, and problem-solving
- Introduced a requirement to complete weekly, self-assessed multiple choice exercises as per Economics 1A.
- Reduced the weight of the end-of-course exam from 100% to 75% of the overall assessment.

In Level 2 we have:

- Introduced a summatively assessed essay for which individual feedback is provided in semester 1.

- Introduced a group project in semester 2 in which students design multiple choice questions, which are subsequently administered to the class as a whole using the electronic voting system.
- Abolished the former in-course exams and reduced the weighting of the end-of-course exam from 70% to 50% and the weighting of exam-based assessment overall from 90% to 50%.

The new assessments, especially the group projects in Economics 1B and Economics 2, are designed to introduce additional elements of problem-based learning early in the programme although, as has been shown elsewhere, the scope for this is limited by the nature of the discipline and by resource considerations.<sup>1</sup>

**Recommendation 2:**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department continue with its plans for its Assessment Working Group to investigate methods of improving the formative element of assessments in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes with a view to increasing the opportunities for students to receive timely, meaningful and useful feedback on their assessed work. [paragraph 4.3.4]

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

**Response:**

The Postgraduate Teaching Committee is to consider the adoption of an improved form for returning helpful feedback to students and of procedures for monitoring the quality of feedback returned. At postgraduate level, there are no plans to introduce more forms of assessment, as the current range is considered adequate.

At all levels of undergraduate study, coursework submission deadlines have been reviewed and set to ensure that feedback is delivered in a timely manner, thereby improving the formative aspect of assessment. Guidelines to staff members on provision of feedback emphasise the importance of advising students on weaknesses in their work and how to improve it. In the case of marking undertaken by Teaching Fellows, rates of pay have been adjusted to make provision for individual feedback (a substantial workload with Level 1 and 2 classes exceeding 400 and 150 students respectively) and marking meetings have provided the opportunity to discuss how to provide effective feedback. Furthermore, the Undergraduate Teaching Committee is

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<sup>1</sup> Piggott and Kilmaster (2005) report that problems were encountered in implementing a first year economics module designed around problem-based learning because of: class size; variable background of the students (in particular that some had prior knowledge of economics and others did not); variable commitment to the economics discipline (in that some students were taking the subject as an optional extra for only one year; and the fact that it was "necessary, in addition to developing knowledge content, to get across a number of key study skills - for example group-working, understanding of assessment criteria, presentation and essay writing skills, quantitative techniques...". Judith Piggott and Andy Kilmister, "Our Experience with Problem-Based Learning", *Developments in Economics and Business Education conference*, September 2005. Available online at <http://www.economicnetwork.ac.uk/projects/mini/pbl0905.htm>.

also rolling out a proposal for staff members to provide general feedback on each item of assessment in order to complement personal feedback.

In Economics 1A:

Students complete assignments in weeks 3, 6 and 8, which permits them to gain experience of the assessment process at an early stage, and ensures they receive 3 pieces of feedback before they take the end-of-course exam in December.

In Economics 1B:

Students begin working on their group project from week 2 onwards and submit in week 8, thereby allowing projects to be marked and returned, complete with feedback, by week 11, i.e. before the Easter vacation when students are likely to begin revising for the end-of-course exam in April/May.

In Economics 2:

Students submit their first assignment in week 4 and thereafter at reasonable intervals throughout the session to ensure that the assessment load is spread evenly and permits work to be marked and returned before the subsequent submission date. The final piece of coursework is marked and returned by week 11 of the second semester for the reasons outlined above in Economics 1B.

In Level 3 and Honours Economics:

Coursework deadlines have been brought forward to week 8 to allow work to be marked and returned in the same semester. Previously we found that students' expectations of marking deadlines were unrealistic because they did not make provision for staff leave during vacation periods.

**Recommendation 3:**

The Panel **recommends** that the remit of the Assessment Working Group be extended to consider how new assessment practices might further support and promote enquiry-led learning across the curriculum including at Levels 1 and 2. *[paragraph 4.4.4 and 4.1.2]*

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

**Response:**

As indicated above, the new assessments introduced at Levels 1 and 2 are designed to incorporate elements of enquiry-led or problem-based learning. At the end of their first year of operation (summer 2009), we will review how successful they have been and examine the scope for further development. However, given large and growing class sizes, especially in Level 1, resource constraints as well as pedagogical considerations preclude any large-scale move away from a predominantly lecture-based approach to teaching and learning, such as is advocated by some proponents of enquiry-led learning.

At Honours and postgraduate levels there are, of course, already strong elements of enquiry-led learning, not least in the Honours and MSc Dissertations, but also, to varying degrees, in the taught courses. However, we believe there is scope both for further development of what is already in place and for more radical restructuring of individual taught courses in order to make enquiry-led learning the main focus of

course delivery. This is likely to involve significant set-up costs and, in addition, buy-in on the part of the course teaching team is essential. We propose to ask each course teaching team to formulate proposals as to how enquiry-led learning can best be developed in their particular course, and, while we expect that most teams will identify relatively minor changes which can, nonetheless, enhance enquiry-ledness, we hope also to identify one or two Honours and MSc courses which can serve as pilots for more innovative approaches.

***Recommendation 4:***

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department ensures that the Assessment Working Group fulfils its stated aims and that a report on the outputs of the Working Group be included in the Department's responses to the recommendations of this Review to ensure that the outcomes of the Working Group are reported to the Panel and to the University. *[paragraph 4.3.2]*

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

***Response:***

A Progress report from the Assessment Working Group is attached as Appendix 1.

***Recommendation 5:***

The Dean reported that the Faculty had recently identified the need for an Equivalence Committee and the Review Panel **recommends** that the Department avail itself of the advice of this Committee as soon as it is in operation to enable the Department to include marks from study abroad in the students' final grade. This would emphasise the value the University places on the educational value of the study abroad experience and the importance of maintaining academic work while away from this University. *[paragraph 5.2]*

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**  
with the support of: **The Dean of the Faculty**

***Response: Head of Department***

The work of the Equivalence Committee is still ongoing; therefore, we are not able to advise how we have implemented its recommendations at this stage.

***Response: Dean***

The Faculty's Undergraduate Studies Committee established a Study Abroad Sub Committee in January 2009 for the MA (Social Sciences) degree to ensure that systems of grade conversion were robust and transparent across all subjects. The intention is that this group will meet twice yearly, reporting to UGSC and building a database of conversions as it becomes more established. Chaired by the Convenor of the UGSC, it comprises Study Abroad Officers from each department.

The Department of Economics will participate, as will all other departments in LBSS, though it should be noted that work is ongoing to determine the most feasible way for the Department of Economics to translate the grades attained elsewhere.

***Recommendation 6:***

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department review its advice on plagiarism and Turnitin to ensure that it is clear and direct and does not have any inadvertent demotivating effect. *[paragraph 5.4]*

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

***Response:***

The Department reviewed the relevant sections of course documentation and agreed that the tone and content was appropriate. Given that this recommendation followed feedback from only one of the students who met with the Panel, the Department decided not to make any changes. Staff members believe that the guidance is well-written and that this view is underpinned by commendation from staff in other parts of the University. Before its publication we consulted the Faculty International Officer and Faculty Effective Learning Adviser who both approved it. Since then, the University Plagiarism Administrator has expressed her view that our guidance is of a high standard and it has been used as a template for a large number of other departments who have piloted Turnitin this year. Moreover, the Senate Assessors for Discipline have asked to see our guidance in the past in view of the large number of cases referred by Economics and provided no suggestions for amendments/improvements. Students in the department have not, at any stage, expressed any concerns with the guidance during classes on avoiding plagiarism, SSLC meetings during which plagiarism was discussed or in evaluation questionnaires.

**Employability**

***Recommendation 7:***

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department explore the possibility of marketing career planning provision and opportunities to students in a way that emphasises the Careers Service input to attract those students who would normally seek information directly from Careers Service. *[paragraph 4.6.1]*

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**  
**The Director of the Careers service**

***Response: Head of Department***

Course documentation includes information about the activities of the Careers Service, and all Moodle courses include a section on Careers which provides up-to-date information about recruitment activities and events organised by the University and other relevant organisations. At Honours level, the newly introduced Study and Employability Skills course includes sessions on job-search strategies and CV-writing, presented by the Careers Service, as well as sessions on presentation skills and relevant IT software.

***Response: Director of Careers Service***

The Careers Service has noticed an improvement in the way that the Department is marketing its career planning provision, namely with the support of Nicola Birkin and via its Moodle site.

***Recommendation 8:***

The Panel **recommends** that the Careers Service be informed of the students' comments regarding being given different advice by different members of staff and finding the Careers Fair unhelpful to assist with ongoing improvements to the Service.

For the attention of: **The Director of the Careers Service**

**Response: Director of Careers Service**

The Careers Service is concerned by the students' perception of the Careers service and would welcome the opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of the postgraduate student issues in order to ensure that future service provision meets their needs. It would welcome the opportunity to explore these needs further by meeting with course representatives or by conducting a student focus group (or both) prior to the end of this academic session. Student feedback from this process would then help inform Careers Service input and approaches for session 2009/10. The Careers Adviser responsible for the Economics Department, Jim Campbell, would be happy to discuss this with the new Head of Department and to explore how the Careers Service might gain easier access to postgraduate students to provide input.

**Recommendation 9:**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department encourage students to think about employability from the earliest stages of their studies by including Level 1 and 2 students in invitations to employability related workshops as was suggested by the Department above, and exploring embedding employability in curriculum development. *[paragraph 4.6.1]*

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

**Response:**

Employability-related sessions in 2008/09 were organised as part of the Honours Study and Employability course in response to concerns raised by the National Student Survey that students felt they did not have important transferable skills or high levels of confidence at the end of their degree. As already indicated, new assessment arrangements at levels 1 and 2 are designed to promote development of a range of transferable skills but, given the structure of the MA (Social Sciences) Degree combined with very large student numbers in first and second year, we believe that we will be most effective by concentrating our efforts related more directly to employability on Honours students.

At postgraduate level, we hope to reach agreements with a number of employers for the provision of internships and work-related experience.

**Recommendation 10:**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department take its proposed development of a graduate network forward in consultation with Careers Service staff and the Development and Alumni Office Director, with a view to improving employment data and building on links with employers. *[paragraph 4.6.3]*

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

**Response:**

Response: the Department launched EGGnet (Economics Graduates at Glasgow network) in July 2008. We have 123 members, approximately 20 of whom graduated in 2008. This has allowed us to make significant improvements to the alumni pages on our web site, with new content including updated testimonials, updates on what students are currently doing, indications of career paths etc. It also enables us to respond more effectively to applicants who regularly seek information on the opportunities that will be available to them post-Masters degree. We continue to

work to encourage students to join EGGnet and keep in touch with the department but this is challenging. We have not yet proceeded to build links with employers on the basis of graduate information because it is not yet sufficiently comprehensive, partly because most of our MSc graduates are international students who leave the UK sooner or later.

### **Postgraduate Taught Programmes**

#### ***Recommendation 11:***

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department examines its postgraduate taught programme structures with a view to eliminating possible duplication of content and ensuring that, in reality, students experience the flexibility of choice set out in recruitment and programme information documents. [*paragraph 4.4.1*]

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

#### ***Response:***

The Postgraduate Teaching Committee has set up two working groups to review the entire PGT provision in both Development and Finance. The working groups have carried out a detailed census of the content of all courses and have made some proposals on how courses and degree programmes could be restructured in the light of its findings. This work will continue during the forthcoming session.

#### ***Recommendation 12:***

The Review Panel **recommends** that consideration be given to making the research methods course compulsory for all postgraduate taught students to emphasise and recognise its importance in gaining the skills necessary to write a postgraduate level dissertation. [*paragraph 4.4.3*]

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

#### ***Response:***

This recommendation was implemented in the 2008/09 academic session

#### ***Recommendation 13:***

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Academic Standards Committee explore concerns relating to the generic PGT regulation with the Department at the point where the implementation of the Generic Regulations is appraised. [*paragraph 5.5*]

For the attention of: **The Convener of Academic Standards Committee**

#### ***Response: Convener of Academic Standards Committee***

The Academic Regulations Sub-Committee (ARSC) has consulted all faculties and departments in its review of the generic PGT regulation. In particular, the ARSC Convener has met with representatives of the Department of Economics to discuss the issues raised by the Department, and agreement has been reached. ARSC has drafted a revision of the PGT regulation, which will be considered by the Academic Standards Committee on 15 April 2009. [Note: this meeting was postponed until 23rd April]

***Note from the Department:***

The recently concluded review of the Generic Regulations for Taught Master programmes addressed our concerns only partially. In particular, we remain dissatisfied with the rules for progression to the dissertation stage of the MSc programme and, hence, with the rules for the award of the MSc degree. This is due to two main reasons. First, the rules for compensations have not been tightened and, hence, it is still possible that one single good grade can compensate for a number of weaker grades with the result that students will still be able to proceed to the dissertation stage of the MSc and to graduate despite having attained a grade that is lower than that required for progression even in the vast majority of credits. Since in the academic year 2007-2008 this problem concerned 10 percent of our students, it is disappointing that the Academic Regulation Committee offered no solution. The second reason for dissatisfaction is related to another aspect of the compensation rules, namely the fact that the range of compensation has been extended, since now grade F can be compensated, while previously compensation was only possible for grade E. We feel therefore that our claim that the Generic Regulations for Taught Masters degrees are too lenient and have brought about a relaxation of standards remains justified. We are especially concerned that many of our competing universities follow more stringent regulations and this may adversely affect the reputation of our programmes.

**Management and Support of Staff and Teaching Fellows**

***Recommendation 14:***

The Panel **recommends** that the Department introduce a P&DR structure that distributes responsibility for P&DR for all academic staff, which currently lies solely with the Head of Department, to other senior staff within the Department.  
*[paragraph 2.7]*

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

***Response:***

This recommendation was implemented in August 2008. The Head of Department now conducts P&DRs for professorial staff, directors of studies and the Departmental Administrator. P&DRs for other academic staff are delegated to the professorial staff.

***Recommendation 15:***

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department adopt a proactive approach to addressing the gender balance amongst staff and, as suggested by Head of Department, include a statement regarding the Department's "aim to achieve gender balance" when advertising, particularly for senior positions.  
*[paragraph 4.8.1]*

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

***Response:***

The Department will continue to consider the gender balance when undertaking recruitment but, legally, cannot positively discriminate in favour of female candidates. For this reason, HR did not permit us to include the statement suggested above when we recently advertised new posts

**Recommendation 16:**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the University (Human Resources) ensures that rates of payment for Graduate Teaching Assistants, or equivalent, are comparable to that of neighbouring institutions and that these are reviewed annually. [paragraph 4.8.5]

For the attention of: **The Director of Human Resources  
Dean of Faculty**

**Response: Human Resources**

HR is currently undertaking a review of the use of GTAs, tutors, demonstrators etc. and the actual duties they undertake. It is the intention to link their duties to the existing level descriptors for the Research & Teaching Family, probably somewhat below level 7. The data from all the faculties is currently being collated, and it is intended to have a first meeting at the end of April 2009. Once the level has been determined, a pay band can be assessed, and the employment contractual situation addressed. There is no direct linkage of pay across institutions as each has determined its own grading structure, and the duties of GTAs may vary across Universities. Nevertheless, the approaches others have adopted will be considered in the review.

**Response: Dean**

It is noted that this recommendation was initially remitted to the Faculty, but is an issue for Human Resources. HR has confirmed that the issues of both pay rates and the mechanisms for pay review for Graduate Teaching Assistants are under currently consideration.

**Recommendation 17:**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department provide structured guidance to new teaching fellows and encourages staff to either adopt a uniform approach or explain clearly what is expected of them on each course. [paragraph 4.8.6]

For the attention of: **The Head of Department  
supported by Learning and Teaching Centre  
and the Coordinator of GTA programme**

**Response: Head of Department**

The Department has provided an increased level of support to all teaching fellows this academic session in terms of regular teaching and marking meetings and consistent encouragement to discuss assessment-related queries with the relevant course coordinator. In addition, we organised a CPD session at the beginning of semester 2 which was facilitated by Dr Mary McCulloch, Learning and Teaching Centre and attended by the Level 2 course co-ordinator. In June, we plan to organise a meeting with teaching fellows for the purpose of gathering feedback and information on further support required. With effect from academic session 2009/10, a staff member will be specifically tasked to mentor teaching fellows and will work with the Learning and Teaching Centre to achieve this.

### **Response: Learning and Teaching Centre**

The Learning and Teaching Centre has considered this recommendation and reached the following conclusions:

- The Learning and Teaching Centre is aware that the GTA Statutory Training Course provides initial training for tutors and demonstrators, often before they have undertaken any teaching tasks. It further recognises that the concerns regarding “structured guidance” may refer to the development of generic teaching skills as well as specific guidance about what to teach, the latter being provided by the department.

The Learning and Teaching Centre has determined the following strategies for dealing with this recommendation:

- The GTA Development Forum (<http://services.moodle.gla.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=184>) is a Moodle site which has been developed to provide resources for GTAs in their teaching role. This site is introduced to GTAs in the Statutory Training session and the web address provided in supporting documentation. Information about and a link to the site is provided on the LTC website at: [http://www.gla.ac.uk/learn/taughtcourses/graduate\\_teaching\\_assistant\\_tutors\\_and\\_demonstrators\\_statutory\\_training/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/learn/taughtcourses/graduate_teaching_assistant_tutors_and_demonstrators_statutory_training/)
- The Learning and Teaching Centre's website provides a range of useful reference material which could be helpful to GTAs. The Learning and Teaching Centre would encourage the Department to promote these resources to its GTAs. Full details of the resources available are provided at [http://www.gla.ac.uk/learn/good\\_practice\\_resources/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/learn/good_practice_resources/)
- The Learning and Teaching Centre has already provided a CPD session for GTAs in the department upon request (19<sup>th</sup> January 2009). The Learning and Teaching Centre would value the opportunity to liaise further with the department, to provide an additional session for tutors in tutorial practice, and the department is recommended to contact Dr Mary McCulloch ([m.mcculloch@admin.gla.ac.uk](mailto:m.mcculloch@admin.gla.ac.uk)) about this in the first instance.
- The Learning and Teaching Centre is developing a Moodle resource to support Reflection on Teaching, which it is expected will provide a means by which higher education teachers can reflect upon the learning and teaching aspects of their academic practice. The resource will also provide directions for those who wish to seek accreditation of their teaching through the Higher Education Academy. This resource is currently in development and will be piloted with a small number of groups over summer 2009, for implementation in the academic year 2009-2010.

### **Tutorial Provision**

#### **Recommendation 18:**

The Panel **recommends** that the Department move towards ensuring that all existing courses include tutorials, i.e. smaller group sessions with a high level of student participation, as quickly as is practicable, and that this type of tutorial be an integral part of all postgraduate programmes in future. The Panel expects significant change in this matter to be reported in the Department's responses to recommendations at the end of session 2008-09 (one year from

the submission of the report to Academic Standards Committee). [paragraph 4.4.2]

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

**Response:**

Resource constraints will most likely prevent us from including tutorials in all existing courses; even if expansion was restricted to postgraduate level (all compulsory Honours courses include tutorials). The Postgraduate Teaching Committee, which is soon to examine the working group proposals for course and programme restructuring, will also, in this context, consider the issue of tutorial support. Its decisions cannot be implemented until the 2010/11 academic session. For session 2009/10, when the potential for some courses to be taken by students with mixed levels of Economics experience remains, the Postgraduate Teaching Committee will imminently consider the provision of tutorial support for students with less Economics experience taking these courses.

**Student Representation**

**Recommendation 19:**

The Review Panel considers that student representation, on teaching committees should be the norm and **recommends** that the Department appoint student representatives to participate in these committee as full members as a matter of priority, reserving business only where necessary, in reflection of practice at Faculty and University level. The Panel also suggests that the Department consider the appointment of a student on to its departmental committee. [paragraph 6.3]

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

**Response:**

We propose, with effect from the beginning of next session, to reconstitute the Undergraduate Teaching Committee and the Postgraduate Teaching Committee as Teaching and Learning Committees, each with a number of student members elected by SSLC student representatives.

We do not, at present, propose to invite student representatives to Department meetings, but we will review this in the light of experience with the T&L committees.

**Recommendation 20:**

The Panel considers that where assessment and feedback policies and practices are being reviewed and developed, the views of students should be an integral part of the discussion. Therefore, the Panel **recommends** that students are brought in to the discussion in a meaningful manner through membership of one or more of their representatives on the Assessment Working Group.

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

**Response:**

The Assessment Working Group appointed one student member in session 2007/08 (only one volunteered) and replaced him (following his graduation in 2008) with two

student members in session 2008/09. All relevant students have attended meetings and contributed effectively to the process.

**Recommendation 21:**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department explore alternative mechanisms for facilitating the effective operation of the class representative system. This should be done in consultation with the Student Representative Council and the Class Representatives in the Department and take account of any recommendations arising from the current University Working Group on the student feedback mechanisms. [paragraph 6.5]

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

**Response:**

Improvements to the administrative processes have been made to ensure that appropriate meeting dates are selected to maximise attendance; to ensure that student representatives have opportunities to discuss committee business with fellow students; draft agendas are sent sufficiently early to allow student representatives to contribute items; to allow student representatives to feedback to fellow students following meetings. A notice board in the department has also been allocated for photos and contact details of all student representatives and to display copies of agendas and minutes. Agendas and minutes are also made available on Moodle in a timely manner to disseminate proceedings more effectively. A standing item on the agenda of the first SSLC meeting of each session is a summary of responses to feedback provided in the previous session to facilitate this process and to assure students that their views are taken on board.

In addition, we encouraged student representatives to participate in the Student Subject Network pilot project for Economics. We were successful in nominating three students who have been involved and will provide the Department with their feedback and suggestions for improving our processes at the end of the academic session.

**Recommendation 22:**

The Review Panel also **recommends** that staff are made aware of the role of student representative as defined in *The Code of Practice on Student Representation* (<http://senate.qia.ac.uk/qa/studentrep/index.html>) and that they be required to facilitate the function of student representatives at all meetings of the relevant classes. [paragraph 6.5]

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

**Response:**

Lecturers discussed the importance of student representatives and facilitated the selection process at the beginning of the 2008/09 session.

**Recommendation 23:**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Department review its methods of communication of actions taken in response to issues raised by students, particularly those related to postgraduate taught programmes. The Panel did not consider that posting summaries of feedback on Moodle was sufficiently proactive. [paragraph 6.4]

For the attention of: **The Head of Department**

***Response:***

As indicated in the response to Recommendation 21, time is set aside in class to allow student representatives to feedback to their class; students are alerted to the posting of agendas and minutes on Moodle; relevant documentation is also now available on a departmental notice board.