

## Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DPTLA)

### Review of Department of Classics: 25 February 2008

## Report Summary

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The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the Department of Classics. Reviews of Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DPTLA) are internal subject reviews 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\\_104276\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_104276_en.pdf)

Further information about the DPTLA process can be found at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qaе/dptla/>

*Italicised words* are explained in a glossary below.

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## Conclusions

The Review Panel commends the Department on its awareness of its strengths and weaknesses as evidenced in its *Self Evaluation Report*. Although there are a number of recommendations, the Panel has no concerns regarding the quality of the Department and was most impressed with the level of commitment displayed by staff.

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## Key Strengths

- Support offered by staff, both academic and administrative, was highly praised by GTAs and students
  - Guidance on essay writing provided in the Classics Handbook
  - The range of provision, particularly at Honours level
  - Flexibility and rigour of language training
  - Range of assessment
  - *Peer Review* of Teaching
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## Areas to be improved or enhanced<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Assessment and Feedback

- a) Unseen examinations to be included as an essential element of assessment. [paragraph 4.3.1.]
- b) All Departmental handbooks to include the *aims* and *ILOs* of courses and highlight *transferrable skills*. [paragraph 4.3.5]
- c) The aims and objectives of the on-line *Moodle* assessment to be clarified and communicated effectively to students. [paragraph 4.3.3]

### 2. Postgraduate Students

- a) The usefulness of examinations for postgraduate students to be reviewed and the viability of using *continuous assessment* explored. [paragraph 4.3.2]
- b) The new postgraduate study space in the Gilbert Scott Building to be publicised when it becomes fully available. [paragraph 4.6.4]

### 3. Honours Core Module

- a) Further consideration to be given to offering a core honours module with a view to providing opportunities for the Honours cohort to meet as a single class as well as potentially reducing staff workloads. [paragraph 4.4.2]

### 4. Staff-Student Liaison Committees

- a) Mechanisms, separate from those used for undergraduate students, to seek feedback specifically from postgraduate students to be introduced. [paragraph 6.1]
- b) Student representatives to be given brief instructions on writing minutes to ensure a record of actions is kept. [paragraph 6.1.1]

### 5. Learning and Teaching Resources

- a) The Student Counselling Service to be relocated as soon as possible on completion of the Hub building to make the basement at 65 Oakfield Avenue available to the Department of Classics. [paragraph 4.8.1 – 4.8.4]
- b) Students to be encouraged to submit book requests to the Library so that usage figures accurately reflect difficulties in obtaining particular books and properly inform the purchase of further copies. [paragraph 4.8.5]
- c) Teaching to be reviewed to reduce the amount of time spent on small group teaching. [paragraph 4.8.10]
- d) The Department's *GTA* budget to be increased to enable additional development of *GTAs* teaching skills. [paragraph 4.8.13].
- e) The Faculty to ensure the prompt replacement of retiring staff by appointees who are research active. [paragraph 4.8.7]
- f) The provision of additional *invigilators* for students requiring special examination arrangements to be reviewed by the *Clerk of Senate*. [paragraph 4.8.6]
- g) Staff member(s) to receive training on digitising items from the Departmental slide collection. [paragraph 4.8.7]
- h) The Faculty of Arts guidelines on *workload models* to be implemented prior to the next point of allocation of duties. [paragraph 4.8.8]
- i) Adequate information on promotion to be provided to junior staff. [paragraph 4.8.15]
- j) *Learning and Teaching Centre* to consider providing follow-up sessions for *GTAs* in tutorial practice. [paragraph 4.8.12]

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

## **6. Absence Monitoring Process**

- a) Early tutorials to be considered to allow any students who do not appear to be contacted and support offered if required. [paragraph 4.6.3]
- b) Student performance during Year 1 examinations to be monitored and support offered to maximise student success in re-sits and increased retention from Year 1 to Year 2. [paragraph 4.6.3]

## **7. Programme Specifications**

- a) *Programme specifications* should be relocated on the University website to make them more visible to students and staff. [paragraph 4.1.3]

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## **Glossary of terms/acronyms used**

### **Aims**

Programme or course aims describe what the University/Department aims to provide to students through the delivery of the programme or course overall.

### **Clerk of Senate**

The Clerk of Senate is responsible for matters to do with: the regulation of academic policy and practice; the provision of advice and judgement on matters of an academic nature; ceremonial events in the University. The Clerk of Senate has Vice-Principal status. The current Clerk of Senate is Professor Graham Caie.

### **Continuous Assessment**

Continuous assessment refers to assessment of a students' participation in classes, tutorials, written, oral and other types of assessments that are held throughout the course. The opposite of continuous assessment would be where the assessment for a course is based entirely on some form of end of course examination.

### **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 department. 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.

### **Invigilators/invigilation**

An Invigilator is a person charged with ensuring that examinations are conducted properly and that instructions to candidates are followed. Invigilation refers to the process.

### **Learning and Teaching Centre**

The Learning and Teaching Centre is a University Service Department 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).

### **Peer Review**

Peer Review is the process by which an academic's research is scrutinised prior to publication by other experts in the same field. Peer Review of Teaching is where an academic's colleagues, usually in the Department, will provide them with feedback on their teaching techniques with a view to enhancing their effectiveness.

### **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.

### **Self Evaluation Report**

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

### **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, 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 Departments to ensure that staff workloads are manageable and allocated fairly with different types of work appropriately distributed.