

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

### Review of Department of Accounting and Finance: 24 and 25 February 2010

#### 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 Accounting and Finance. 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\\_173364\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_173364_en.pdf)

Further information about the DPTLA process can be found at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/gea/psr/>

*Italicised words* are explained in a glossary below.

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#### Conclusions

The Review Panel commends the Department for its approach to learning and teaching; its innovation with the development of the first *service based learning* course in Scotland - *Accounting and Civic Responsibility* - and its international links; the positive way it responds to comment and criticism and the way it supports its students and staff. The Panel was impressed by the unanimous view of all groups that a very supportive collegiate atmosphere existed in the Department. 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.

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#### Key Strengths

- The range of provision and innovative developments;
- Use of case studies and tools within teaching (e.g. DataStream);
- The rapid and strategic development of *postgraduate taught* provision and international *collaborative* arrangements;
- Successful recruitment of international students to *postgraduate taught* programmes;
- Engagement with applicants during recruitment process;
- The Department's record of *employability* and engagement with external stakeholders through its External Review Board;
- Collegiality of its academic and administrative staff;
- Innovation in course content e.g. Ethical Accounting and the trip to Barlinnie.

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## Areas to be improved or enhanced<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Assessment, Feedback and Achievement

- a) Plans to investigate methods of improving the *formative* element of assessments in postgraduate programmes to be taken forward to increase the opportunities for students to receive timely, meaningful and useful feedback on their assessed work. [paragraph 4.3.6]
- b) The availability and use of technology for providing oral feedback to be explored with the Learning and Teaching Centre. [paragraph 4.3.7]
- c) The amount of assessed group work included in programmes to be reviewed as part of a planned review of learning objectives across the curriculum to ensure that students are developing an even coverage of *graduate attributes*. The Department should also explore best practice in group work across the University. [paragraph 4.3.2]
- d) Particular attention to be paid to the distribution of *honours classifications* and consideration given to whether any systematic variations reflect difficulties with the implementation of the *Code of Assessment*. [paragraph 4.3.5]
- e) Students to be included in discussions on assessment in a meaningful manner through the inclusion of one or more of their representatives as full members of the working group commissioned by the Undergraduate Studies Committee. [paragraph 4.3.1]

### 2. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

- a) The process of highlighting *ILOs* to all students at the beginning of their programmes and courses to be reviewed to ensure that all staff undertake this consistently. [paragraph 4.2.3]

### 3. Curriculum Design, Development and Content

- a) Consideration to be given to the restructuring of Levels 3 and 4 to ensure that students are less stretched across a wide range of topics and depth of analysis is maintained. [paragraph 4.4.2]
- b) Possible alternatives to the undergraduate dissertation to be reviewed by the Department, with other cognate departments, with a view to offering alternative models of independent study and thus addressing potential supervisory load difficulties. [paragraph 4.4.6]
- c) Tutorials to be linked to assessment and *Graduate Teaching Assistants*, with the relevant training and support, to be more involved in teaching and assessment at Levels 3 and 4. [paragraph 4.4.5]
- d) Consideration to be given to the restructuring of provision to support staff research and enhance research-teaching linkages. [paragraph 4.4.3]

### 4. Assuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Students' Learning Experience

- a) Feedback on actions taken in response to concerns raised by students to be included as a standing agenda item at *Staff:Student Committee* meetings. [paragraph 6.1]

### 5. Resources for Learning and Teaching

- a) Additional space to accommodate the *postgraduate research* students nearer the West Quadrangle premises to be sought. [paragraph 4.8.1]

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

- b) The *staff workload model* to be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure continued relevance. [paragraph 4.8.6]
- c) The support provided to probationary staff to be closely monitored to ensure that the impact of any future staff shortages on this group is minimised. [paragraph 4.8.9]
- d) *Graduate Teaching Assistants* to be invited to join the Departmental Committee.. [paragraph 4.8.10]
- e) A clear 3-5 year strategy to be developed and implemented urgently, outlining the mix and strengths of the staffing required. [paragraph 4.8.5]
- f) Time to be allocated, where possible, to permit the *University Teachers* to engage with the M Ed in Academic Practice programme provided by the Learning and Teaching Centre. Also Human Resources (on behalf of the University) should review how promotion boards deal with the review of scholarship and ensure that University Teachers are fully aware of what is required to progress. [paragraph 4.8.11]

## 6. Student Progression, Retention and Support

- a) Joint undergraduate and postgraduate guest lectures to be considered to increase opportunities for integration between student groups both within the Department and across the Faculty. [paragraph 4.6.3]
- b) The high graduate employment rate should be promoted on the departmental website and associated marketing material. [paragraph 4.6.4]

## 7. Student Recruitment

- a) Procedures for communicating with potential postgraduate students to be reviewed to ensure they are fully aware of the provision being offered including the balance between research and practice. [paragraph 4.4.1]
- b) Postgraduate Scholarships for *home students* to be considered to help address the lack of demand for postgraduate provision amongst that group due to the high level of employment after the undergraduate degree. [paragraph 4.5.2]
- c) Efforts to recruit international students to be continued with a view to creating a more diverse student group. [paragraph 4.5.2]

## Glossary of terms/acronyms used

### Code of Assessment

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

### Collaborative degree programmes

Collaborative degree programmes are those provided in partnership with another institution. The nature and extent of the collaboration is particular to each partner institution and to each degree programme.

### Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment or DPTLA

The University has a six yearly cycle of review of the departments within it. The DPTLA is one of the main ways by which the University assures itself of the quality of the provision delivered by departments.

## **Employability**

Employability is about more than being able to get a job after University. It is about acknowledging and being able to demonstrate achievements, understanding and personal attributes that will contribute to success both during, and after, University.

## **Formative assessment**

Formative assessment refers to assessed work where feedback is given to help the student improve their learning and their performance. The work may or may not contribute to the student's final grade for the course.

## **Graduate Attributes**

Graduate attributes are the skills, knowledge and qualities or attitudes developed by individuals through their programme of study that they will use to contribute effectively in work or other aspects of society in the future.

## **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.

## **Home student**

Generally, a home student is one who normally lives in the UK or European Union. However, for the purposes of determining which level of tuition fee is payable, a more detailed definition is available from the International Office.

## **Honours Classification**

Honours Classification is the process of deciding the class of award that should be conferred on a student who has successfully completed a defined programme. For Honours degrees, the available classes are 'first', 'upper second', 'lower second', and 'third'.

## **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.

## **Postgraduate Research or PGR**

Postgraduate Research refers to research programmes at postgraduate level, usually PhD. In some Faculties and Graduate Schools students candidates undertaking PGR studies may also be registered simply as research students and not for a specific degree.

## **Postgraduate Taught or PGT**

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

## **Service-based Learning**

Accounting and Finance have recently introduced a course, *Accounting and Civic Responsibility*, which provides students with the opportunity to put their learning into practice in the service of local communities. Examples of projects have been students assisting in the development of a performance measurement system for a local housing charity and a cash management system for a community project in Castlemilk.

**Staff:Student Liaison Committee or SSLCs**

Staff:Student Liaison Committees are departmental committees which provide a formal opportunity for Student Representatives to discuss matters with, and give feedback to their Department.

**University Teacher**

University Teachers are equivalent to Lecturers but make a relatively greater contribution to teaching and service/administration than Lecturers who are required to conduct and publish research.

**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.