

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee – Tuesday 14 April 2015

Periodic Subject Review: Responses to Recommendations Arising  
from the Review of Nursing and Health Care, held on 4 & 5  
December 2013

Ms H Clegg, Clerk to the Review Panel

**Conclusions**

The Panel was impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff and students, and with the firm focus on person-centred care and readiness for entry to the profession. The student group were enthusiastic and positive, and a credit to the School.

The School demonstrated a number of strengths, as well as an awareness of the areas requiring improvement. The most substantive of these are reflected in the recommendations below.

**Recommendations**

The recommendations interspersed in the preceding report are summarised below. They have been cross referenced to the paragraphs to which they refer in the text of the report. They are ranked in order of priority.

*Recommendation 1*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School give consideration to how it might alter its range of provision, in order to strengthen its resilience to changes in undergraduate provision beyond the University's control [*Section 3*].

**Action: Head of School**

*Response:*

The School is addressing this in several inter-related ways.

- New Trans National Education (TNE) initiatives
  - Singapore Institute of Technology - The School is actively and enthusiastically preparing for a formal collaboration with the Singapore Institute of Technology, initially to develop a 2-year joint Honours degree programme, for 80-100 students per annum. There is scope to extend this to a full 4-year degree and to explore opportunities in postgraduate or post registration education, research degrees and research collaboration. There is also interest in student and staff exchanges. The initiative is fully supported by the College and plans are progressing well, with a view to formal agreement being achieved by June 2015.

- The Magdy Yacoub Foundation - Aswan Heart Centre in Egypt has requested the development of a 2-year ordinary degree programme for qualified nurses holding a diploma. The programme would be partly online and partly work-based learning with some teaching in country. There is also scope to extend this to other Continuing Professional Development courses and PGT. The numbers are fairly small – 6-8 per year but there is an understanding that this would be contracted for a minimum cost for an agreed number of years. There is the possibility of funding up front to establish this. A business plan is currently being developed. Once established, this model may attract interest from other countries.
- Recruitment of PGT/PGR in Oman – We visited Oman in 2014 and have established good links with the Ministry of Health. Several of our PhD students are senior nurses who have been sponsored by the Omani government. We are in discussions with them about master’s level education. They are keen to send a number of staff for a master’s education but wish an extended programme of 18 months, to include some time in clinical areas. It is not clear what outcome they are seeking for this and they have suggested that we undertake another visit to discuss their needs in more detail. We have discussed this with some clinical areas and there is potential to offer such experience. RIO has been asked if the University would support a second visit and a response is awaited.
- Building capacity and capability in the development and delivery of interactive online education which will extend the market for its existing provision and support and facilitate a number of initiatives including the TNE.
- New PGT
  - A new Online PGC in Spiritual and Religious Care (based on an existing programme), suitable for a variety of professions is planned for 15/16 to extend the market outside of Scotland.
  - A new Inter-professional PGC in Leading, Improving and Transforming Care is planned for 15/16. The programme has a unique focus on economic assessment. It is endorsed by the Royal College of Nursing and the Oxford Policy Management Unit. It addresses a gap in provision for all health professionals
  - Collaboration with the Institute of Cancer Sciences is under way to develop an online MSc in Palliative Care. There are some of our existing courses that would be appropriate as options for this multi-professional programme.
- PGR - The School has been gradually changing its staffing profile to increase its capacity to supervise PGR students and other initiatives that bring additional staff, e.g. TNE will help to increase the capacity.
- CPD
  - A new CPD course in Dementia in Acute Care has been introduced very successfully with 20 participants in 14/15.
  - A free online ‘taster’ course on chronic oedema has been run with a view to raising the profile of the University in this field and to stimulate recruitment for

the Graduate Diploma programme. The course was capped at 200 for this pilot and the outcome will be evaluated.

- Opportunities are being explored with Glasgow Caledonian University for sharing postgraduate courses and ensuring complementary provision.

*Recommendation 2*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the College give consideration to demonstrating commitment externally about the sustainability of the School, such as publicising ‘good news’ messages about the School to external audiences, in order to alleviate any perception of uncertainty surrounding the School’s future and its provision [Section 3].

**Action: Head of College**

*Response:*

This has already been carried out extensively. Our College Newsletter published several articles on “good news” messages about the School. This has also been extended to the University news.

There are two major international opportunities for the school, the major TNE collaboration with the SIT and a smaller collaboration with Egypt. These collaborations required a major engagement of the College with bilateral visits and positive messages to broad external audiences. The plan to recruit the Florence Nightingale Chair of Nursing as part of our strategic plan for the School is a further evidence for a strong and long-term support.

*Recommendation 3*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School continue to develop its strategy for the coherent involvement of users and carers, exploring additional ways of involving them and ensuring that participants are reimbursed for any expense incurred in taking part [Section 4.8.8].

**Action: Head of School; Head of School of Medicine**

*Joint Response:*

We have developed a strategy for service user and carer engagement. We have initiated discussions with the Alliance Scotland, an umbrella organisation for national patient representative groups and voluntary organizations and services users and carers. They are working with us to promote meaningful engagement from the outset. A member of the Alliance Scotland Staff is acting as advisor and helping with the initial involvement of a group of service users to develop policies and processes for implementation. This will also address the need for support and preparation for various engagement roles. We are also exploring engagement of patient groups working with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

Our policy is to pay any expenses incurred by service users and carers through their contribution to the School. The Advisor from the Alliance has highlighted difficulties in payment beyond expenses because of tax issues and the potential impact on benefits. The best approach would appear to be to seek input on a volunteer basis but that can be discussed further when we have more engagement.

*Recommendation 4*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School encourage GCU to liaise with NHS partners in order to ensure placement arrangements are in place as early as possible, giving students the opportunity to research the placement in advance and gain an enhanced experience [Section 4.7.3].

**Action: Head of School**

*Response:*

The School is in regular close liaison with the Glasgow Caledonian University placement Unit, particularly via the Placement Advisory Steering Group, which oversees the process. Considerable progress has been made in the last 18 months in the timing of placement information. No placement allocation has been less than the minimum standard over the last session. Those in the previous session that were a little late were as a consequence of particular circumstances, e.g. a change in address. Glasgow Caledonian Placement Unit have recently installed a new management system that is expected to enhance efficiency. The aim is for students to have the appropriate contact details a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of the placement starting. We have initiated an audit trail to document when placement information is sent to Administrative staff in Nursing & Health Care and when we disseminate this to students, so that we can determine that the targets are fully met.

*Recommendation 5*

The Review Panel **recommends** that students be given full information about the benefits of progressing to Honours as early as possible, perhaps by inviting past Honours graduates to speak to students [Section 4.6.2].

**Action: Head of School**

*Response:*

We have adopted 4 different strategies to address this recommendation:

- Awareness raising: From the recruitment stage, staff emphasise that we offer a 4-year honours programme to ensure that year 4 is not seen as an optional extra. This is now reflected in all documentation.
- Engagement of Students: Year 4 students and graduates have discussion sessions with first and second year students to share their experiences and perceptions of the value of the Honours' years.
- Added Incentives: we are initiating and supporting several opportunities for an international experience, which, due to the structure of the programme, can occur only between year 3 and 4.
- Development of Year 4 programme: plans are in place to review the year 4 curriculum to balance the focus between the dissertation and other clinical and theoretical work.

*Recommendation 6*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School take steps to ensure that the policy of

reduced workloads for probationary staff is adhered to, for example, through seeking resource for an additional appointment or more effective use of research students [Section 4.8.7].

**Action : Head of School**

*Response:*

With such a small staff and several members of staff on probation it is challenging to provide adequate support, while not overburdening core staff. We ensure that probationary staff have a considerably lighter load of teaching responsibilities than other staff, but are aware that it may be more than that required in other departments. We have also had a vacant post for part of the year, so staff have shared additional responsibilities to cover that. However, we recognize the importance of ensuring they have an adequate range of responsibilities to enable their development and learning in relation to the PGC in Academic Practice and for their probationary objectives to be met.

There is close liaison between the BNH Programme Lead and the Head of Department to ensure probationary staff are not overburdened. The Head of Department has discussed workloads with each member of probationary staff to gain a better understanding of their perception of the various aspects of their work and the challenges in managing this. We have reduced the teaching load of one member of probationary staff where this was clearly needed. For two other individuals on probation, the issues seem to be not so much the volume of teaching that they have been allocated, but more the additional things that come up, e.g. student support, involvement with scholarship projects that are going on and partly, being enthusiastic and trying to do too many things, e.g. sitting in on other teaching sessions, which is undoubtedly valuable, but could be more measured. Staff have been reminded of the need to limit their input in projects or extra duties outside of their agreed teaching, administrative and scholarship roles. The teaching and administrative roles of all staff are now on the School shared drive and the key objectives for all staff are disseminated by agreement for transparency.

*Recommendation 7*

In line with the School's suggestion, the Panel **recommends** that the School seek to reduce the burden of processing over 800 applications by seeking support from the Recruitment and International Office in the task of filtering applications that do not meet the minimum entry requirement [Section 4.5.1].

**Action : Head of School; Recruitment & International Office**

*Response – Head of School:*

We have raised this with the Director of RIO. RIO are piloting an initiative with the School of Education to address similar challenges there. We plan to meet with RIO in June to discuss the outcome of the pilot and determine if a similar approach may be helpful for Nursing admissions.

*Response- Director of Recruitment and International Office*

Communication has taken place between the Head of Admissions in RIO and Nursing around the possibility of RIO's involvement in initially filtering Nursing applications. RIO fully supports the desire to simplify business processes in order to allow Nursing to focus on core

activities. However, this is additional workload that cannot simply be absorbed by RIO without additional resource at this time.

However, a process improvement exercise is currently being undertaken with the School of Education who operate a similar admissions process to Nursing. The hope is that process re-engineering will drive efficiency savings and work will be completed prior to the 2015/16 admissions cycle.

Once this exercise has been completed, RIO would hope to establish a similar review with Nursing with the aim of dovetailing Nursing applications into this new process. A meeting has been mooted for early summer to discuss further with Nursing and take forward as appropriate.

*Recommendation 8*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School explore ways of utilising research students in teaching, demonstration and assessment, in order to develop the role and assist in relieving workload issues within the School [Section 4.8.5].

**Action: Head of School**

*Response:*

Staff in the School have considered this the appointment of PGR students at Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) carefully and held discussions with colleagues in the School of Life Science. Life Science staff have a number of GTAs and report that the support they are able to provide is variable, depending for example on their English language ability and that they require considerable support and mentorship. However GTAs help in practical ways, e.g. operating scanners for class registers.

Research student supervisors have been consulted about engaging their students as GTAs and they are supportive in principle. We plan to discuss this further and develop guidelines to ensure recruitment is equitable and that it does not interfere with their PhD progress. We aim to offer the opportunity to take on a GTA role before the start of the next session and will identify the various ways in which we could engage them, including teaching, tutorials and assistance with operating scanners for attendance, which we have recently purchased.

*Recommendation 9*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School clarify with both students and mentors the nature and timing of mentor feedback, in order that students and mentors understand clearly what is to be expected [Item 4.3.6].

**Action: Head of School**

*Response:*

Students and Practice Education Facilitators were canvassed about their understanding of the nature and timing of feedback and no misunderstanding was found as they were aware this was clearly recorded in the Ongoing Record of Achievement. Students continue to have this information reinforced prior to every practice learning experience and it is also checked on every supervision visit or meeting with the Practice Learning Link lecturers.

A national collaborative group, with which our staff have been involved, have developed new documentation for practice placement assessment to ensure consistency across Scotland. This should overcome any issues with misunderstandings over expectations as it will be that same for students at all universities. This will be implemented by 2016 following pilot adoption by other HEIs.

*Recommendation 10*

The Review Panel **recommends** that those on hourly-paid or atypical worker contracts be invited to attend relevant meetings within the School, including Examination Boards, Undergraduate Teaching Committee and any other meeting relevant to their roles, in order to improve integration with other staff. Other areas of activity that might assist in this regard should also be identified. [Section 4.8.6].

**Action: Head of School**

*Response:*

Atypical workers were consulted about what would be helpful. This has been addressed by inviting those contributing to the programme to the Annual Forward Planning Day, the monthly Undergraduate Teaching Committee and to Examination Boards. They are sent all papers for these meetings and invited to make any comments or put forward ideas.

*Recommendation 11*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School produce a feedback policy focusing on managing students' expectations, and clarifying what constitutes feedback [Section 4.3.8].

**Action: Head of School**

*Response:*

We have consulted with colleagues in other School and have now implemented the cross-College feedback policy. Clear information is provided for timing for written assignments and examination feedback is provided across the programme. The feedback processes have been enhanced and any feedback provided is communicated as such to students. Staff have discussed ways of enhancing the feedback process with staff from Learning Support. Peer assessment is being used in a number of courses and has been found to be an effective way of helping students to understand the grading system and what is expected in various types of assessment. This has proved popular with students, and peer assessment of clinical skills has been adopted in all years of the curriculum.

*Recommendation 12*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School review the content of their Handbooks to ensure information is up to date, and that a robust review procedure for Handbooks is implemented to ensure these are properly maintained [Section 6.8].

**Action: Head of School**

*Response:*

We have had several changes in the administrative support team over the year and have only recently been able to fill both of the programme support posts. However, this has enabled us to recruit a higher grade and caliber of support for academic staff. The School Administrator and the Programme Director will agree and document the responsibilities of academic and administrative staff to ensure there are robust processes for updating course and university information proactively, including live links and proof reading. This will be actioned by end of May.

*Recommendation 13*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Undergraduate Medical School Administration be asked to negotiate access to the Wolfson Medical School facilities for Nursing annually, to accommodate the seven sessions required by Bachelor of Nursing students [Section 4.8.4].

**Action: Head of School; Undergraduate Medical School Administration**

*Response:*

The situation has now moved on with the imminent opening of the new Teaching and Learning Centre at the SGUH which has state of the art clinical skills facilities which the BN students have access to and their needs are incorporated in the current timetabling exercise. They also have access to the WMSB and if difficulty should be unexpectedly encountered this will be dealt with by the Head of School or the SoM Head of Administration

*Recommendation 14*

The Review Panel **recommends** that the School offer opportunities for student members to chair meetings of the Staff/Student Liaison Committee, in line with University policy [Section 6.4].

**Action: Head of School**

*Response:*

At the first Student/Staff Liaison Meeting of the 2014-15 session, the recommendation was discussed with Student Representatives and they were asked to consider the opportunity and inform the Administrator if any of them wished to take on the role of chairperson. They were offered support in preparing for subsequent meetings, as well as directed to further support that may be provided by the Student Representative Council. No responses were received. A reminder was sent by email and text but no response was received. As the Representatives changes each year, chairing the meetings will be an item on the agenda for the first meeting to allow future students to take the opportunity. A debating session was introduced to Year 3 this session, with guidance and opportunities to 'practice' the role of chair.



