

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee – 21 May 2015

**Periodic Subject Review: Response to Recommendations Arising
from the Review of Philosophy Wednesday 12 & Thursday 13 March
2014**

Mr Ryan Reed, Clerk to the Review Panel

Recommendation 1

The Panel recommends that the Subject, as a matter of urgency and alongside the recommendation at 3.1.5, develop formalised courses, approved through PIP, which have appropriate ILOs at SCQF level 11 and appropriate assessment to form part of the MLitt Conversion programme. Whilst it is acceptable for MLitt students to share teaching with Honours students they must be enrolled on courses at the appropriate level and with an appropriate credit value to ensure that the requirements for the award of MLitt are met. [Paragraph 4.1.2]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

For information: **Assistant Director, Senate Office, Convener of College Board of Studies, Dean of Graduate Studies**

Response: Head of Subject

Course proposals for MLitt (conversion) courses corresponding to every Philosophy Honours course running this year were submitted in time for the first meeting of the College Higher Degrees Committee. Some changes have been requested by the committee but once approval is obtained it will be possible to enrol this year's cohort on the new courses.

Approved by ASC, November 2014

Recommendation 2

The Panel recommends that alongside a curriculum review the Subject ensure all programmes and course specifications are current and complete, and that all courses are detailed in full through the Programme Information Process (PIP) and are therefore included in the course catalogue. No programme specifications were available online for any of the current taught postgraduate programmes. Programmes were, however, showing in MyCampus and appearing on student transcripts perhaps indicating that the official approval process had not been followed correctly. The Panel recommends that the Academic Standards Committee explore whether any action is required to ensure that all course and programme specifications are complete and that all courses and programmes are subject to the proper approval processes. [Paragraph 4.1.3]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject, Senate Office, Convener of ASC, Clerk of ASC**

For information: **Convener of College Board of Studies, Dean of Graduate Studies**

Response: Head of Subject

As part of the curriculum review, the programme specifications for both PGT courses will be revised and submitted for approval by the Higher Degrees Committee later this year.

Response: Senate Office/Convener of ASC/Clerk of ASC

The review sub-group hasn't yet met as we are still in the preparation stage (gathering info on practice elsewhere, etc). A major review of the approval processes is underway and it will attend to these points in due course.

Approved by ASC – November 2014

Recommendation 3

The Panel recommends that the Subject undertake a comprehensive review of the curriculum at all levels, as a full review has not been conducted within the last 10 years. Whilst the currency of curriculum content is not in question, the Subject should review the content of courses to ensure the continued coherence of programmes, including progression across levels. The Subject should contact and consult with the Academic Development Unit within the Learning and Teaching Centre for advice.¹ The Panel suggests allocating some dedicated time to undertake this review, such as a staff away day or similar. It is also important that the Subject use the opportunity of review to address other recommendations dealt with in the review report in a coordinated way. [Paragraph 3.5.11]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

For information: **Academic Development Unit**

¹ For guidance on review see:

www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/goodpracticeresources/programmeandcoursedesignandreview/
(accessed 21.3.14)

Response:

The subject staff, in consultation with our staff-student liaison committee, undertook a full review of our undergraduate provision. After initial discussion at a subject meeting, this consisted in four dedicated meetings to discuss the curriculum—two to discuss the moral and political offerings and two to discuss the epistemology and metaphysics (broadly construed) offerings, together with numerous email exchanges with staff, and discussions between the Head of Subject, Fiona Macpherson and the Director of Teaching, Chris Lindsay. It was agreed that the broad shape of the provision remain the same: our Level 1 courses should act as broad introductions to the subject, given that most incoming students would have had no opportunity to study the subject prior to University entry. The division between epistemology and metaphysics on the one hand and moral and political philosophy on the other should be retained at Level 1 for pedagogical reasons. Level 2 courses should build upon the Level 1 courses while starting to make explicit the epistemological and metaphysical commitments of moral and political theories.

The content of all subhonours courses was updated as a result of the review. The greatest changes were to the Level 2 Morality, Politics and Religion course, which is being retitled 'Self and Society'. This course will explore the moral, political, epistemological and metaphysical aspects of the self and society and the relationship between these. The course will be divided into four parts, one on the nature of the self (i.e. theories of personal Identity, free will, and human nature), one on applied social ethics that will explore up to the minute moral issues (e.g., reproductive rights, the impact of technology on the relationship between citizens and the state), one on philosophy of religion, and one on political philosophy (Hobbes and Locke). The other Level one and two courses have had small changes in their content and in the case of the Level 2 course Knowledge, Meaning and Inference, a more equitable balancing of the components that form the course.

The Academic Development Unit of the Learning and teaching Centre was consulted about the revised Level 1-2 course specifications. We consulted with students about the proposed changes to the curriculum at our Teaching and Learning Committee meeting and by e-mail and received very positive responses.

All agreed that the division between Junior and Senior Honours courses should be retained: this would allow the research-based Senior Honours courses to build upon the knowledge acquired from the specialised Junior Honours courses. These courses are regularly updated by the staff teaching them and the courses offered reflect available staff, their interests, and a desire to offer a broad curriculum for our students compatible with staff time and resources.

Recommendation 4

The Panel recommends that the Subject undertake (as a matter of urgency with regard to the MLitt Conversion) a comprehensive review of all ILOs at programme and course level to ensure that:

they are consistent with both programme and course level aims;

ILOs are consistent with University guidance on ILO structure, language and subsequently with the principle of constructive alignment;

ILOs are appropriate to the intended level of study and the corresponding SCQF Level.

This review of ILOs should be undertaken as part of a wider curriculum review, which is addressed separately in a later recommendation at 3.5.11. [Paragraph 3.1.5]

For the attention of: Head of Subject

For information: Academic Development Unit

Response: Head of Subject

As described in the response to recommendation 1, new courses for the MLitt (conversion) are currently going through the approval process. This includes formulating ILOs appropriate for the degree.

Approved by ASC – November 2014

Recommendation 5

The Panel recommends that the Subject review the programme aims of the MLitt Philosophy (General) and MLitt Philosophy (Conversion) programmes to ensure that these are clearly explained and available. It was suggested by the Panel that some of the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) from the MLitt programmes may be better suited as programme aims. [Paragraph 2.1.3]

For the attention of: Head of Subject

For information: Academic Development Unit

Response: Head of Subject

As described in the response to recommendation 2, the programme specifications for both PGT degrees are currently being considered by the subject, and revised versions will be submitted for approval later this year.

Approved by ASC – November 2014

Recommendation 6

The Panel recommends that the Subject consider how all ILOs can be made available to students, and how the Subject might raise awareness of them, so that students understand what they are expected to demonstrate at assessment. [Paragraph 6.1.6]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

At subhonours levels, all ILOs are prominently placed in Course Handbooks. Course conveners and lecturers draw attention to these at the start of the semester and then when appropriate thereafter. Students are also instructed to use these as a basis for exam preparation, revision, etc.

At Honours level, lecturers are instructed to provide aims and objectives that contain greater detail than those found in course specification documents. These aims and objectives are posted on course webpages and Moodle pages. Again, lecturers draw attention to these at the start of the semester and then through out the course when appropriate.

Recommendation 7

The Subject commented, within the SER, on student concerns around the weighting of assessment methods. The Panel recommends that the Subject reconsider the balance of the assessment methods used and whether there is merit in reducing the amount of credit awarded on the basis of assessment by examination, particularly at Honours. The Subject should explore the balance of assessment methods used in cognate subjects to determine current practice in other parts of the University. [Paragraph 3.2.7]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

Consideration of the balance between essays and exams at Honours level was postponed pending a College level discussion of the same issue. Once any College recommendations are received, the subject will implement these as required or take them into account when we re-start discussions. It is certainly our intention to explore this issue further with a view to increasing the weighting of essays and reducing the weighting of exams.

Recommendation 8

There was limited evidence of guidance on assessment criteria or technique at sub-honours level, with the exception of some input as part of Philosophy 1M. The Panel recommends that the good practice at Honours level (3.2.9) where the Subject provides guidance on essay writing, makes available exemplars of assessed work and contextualises assessment criteria within the subject be extended to the benefit of all students. This might be through the provision of lecture input at sub-honours level, through work in seminars, and through the use of the VLE to provide exemplars. [Paragraph 3.2.10]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

As per previous practice in the Level 1 Philosophy 1K course (not the Level 1 Philosophy 1M course as specified in the recommendation), all our subhonours courses now include lectures dedicated to essay and exam preparation (this is in addition to longstanding compulsory tutorial/seminar discussions of essay questions/techniques and exam preparation/techniques). Staff are building collections of sample essays for student use and marker training.

Recommendation 9

The Panel recommends that the Subject consider how awareness could be raised of the contribution the study of Philosophy makes to the development of Graduate Attributes and employability skills. This should include consideration of providing input to students studying at all levels on the relevance of uniquely philosophical skills, and on the value of these skills in other contexts. The Panel acknowledges that the Subject had recognised the importance of this area in the SER and welcomes their plans to offer further Philosophy specific guidance to students. It also encourages the Subject to continue signposting external sources of information to students. [Paragraph 2.2.3]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

Enhancing student awareness of graduate attributes continues to be a priority of the Subject. We have implemented additional measures towards this end. A member of staff has been assigned as Careers and Employability Officer. We have: included a section on graduate attributes in the class handbooks for Levels 1 & 2; had a member of the Careers service give a talk to one of the first-year classes; included a section on employability in the talk we give to prospective Philosophy Honours students; and held an evening event in which recent graduates with jobs in the private sector, civil service, charity sector, and teaching have explained how they have found their Philosophy degree useful in the world of employment. We are currently putting together a self-standing leaflet on employability, graduate attributes, and transferable skills that we will make widely available to our students at all levels (and their parents who sometimes do not have an in depth understanding of the nature of philosophy). We will place a copy of this leaflet on the web and Moodle. We hope that in addition to being of practical use to our students it will lead to an improvement in our retention rates.

Recommendation 10

The Panel noted that there may be a strong rationale for the recent revision of College regulations which set down minimum credit which must be achieved by students within the relevant College for progression to Honours. For example, maintaining distinctions between entry requirements for each College may have been a concern. However, the Panel also recognised the impact regulatory changes at College level were having on student choice and the flexibility of the M.A at Glasgow. The Panel recommends that the University, the College of Arts and the College of Social Sciences consider whether the changes to the regulations, stipulating credit requirements within the Colleges at Level 1 and 2, are appropriately balanced against student choice and programme flexibility. [Paragraph 3.6.3]

For the attention of: **Director of Senate Office, Head of College of Arts, Head of College of Social Sciences**

Response: Head of College of Arts

Extensive consultation led to the introduction of the 120 credit rule in Arts, which both reflects the direction of contemporary student choice and allows us to be fair to all our students. Our intending undergraduates increasingly come to study a particular subject or subjects, and with funded places being so competitive, we cannot justify offering them to students who wish to take fewer than 120 credits in the College. In a highly competitive admissions environment, we need to ensure that students who want to focus their study on Arts are given the greatest possible chance of doing so. It is equally important that we can afford the staff to teach them. The College will be unable to meet the budget agreed with Court in the absence of this rule.

Recommendation 11

The Panel recommends that the Subject in liaison with the School of Humanities consider how further progress may be made in reducing the student to staff ratio within the Subject Area. [Paragraph 3.9.2]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject, Head of School**

For information: **Head of College**

Response:

At a recent meeting with Jeremy Huggett, the Head of School of Humanities, Fiona Macpherson, the Head of Subject, raised this matter for discussion. She stressed that not only did this PSR recommend that we explore ways of reducing our student-staff ratio, but the previous equivalent exercise that took place (the DPTLA) in 2007 did also, and that this was an on-going problem that now urgently needed to be addressed. The response we got was that there were no immediate plans to provide additional staff to Philosophy. Longer-term plans were unclear.

The lack of rapid action on this point by the School (and by the College of Arts—see below) is deeply disappointing. It demonstrates a lack of support with respect to this issue by the University to the subject area. We very much hope that very shortly after the REF review of Philosophy in early May the School and the College will engage in constructive dialogue with

us to remedy the situation. We are disappointed that they are waiting for the REF review to happen before taking action, and not acting now on this PSR and the previous DPTLA. We are concerned that if there is a lack of response to this recommendation by the School and the College it will lead to a lack of morale in Philosophy and a lack of trust of reviews of this sort (especially when the subject area has done our utmost to respond to all the recommendations of the PSR). Indeed, one problem that we perceive with this review is that it does not involve the College of Arts in the appropriate manner. Evidence for this lies in the fact that this recommendation has been specified to be for the attention of the Head of Subject and the Head of School, however, it is the College of Arts that holds the budget for extra posts. Given this, we believe that this recommendation should have been put to the Head of College, Robby O Maolalaigh. We hope that the PSR review panel will inform the College of Arts and the School of Humanities that they have failed to act on this recommendation thus far and request that they do so in order to reduce the SSR in Philosophy.

The poor SSR has been made even more difficult for Philosophy this year because one senior member of staff has been on sick leave from the start of the academic year (with the exception of a few weeks late on in semester 2). Nothing was done to find a temporary replacement for this member of staff by the School or College. Philosophy suggested to the School (HoS Jeremy Huggett and HoSA Michael Murray) that even if we couldn't receive a temporary replacement, at minimum we required an increased budget for GTAs in light of our colleague's illness, given that such a budget is based on SSRs and we were now a senior staff member down making our SSR even worse. However, we were told that the budget had been fixed in advance of our colleague becoming ill and that they were not willing to change it. This is a good example of the lack of flexibility in the University's operating practices and another example of the lack of support that we receive. Again, we would like the PSR review panel to recommend to the School that they be more responsive to subject needs in the manner that we have suggested in this paragraph.

Finally, one of our senior staff is about to retire on medical grounds and we would like to replace him with two junior staff, which we understand could be done with little additional salary commitment. This would help a little with our SSR. We have asked the Head of School to approve this strategy and approach College with regards to it. We await a response—which we very much hope will be positive. Another way that the School and College could help us would be to approve an appointment to the Chair of Moral Philosophy, which is unfilled. (This chair was established in 1727 and was held by among others, Frances Hutcheson, Adam Smith, Thomas Reid and Edward Caird.)

Recommendation 12

The Panel recommends that the accommodation used for large Level 1 and 2 lectures in Philosophy be reviewed. Venues for these lectures should be sufficient to cope with the student numbers involved. Ideally there should not be a different location for every lecture as this creates complexity for staff and students. The Subject had previously made attempts to rectify this problem and recognised the stress placed on accommodation resources generally across the University. [Paragraph 3.9.5]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject, Director, Estates and Buildings (Timetabling)**

Response: Head of Subject

Despite Philosophy's timely efforts to once again secure suitable lecture space in the same location, we faced enormous problems due to the lack of space in the University. Indeed, this year was worse than ever. Two weeks from the start of term we had inappropriate rooms given to us which forced us to temporarily close enrolment for our Level 1 course as we could not accommodate all the students that wished to take Philosophy given the lecture rooms assigned. This was a major problem, as it might have caused some students to be unable to take the courses required for the degrees that they had been accepted to study for. It was only with considerable juggling in many respects from School admin staff, we managed to avoid this. In addition, there were some sessions for which no lecture room was assigned. In the end we had to move the planned Wednesday lecture slot to a Friday. This severely inconvenienced some students who had planned other courses, and in some instances their part-time jobs and family arrangements, around the previously timetabled Wednesday lectures, and led to some complaints from students.

We did not receive lecture rooms in the same locations as had been our hope, indeed, as the previous paragraph attests, finding rooms at all was a major challenge.

We will continue to work with the room booking system and people at an early stage in the process to find suitable rooms in the same location. We welcome the University investing in the proposed teaching hub and building a large lecture space within it. We only wish that they were building more.

Recommendation 13

The Panel recommends that the Subject, together with the School of Humanities and the College of Arts, consider what options are available to secure an adequate, consistent and dedicated budget for the provision of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), conducts a risk assessment relating to the continued availability of GTAs and, if necessary, put in place sufficient mechanisms to minimise the risk of over-reliance upon GTAs. In undertaking this the Subject is encouraged to reflect on the College of Arts policy on the role of GTAs.
[Paragraph 3.9.10]

For the attention of: **Head of College**

For information: **Head of Subject, Head of School**

Response: Head of College – November 2014

The GTA budget formula has been in place since 2010 but transitional arrangements were put in place to deal with large numbers in 2013, due to a Home/EU overshoot. We would expect to do this in exceptional years. In addition, the School of Humanities received four extra staff due to heavy recruitment. Therefore increased resourcing followed increased income: Schools are incentivised in R & T in accordance with the University's emerging strategic priorities. Both are done according to agreed formulae.

As regards the GTA formula, this can be changed at any time by CMG on the initiative of Heads of School. There are clear procedures which will allow Heads of School to bring this issue to the College Management Group. This is therefore an issue for discussion between the Subject and the School and this recommendation should be addressed by them in the first instance.

In considering the response to recommendation 13 concerning the use of GTAs, it was agreed that a response should also be sought from the Head of Subject and the School of Humanities.

Response: Head of Subject, April 2015

At present the subject does not receive enough in its GTA budget to cover 1st and 2nd year tutorials. This is what the Subject would like to happen. Providing such cover would transform the teaching timetables of academics by spending just a bit of extra money on GTAs, freeing up time for research, impact and other activities. GTAs are incredibly good value from the point of view of hours of teaching per pound (10 times or more the value of a lecturer). Without at least the GTA budget that we receive at present we could not continue to teach the numbers that we do at first and second year level.

The present formula that the School uses to distribute GTA funds among the Subjects was agreed by the Subjects in the past as a better way of divvying up the funds than had occurred previously. This formula is based on the FTEs for the Subjects and the number of staff in them. However, in our opinion, a better and fairer formula would be based on the level 1 and level 2 FTEs, which is presumably the only level at which cover by GTA is sought by Subjects. It is unclear to us, however, whether, on any formula, the School Budget—funded by College—would allow us to cover all our 1st and 2nd level tutorials, and so we would urge the School and the College to find the money to ensure that this happens.

The subject recognises that it needs to take steps to ensure sufficient numbers of GTAs are available to teach our level 1 and level 2 students. This year we have been able to rely on present and former graduate students at Glasgow. However, in order to be sure that the numbers of GTAs will be sufficient, we intend to contact graduate students at Stirling and Edinburgh to see if they are available for teaching in future years.

Recommendation 14

The Panel recommends that the Subject, in liaison with Human Resources (HR), review the current individual contractual arrangements in place for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). This review should take into account guidance from HR on the point at which GTAs should be placed on fractional contracts of employment, rather than zero hours or atypical contracts. The Subject should liaise with GTAs on this issue, seeking their views and suggestions. It was the view of the Panel that the Subject was under the false impression that the total worked hours of any GTAs should be limited so as not to exceed a specified earnings cap – whereas Corporate Human Resources had clarified that this was not the current University policy. The priority was to ensure that workers were on the most appropriate type of contract. [Paragraph 3.9.11]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject, Head of School, College HR Manager**

Response: Head of Subject

The School consulted with HR over the summer to produce an appropriate policy on GTA pay and conditions that would be consistent across the school. The policy does not recommend an earnings cap. We have adopted the School policy.

Response: College HR Manager

The University has recently revised its approach to the engagement of atypical staff including its policy with respect to the engagement of GTAs. These revisions are contained in the published Extended Workforce Policy (EWP).

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/humanresources/mgrs-admin/ewp/>

While there was potential in the wording of the previous atypical policy for the earnings triggers to be incorrectly applied as a cap – the new EWP removes any such ambiguity in its application. The College of Arts Management Group (CMG) has recently approved a revised GTA policy to align practices in the appointment of GTAs. This is attached for reference and should address the additional points made in the recommendation made

Recommendation 15

The Panel recommends that the College HR Manager should clarify with Corporate HR the position on 'earnings caps' and ensure this position is effectively communicated to Schools and Subjects. [Paragraph 3.9.12]

For the attention of: **College HR Manager**

Response:

The new GTA policy, referenced to the Extended Workforce Policy [discussed above], has been circulated to all Heads of School following approval by College Management Group approval. Heads of School will circulate as appropriate through subject areas in their School. The College HR team are supporting initial transition arrangements.

Recommendation 16

In order to enhance recruitment to PGT programmes the Panel recommends that the Subject give further consideration to how and to whom the postgraduate study of Philosophy at Glasgow might be promoted. In particular it should consider the promotion of PGT Philosophy to students within other subjects at the University and in particular to students within the College of Arts. The subject should contact the Recruitment and International Office for advice. [Paragraph 3.6.6]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

The Head of Subject, Fiona Macpherson, and the Head of PGT for Philosophy, Adam Rieger, have jointly and/or individually met with Caryn Fyfe the College of Arts Recruitment and Conversion Marketing Officer, and with one of the University's Alumni Officers, Lucinda Keith. We discussed ways of advertising our degrees. Unfortunately, there is not much budget for these purposes and Caryn Fyfe wishes to advertise the Philosophy degrees only as part of a general programme of advertising the Arts PGT degrees in general. Lucinda Keith was of more help. We have advertised our PGT degrees through the arts alumni e-newsletter—targeting students who took other subjects for our conversion degree, as well as those with a philosophy degree who may wish to take a Philosophy PGT degree. We are holding a Philosophy alumni event in May 2015. There will be a series of talks and a reception. As part of this we will advertise our PGT degrees. Moreover, we applied to the College of Arts and received permission to set up a Philosophy Scholarship fund, which we

intend will fund PGT scholarships. We are seeking permission to ask alumni for money for this fund and at the same time advertising our PGT degrees through a postal mail shot.

Recommendation 17

The Subject suggested that its PGT programmes were critical to the recruitment of postgraduate research (PGR) students. The Panel recommends that the Subject consider the development of its other routes to the recruitment of PGR students and make efforts to enhance these. The subject should contact the Recruitment and International Office for advice on recruitment. [Paragraph 3.6.7]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

The Head of Subject, Fiona Macpherson, and the Head of PGT for Philosophy, Adam Rieger, have jointly and/or individually met with Caryn Fyfe the College of Arts Recruitment and Conversion Marketing Officer, and with one of the University's Alumni Officers, Lucinda Keith to discuss the possibilities for advertising our PGR degrees. In addition, we have taken steps to further improve our webpages to recruit PGR students, developing a page that explains the research interests of those working in philosophy. Unfortunately, there was no money in the budget this year to advertise our PGR programmes on the Leiter Blog, which we have done in the past. And, indeed, without being given a budget, there is very little that we can do on this front. We continue to receive applications from very good students for PGR scholarships, but without receiving one of those, the number of student that want to pursue a PhD is small. And there are only a very limited number of available scholarships (primarily highly competitive AHRC, Carnegie, and College of Arts scholarships). We continue to welcome a good number of visiting PhD students who pay pro rata fees at the Centre for the Study of Perceptual experience, based in Philosophy.

Recommendation 18

The Panel recommends that the Subject consider how it may collaborate with other subjects to jointly develop interdisciplinary courses. The Subject should consider where it may beneficially collaborate with other subjects, particularly in cognate areas such as Theological and Religious Studies and Classical Studies. [Paragraph 3.6.8]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

Fiona Macpherson, Head of Subject met with Professor John McKernan of the Business School to discuss once again Philosophy contributing to the offerings of the Business School in the form of a course specially designed for PGT students at the Business School on Business Ethics. However, the Business School were ultimately not interested, despite initial interest.

The panel mentioned that we might consider collaborating with staff in Classical Studies to develop interdisciplinary courses. However, we have no philosopher of Ancient Philosophy and we believe that such a person would be required for a meaningful collaboration of this

kind. Moreover, we only have a 0.5 staff member who does Philosophy of Religion, so the possibilities of collaborating with Theology and Religious Studies are also somewhat limited.

Instead we do have substantial links to psychology, and we would like to now once again investigate the possibility of running a joint PGT degree course in philosophy of mind and psychology, which we believe would be very popular

Recommendation 19

The Panel did note attempts by the Subject to collaborate with other Subject Areas within the University in the development and delivery of courses. These attempts to collaborate had initially been positively received but had for a number of reasons failed to come to fruition. The Subject suggested that there was little incentive for some Subjects to collaborate, due to the demand for their programmes and courses, despite the fact that a joint course might be attractive and indeed useful to students. The Panel recommends that the University consider how it might support and incentivise the development of joint courses and programmes across Subject Areas. It recognised that on occasion professional accreditation can limit potential for this kind of collaboration. [Paragraph 3.6.9]

For the attention of: **Senate Office, Vice Principal (Learning and Teaching)**

Response:

Recommendation 20

The Panel recommends that the amount of training formally provided to Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), and embedded in the policies and processes of the Subject, properly reflects the guidance issued by the Learning and Teaching Centre. A minimum of two half-day training opportunities should be provided to hourly paid teaching staff. The Panel did recognise that the Subject provided informal support and guidance to GTAs and some more formal training and mentoring through observations and feedback. [Paragraph 3.9.13]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

For information: **Academic Development Unit**

Response: Head of Subject

The subject has formalised GTA training arrangements. In addition to College/University training, all GTAs attend initial course team meetings at which course content, GTA responsibilities, seminar aims and methodologies are discussed. Each GTA is observed in class by a member of the lecturing staff who provides feedback to the GTA through informal discussion and a written report, which also goes to the Director of Teaching and the Head of Subject.

In addition, GTAs now participate in essay marking exercises using sample essays, supervised by course conveners. All GTAs mark the same samples then discuss similarities or differences in marks, any issues arise, what feedback is appropriate, and so on. This ensures consistency of marking across lecturing staff and GTAs. GTAs are also offered training prior to exam marking. They are offered guidance as to what to expect from answers, what merits reward, etc.

Recommendation 21

The Panel recommends that the Subject continue to liaise with the Head of School Administration on the issue of the location of administrative staff and suggests that options to alleviate issues created at a Subject level be explored in further detail. The situation should also be reviewed in light of the forthcoming appointment of 2 additional members of administrative staff at School level. [Paragraph 3.9.16]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

For information: **Head of School Administration, College Secretary**

Response:

The Head of Subject, Fiona Macpherson, asked the Head of School, Jeremy Huggett, and the Head of School Administration, Michael Murray, whether we could have admin staff based in Oakfield Avenue, perhaps on a rotating basis with a different member there each day to perform the work assigned by Michael Murray, but she was told no. Therefore little has improved on this front.

In addition, when the admin staff were moved out of the building the School planned that there would be a door entry and reception system for visitors, deliveries, workmen, etc. that would connect them to a janitor who could deal with requests. Two years on this still is not working. We have just been informed that the equipment that was installed about a year ago, and which has never worked, has been now deemed unsuitable. While the School places blame on Estates and Buildings who, it is true, are responsible for not installing a working

system in a timely fashion, it was the School's policy to move out administrators from the building before this work was completed, thus placing burdens on academic staff. For example, in the storms over the winter, the Head of Subject had to manage workmen who came to look at a substantial leak that we had in the building that was flooding it. She had to find keys to open doors, liaise with janitors and other staff, eating up a substantial portion of time. Moreover, with no admin staff in the building, academic staff have to check up to see whether janitorial, cleaning, an Estates and Building work that has been requested has been done, and then chase it up when it hasn't.

We understand that co-location of the School of Humanities which is planned for the future will ultimately resolve this situation. However, that time is probably at least five years away. The arrangements that are in place for this time prior to co-location have not changed and are still not suitable in our opinion.

Recommendation 22

The Panel recommends that the Subject consider the possibility and resource implications of making a study space available to postgraduate students. [Paragraph 3.9.7]

For the attention of: **Head of Subject**

Response:

This year all of our PGR students who have wanted an allocated desk have received one either in Philosophy or from the College of Arts. In addition, we arranged for the sub-basement of 67 Oakfield Avenue to be returned to Philosophy (from Classics). This is now a hot-desking space for graduate students, GTAs, and visitors. We have also arranged for the PG lab in the basement of 69 Oakfield Avenue that was under the College IT services control to be given back to Philosophy. This will be used either as a staff office if required (this year we had temporary teaching and research staff sharing offices) or as further permanent graduate, GTA and visitor space or as hot-desking space. In addition, we arranged for Classics to move out of the main Philosophy office. In addition to that being our mail and stationary room, we will place desks in there for hot-desking for graduate students, visitors, and GTAs.