

University of Glasgow
Academic Standards Committee – 20 May 2016

Periodic Subject Review: Responses to Recommendations arising from the Review of Theatre and Film and Television Studies and Centre for Cultural Policy Research held on 16 and 17 March 2015

Recommendation 1

The Review Panel recommends that the School of Culture and Creative Arts, in consultation with Theatre Studies, Film and Television Studies and the Centre for Cultural Policy Research, liaise with the College of Arts in a review of the management structure that supports teaching and curriculum development and, if appropriate, formalises academic leadership roles at subject level to provide greater coherence in the development and delivery of teaching across the School [Section 3.5].

School's Response

After consulting with the Heads of TS, FTVS and CCPR, the Head of School submitted a draft report proposing that the University formalises the autonomous identities of the three subgroups and recognises them as subject areas and centre in their own right: namely as a Theatre Studies Subject Area, Film and Television Studies Subject Area, and Centre for Cultural Policy Research. The report has been submitted to Head of College and further consultation within the School and the College will follow shortly.

The autonomous function of the three subgroups is reflected by the structure of this document with TS and FTVS acting and responding independently in relation to the recommendations of the report. CCPR, primarily a Research Centre, runs one PGT programme and recommendations relevant to that are limited, they are however included where appropriate.

Recommendation 2

The Review Panel recommends that the School clarifies the roles of Graduate Teaching Assistants and University Teachers, to ensure consistency of support from staff and that reward in pay and personal development aligns with College and University policy [Section 5.3.6].

School's Response

In FTVS, support to appointees at all grades is provided in the form of initial interview meetings, ongoing mentoring via course convenors and the Head of FTVS, moderation of all assessments, and formal feedback on teaching and assessment performance in the form of a written report. Guidance with the preparation of course materials, use of online resources etc. is offered by convenors to ensure consistency of delivery, and an alignment of teaching strategies across teams with the overall aims and objectives of each course. Mentors attend a sample of lectures and/or seminars each semester, as a basis for informed guidance on more detailed aspects of teaching practice. Since the period of the review, FTVS in consultation with the School, Human Resources and the Teaching and Learning Service, has developed specific job descriptions for use by (Grade 6) Graduate Teaching Assistants, and (grade 7) University Teachers, which have now been adopted for wider use across the School and College of Arts. Standard School rates of pay are identified early to prospective staff joining the extended workforce, and updates are provided throughout the academic session (usually in January) as

rates are revised. A standardised appointment letter has been developed, again in consultation with appropriate support staff, detailing the terms and conditions of appointment to FTVS (contact and preparation hours, rates of pay for assessment, varied by type of assessment, etc.). All temporary appointments in FTVS are paid at a uniform rate, with a provisional summary offered prior to the commencement of duties. Support to appointees at all grades is provided in the form of initial interview meetings, ongoing contact with designated mentors and course convenors and the Head of FTVS, moderation of all assessments, and recorded feedback on teaching and assessment performance in form of a written report. All temporary teaching staff offered employment are directed to training opportunities available via TLS and SDS.

Within TS, GTA posts are advertised to all eligible students and recent graduates. GTAs and UTs are issued with a standard letter of contract, which details their conditions of appointment (contact hours, preparation and assessment duties.) All GTAs and UTs are paid at a uniform rate. TS hold regular mentoring and briefing sessions with GTAs and UTs, facilitated by course and year convenors. These meetings include an initial briefing session and further support and briefing sessions, once or twice each semester. The sessions are designed to ensure that GTAs and UTs are supported in developing course material and providing feedback and that there is consistency in delivery of the curriculum across courses. At these sessions, GTAs and UTs are also offered the opportunity to discuss any matters arising from their teaching and assessment duties and to reflect productively on the results of student evaluation questionnaires. All work assessed by GTAs and UTs is moderated. UTs and GTAs each also receive one-to-one mentoring from a designated mentor where issues such as managing workloads, developing a portfolio of teaching, and personal and professional development are discussed. TS organise workshops specifically tailored for the needs of GTAs and UTs in the subject area — for example, workshops have recently been held on assessing practical work and the role of critical reflection on practice.) GTAs and UTs are encouraged to participate in appropriate training opportunities in SCCA, CoA and the wider University. TS's two UTs underwent P and DRs in 2015-16. All TS UTs will be included in the P and DR process in future years.

Recommendation 3

The Review Panel recommends that the School of Culture and Creative Arts form a short-life Working Group, in consultation with the Dean of Graduate Studies, to consider future cross-discipline postgraduate provision, which responds to student needs and builds on the strengths of the Subject [Section 3.9].

School's Response

The School's Postgraduate Committee has taken over this task. The Committee is proposing the introduction of a new cross-School postgraduate programme with more specific details to be worked out during the 2016/17 academic year.

Recommendation 4

The Review Panel recommends the Subjects continue with their review of curricula, and in particular the MLitts in Film and Television Studies and Playwriting and Dramaturgy to ensure programme aims meet student needs and expectations [Section 5.1.5].

School's Response

FTVS review of its postgraduate provision has continued throughout 2015-16. Since completion of the PSR in early 2015, the MLitt Film and Television Studies revision group has continued to meet regularly, has formalised and presented its proposals concerning restructuring to colleagues, and has completed the submission of necessary course approval documentation through the PIP system, for altered components of the MLitt degree. The

revised programme will be offered for the first time in 2016-17. A firmer balance of attention to both film and television has been inscribed in the new structure (required team-taught 'Advanced Topics' courses will replace options based on individual staff specialisms, in order to give more uniform coverage across the student group), which has been more clearly defined as a research-preparation degree, offered in tandem with new MSc programmes offering more practice-centred approaches. The revision is aimed at achieving a clearer account of the range of Film and Television Studies as a discipline, especially for those students from cognate areas, and creating a programme whose contents may be advertised to prospective students in sharper outline. With required courses team-taught, a wider range of staff expertises will now contribute to the MLitt, students will gain a greater familiarity with the teaching team important in preparing for dissertation work, and improved consistency of delivery from year-to-year will be reconciled with changing staff availability. University promotional and marketing materials have been updated to reflect the structural changes in the programme, and to clarify its ethos, whilst the Subject Area itself has produced further information materials for use at Open Evenings, and for direct mailing in response to more general enquiries.

Within TS, the programme convenor for the MLitt in Playwriting and Dramaturgy undertakes annual reviews of the curriculum in response to student feedback and the changing external climate. A review and revision of the course, Debating Dramaturgy 2, was undertaken for 2015-16 in response to PSR and other student feedback, to ensure that the course met the needs and expectations of Playwriting and Dramaturgy students. This entailed introducing material more directly relevant to script-based dramaturgy and engaging additional tutors with expertise in this area. A further focus for 2016-17, again in response to student needs and expectations, has been on enhancing relationships with professional practice/organisations and increasing employability. In 2016-17 links with Playwrights Studio Scotland have been formalised to provide regular opportunities for students to gain experience in literary management and literary review as part of the National Playwriting Service. Further professional links are being developed with the Oran Mor venue and more resources have been devoted to the public rehearsed play reading event to provide additional and enhanced showcases for students' work.

CCPR continues its standard practice of carefully ensuring the integrity of all PGT programme publicity and informational material and of constantly gathering, analysing and responding as appropriate to feedback from students so as to ensure that student expectations are met.

Recommendation 5

The Review Panel recommends that the Subjects engage with the Learning and Teaching Centre (L&TC) and utilises their online support to ensure a consistent approach in the communication of assessable Intended Learning Outcomes to students [Section 5.1.2].

School's Response

In consultation with the L&TC, FTVS has revised its programme documents at all levels, with specific reference to assessable ILOs, and the particular issue of learning 'objectives', with appropriate changes to course documentation made by relevant convenors. New honours options for introduction in 2016-17 have been developed, and PIP documentation approved with specific reference to guidance from software administrators, and academic colleagues scrutinising submissions via the SCCA Teaching and Learning Committee. Induction meetings at all levels direct students to the specific issue of ILOs, whilst assessment feedback contains frequent reference to the attainment of specified outcomes in individual pieces of work. FTVS course handbooks have been reviewed for 2016-17, and appropriate revision made to wording, nomenclature etc. to standardise reference across documentation to criteria for assessment.

TS annually revises its programme documents at all levels. In response to the PSR and in consultation with and guidance from L&TC, particular attention has been devoted to assessable ILOs, with appropriate changes to course documentation made by relevant

convenors. Induction meetings are held at all levels to brief students on ILOs, and further briefing sessions are conducted by course convenors on courses that are taught by external tutors and/or entail atypical assessment tasks. (For example, practical assessments.) In assessment feedback, TS staff refer to the attainment of specified ILOs in individual pieces of work. TS programme and course handbooks have been reviewed for 2016-17, and appropriate revisions made to wording, terminology etc. to ensure consistency across documentation, specifically in relation to assessment criteria. TS will continue to engage regularly with the L and TC, and use their online support to monitor and amend ILOs to ensure consistency and accessibility. The TS L and T convenor will undertake this task annually, in relation to existing courses. ILOs for new courses will be devised in accordance with current L and T C guidelines.

CCPR also revises programme documents regularly to ensure compliance with L&TC guidance on assessable ILOs and more generally.

Recommendation 6

The Review Panel recommends that the School continue discussion with the College of Arts to reach final agreement on the continuation, or otherwise, of the 30 credit model. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, the School should develop an appropriate implementation plan for any agreed changes and communicate this clearly to staff and students [Section 5.2.5].

School's Response

A case for retaining the 30 credit model has been made to the College Management Group and has been accepted. TS continue to use the 30 credit model and all affected students and staff in TS have been notified.

Recommendation 7

The Review Panel recommends that the School communicate with teaching staff and students to ensure that advice and provision of feedback on examinations is consistent and in accordance with University policy on Feedback Following Summative Examinations [Section 5.2.8].

School's Response

FTVS developed standardised exam feedback sheets in 2013, which are returned to all students following assessment of summative examinations, for use at Levels 1 and 2, Honours and PGT Levels. Generic feedback on class performance across summative examinations is produced by course leaders for distribution to all students, and more individual feedback is provided where sought or deemed appropriate. The feedback is circulated via moodle and direct emailing, and re-visited in lecture presentations devoted to exam preparation, for students in the subsequent year. Staff remain responsive to requests for feedback on examination performances, and provide ongoing support to students in specific aspects of exam approach, technique, expectations etc. All students in FTVS receive a separate and identifiable mark/grade for each of their summative examinations as part of their overall range of results, which is transmitted via My Campus. External examiners have commented specifically on the value of such feedback in making final assessments, which is retained for future use in reference-writing etc.

In line with University policy, TS provides written cohort-wide generic feedback on class performance in summative examinations which identifies the characteristics of strong and less successful answers in relation to the course's stated learning outcomes and, where appropriate, noting different approaches taken in addressing different questions. This feedback is produced by course convenors and distributed to all students via Moodle/email and in lectures, with key aspects fed forward into assessment briefings for the following

semester/year. These briefings discuss the nature of each exam paper, and cover expectations, possible revision strategies and the relation of the assessment to the course as a whole. Further, verbal individual feedback on examination performance is available on request. All students in TS receive a separate and identifiable mark/grade for each of their summative examinations as part of their overall range of results, which is transmitted via My Campus.

Recommendation 8

The Review Panel recommends that the School consult with Human Resources so that where appropriate, University Teachers are conferred with early career status and benefit from relevant training [Section 5.3.5].

School's Response

In FTVS, temporary University Teachers (grade 7) are offered information by the Head of FTVS on the availability of PG-CAP training by TLS at their point of appointment, and guidance more locally in course design and practice-based teaching techniques. All new courses introduced by University Teachers on extended workforce contracts receive detailed scrutiny in draft form by the HOSA, undergo revision following review by relevant colleagues, and support in the formulation of teaching and assessment methods. The issue of alignment with ILOs is emphasised at these various stages. During 2016-17 one new University Teacher has been conferred with early career status and is undergoing relevant training; in 2016-17 two other new University Teachers have indicated a desire to undergo PG-CAP training, and will do so.

In TS, temporary UTs are advised of appropriate training opportunities, including PG-CAP training by TLS, and supported in taking advantage of these opportunities. Where appropriate, and in consultation with HR, the possibility of conferring early career status is explored and offered to UTs. UTs are supported through individual mentoring at subject area level in developing new courses. New courses devised by UTs are closely scrutinised at subject level and advice offered on ILOS, assessment and teaching methods before being submitted to PIP.

Recommendation 9

Review Panel recommends the School works with the College to review how teaching space and equipment requirements could be supported in the future, taking a creative approach, including examples of best practice, to ensure the Subjects' accommodation needs are reflected in the College of Arts and University estate plans [Section 5.4.4].

School's Response

The School is represented on the College of Arts Collocation Project Development Board (PDB) and has full input in the preparation of the documentation that details vision, aspirations and needs. A senior professor from TS convenes the Creative Spaces work stream of the project which feeds into the PDB the specific needs of FTVS and TS in terms of specialist teaching space. A smaller group is also looking at other universities in the UK and internationally to establish best practice examples for arts buildings.

Recommendation 10

The Review Panel recommends, as a matter of urgency¹, the Senate Office liaise with Ms Dorothy Welch, Deputy Secretary, to reassess the viability of installing of a swipe-card

¹ Clerk's note: A review of the standard access system (apparently now defunct) through E&B is likely to delay progress.

controlled system in Gilmorehill Halls, to provide evening and weekend access for staff and students. [Section 5.4.6].

School's Response

Meetings with colleagues from University Estates and Buildings have taken place with FTVS and TS HOSAs since January 2016, with a view to installation of a push-button system allowing out-of-hours access to the Gilmorehill Centre for both FTVS and TS students. This was recommended as an interim measure pending implementation of a wider access scheme across the University. It has been recognised that an extension of the existing alarm systems is also required to ensure safe and meaningful operation of the new entry system, and this provision is being included in quotations currently being submitted to the University by relevant suppliers. A University-wide swipe card system is simultaneously being considered, which would incorporate the Gilmorehill Centre if implemented in due course. Costing of the new entry system has been identified as an issue by Estates and Buildings, who are working with the Gilmorehill Buildings Supervisor to resolve this outstanding issue. HoTS and HoFTVS met with Gordon Mackenzie, Head of Security and Central Services, in October 2015 to discuss the installation of a door entry system that would allow extended and more convenient evening and weekend access for students. (TS PGT and PGR students can currently access the building and use the theatre and performance studio at weekends and evenings by borrowing a key from the security services in exchange for their ID cards. UG students have no access to the building and spaces for practical work after 4.30pm or at weekends.) The recommendation was for the installation of a keypad entry system and CCTV camera in the short term and a swipe card system in the longer term. Gordon Mackenzie indicated that this could be installed in a matter of weeks. HoTS followed this up in November 2015 and again in January 2016 and was informed that the installation had stalled due to a backlog of work for Estates and Buildings. Since January 2016, issues have been raised about fire safety and security resulting from the installation of a door entry system. The large main door is not secure internally (it is closed only by bolts on the interior) and therefore cannot function appropriately as a fire exit (fitting of quick-release bars and inclusion of the doors on the fire alarm system are necessary). The matter is currently being reviewed by security services, fire safety officers and Estates and Buildings. If no solution is presented by end March 2016, HoTS will follow it up with security services, fire safety services and Estates and Buildings.

Court's response

The University is engaged in an exercise to replace its core access control system (now obsolete) which will also integrate all security systems across campus for the future and in line with the principles underpinning the campus development. As part of that exercise an assessment of all requests for building access is undertaken by Security, working closely with the building users, and a recommendation made to Estates for the implementation of an appropriate solution.

In this instance, CCTV and an electronic key pad entry point are to be installed to facilitate out of hours access. This will include a new push bar to ensure means of escape provision. Delivery is programmed to be completed by early April.

As part of the review of the building out of hours occupancy levels have been considered and there are options either to retain the existing internal glazed screen or fit a new door-set. The fire risk assessment is being reviewed and the outcome of the assessment will confirm whether this additional work is necessary. This does not preclude the previously mentioned work and would be an enhancement to existing arrangements.

Recommendation 11

The Review Panel recommends the School undertake a review of the operation of the Subject's Staff Student Liaison Committees, to ensure that actions are clearly identified and progressed, and outcomes reported back to students [Section 4.5.7]

Response

FTVS have undertaken a review amongst staff of the operation of its SSLCs, and instituted more rigorous forms of notice to representatives (email notification, noticeboard displays and lecture reminders), more detailed minute-taking (by the Gilmorehill-based administrator, before revision by HOSA), and feedback (to both representatives and wider class members via email, moodle and noticeboards). Details of class representatives are routinely circulated direct to all class members, and changes to the team updated from semester to semester. Copies of meeting Minutes are routinely retained by the Gilmorehill office as well as by the HOSA and relevant class convenors. During 2016-17, all proposed new courses have been discussed at relevant SSLCs in advance of submission to PIP, and amendments made in the light of very valuable student comments.

In TS, class representatives are elected by year/programme cohorts and their names made available via email and Moodle. Class reps are notified of SSLC meetings in advance with reminders issued to all students – to allow time to table agenda items - via email and seminar/lecture announcements. Class reps are required to table agenda items for the SSLC in advance of each SSLC meeting. Minutes from TS SSLC meetings are taken by a class rep volunteer and are then revised by HoTS. The revised minutes are returned to the class rep/minute taker for approval before being circulated to all students via email and Moodle. HoTS retains a copy of all minutes. From 2016, the minutes include a list of actions. The minutes are reviewed at the following SSLC meeting and a report made on the progress of actions and outcomes. This procedure is followed for both UG and PG SSLCs. All new TS courses and course changes are brought to the SSLC for discussion before being submitted to PIP.

In CCPR, class representatives for the MSc in Media Management are elected each year and are invited to participate in the PG SSLC meetings for the wider subject area but we also organise regular dedicated staff student meetings specifically for the MSc in Media Management to ensure that any problem issues are identified, acted on promptly and reported back to students.

Recommendation 12

The Review Panel recommends that the Subjects liaise with the Recruitment and International Office to ensure that prospective postgraduate students are provided with accurate information regarding the availability of course options [Section 3.11].

School's Response

In FTVS at undergraduate level, administrators of the course catalogue have been contacted to ensure that only 'live' courses are now visible to prospective students at the start of each session, with a view to easing enrolment difficulties; details of the planned option listing will be made available earlier than in previous years, to both Level 2 and Junior Honours students, and normally clarified by the end of semester two; revisions to the practical offer in particular from 2016-17 will be notified as part of this overall briefing, enabling earlier option choices to be established by the Honours convenor following distribution of Honours offer letters in June. At postgraduate level, reformation of FTVS postgraduate options to make the offer more consistent – and therefore marketable – year by year has been completed, providing courses that index key developments in the field, and are appropriate to postgraduate levels of study.

With the provision of revised MLitt and new MSc programmes in FTVS (see recommendation 4, above) updated publicity documentation has been generated by the Recruitment Service,

itemising offered courses in greater detail. These have been supplemented by information sheets produced in-house by FTVS, providing more itemised coverage of changes to provision each session. Re-launch of the MLitt in FTVS (see above) has been undertaken to allow a more predictable provision of courses, allowing more informed decision-making by prospective students, and helping to clarify the ethos and ambitions of our well-established PGT programmes.

TS has undergone a review of the course catalogue to ensure it accurately represents which courses are offered each year. This review will be undertaken annually. Information about core PGT courses and electives available across SCCA is also updated annually and circulated to prospective PGT students. PGT convenors will liaise with RIO to ensure that they receive timely and accurate information on the course options available each year.

CCPR provides information which is as up-to-date as possible to RIO about available options and every effort is made to ensure that incoming students receive timely and accurate information about options. Because electives provided as part of our Masters teaching by other subject areas (e.g., the Adam Smith Business School) are subject to alteration depending on factors outwith our control, we are careful to indicate as appropriate in programme and in promotional information where lists of electives may be illustrative and subject to change.