



## Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

### Review of the Archaeology held on 25 February 2016

#### Report Summary

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The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the subject area of Archaeology. *Periodic Subject Review* is an internal subject review 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\\_484829\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_484829_en.pdf)

Further information about the PSR process can be found at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/periodicsubjectreview/>

*Italicised words* are explained in a glossary below.

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#### Conclusions

In its discussions with students and staff, the Panel heard many positive reports on activities and teaching in the Subject, which corroborated feedback sections in the *SER*. There was clear evidence of a strong commitment to supporting undergraduate students in their learning and providing a rich, varied and flexible curriculum. In addition, the Subject had committed itself to innovation in assessment and feedback and had preserved the practical elements of the undergraduate degrees which the Panel understood were a recognised and marketable aspect of Archaeology at Glasgow and popular with the students. It was acknowledged, however, that the *PGT* area lacked vigour and focus, and that a new approach to *PGT* provision and recruitment was needed.

The Subject's concern over recent staff losses, post-*REF*, was acknowledged by the Panel. The PSR was not a review of resources, however, and the Panel urged staff to respond to these challenges by following the lead of the Head of Subject, in creating a longer term vision for the Subject and working collectively on specific strategic plans to achieve that goal.

## **Key Strengths (Commendations) <sup>1</sup>**

### **Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their learning**

- The support for its UG students and the academic and pastoral experience it provides, as articulated for the Panel by a very content and enthusiastic group of students. In addition, the students' strongly praised the varied, flexible and interesting curriculum and commitment offered (para. 4.3.6).

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Assessment and Feedback**

- The commitment to innovation and variation in assessment and its good practice in providing high quality feedback to students (para. 5.1.3.6).
- The problem-based and case-based approach to teaching and the excellent practical emphasis of the degrees (fieldwork and artefact work), including a strong commitment to embedding *Graduate Attributes* in the curriculum (para. 5.1.2.2).

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Engaging and supporting staff**

- The management of, and support for, its *GTAs* as well as the commitment of the *GTAs* to supporting the Subject (para. 5.2.2.5).

## **Areas to be improved or enhanced**

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Curriculum design and development**

- Specifically agree a plan to address the issue of fieldwork in the curriculum and the loss of the *Field School*. The current ideas for future fieldwork provision (outlined in 3.2.6) should be distilled into a single clear and agreed strategy and time frame. Any solution should seek to preserve the sense of community amongst the student body, fostered by group field trip activity. The plan should be implemented ready for the start for the 2016/17 academic year (para. 3.2.9).

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Assessment and Feedback**

- Take on board the issue of overassessment and imbalance in staff time devoted to assessment and feedback, leading to delays in feedback turn-around times. As a remedy, it is suggested that the Subject should carry out a *mapping* of the UG curriculum to understand where different types of assessment occur in the students' programmes and the balance of formative and summative assessment. The Subject may also seek advice on this exercise from the *Learning & Teaching Centre* which has carried out work on such mappings. With information from this mapping, assessments should be reimagined and rationalised across programmes and students' routes through them (para. 5.1.3.6).

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Engaging and supporting staff**

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

- Consider how efficiently its *GTA*s could carry out their roles, in supporting and engaging with students, if the new *GTA* contracts precluded them from holding office hours (para. 5.2.2.4).

### **Academic Standards: Quality processes**

- Immediately review the course catalogue to check for any inaccuracies and confirm that the incorrect listing of the aerial photography course was an isolated occurrence. In addition, the complete database of courses should be reviewed to ensure that only active courses are uploaded on *PIP* (para. 4.3.6).

### **Context and Strategy**

#### ***Strategic plans***

- Actively and strategically supported by the Head of School, the Head of Subject should meet with staff to articulate a robust and ambitious vision for the Subject for the next 5 years. (para. 3.1.3).
  - There should be collective agreement of the specific strategic plans to achieve this vision, and an agreed time frame for their implementation.
  - The overall plan should tie together both future research strategy and teaching strategy. Specific consideration should be given to the formation of 3 or 4 research groupings representing the strengths of the Subject and teaching provision, especially *PGT* provision, should link in with these themes.
  - Further, specific consideration should be given to how the new resources of the Kelvinhall development could be exploited by the Subject and an appropriate business plan for this drawn up.
  - This task should be completed by the end of the current academic session

#### ***PGT provision***

- Meet with colleagues in *MaRIO* and, if necessary, the School and College, to clear up any miscommunication concerning the *PGT* recruitment process and work out a clear and agreed process for the consideration of applications that efficiently captures all appropriate applicants. More generally, the Subject should work with colleagues in *MaRIO* to create a market driven strategy, with the aim of re-shaping the extant provision and increasing *PGT* recruitment (para. 4.1.4).
- Agree a plan to rationalise its *PGT* provision, working with the School as necessary, creating some form of 'umbrella' programme and withdrawing non-viable programmes and courses. In general, linkage of *PGT* provision with the development of themed research groupings, should be considered as a way forward and an opportunity to enhance the long term reputation internally and externally (para. 5.1.1.4).
- Consider ways to develop a clear strategy to promote a more cohesive *PGT* community and involve *PGT* students more in the wider Subject (para. 4.3.6).

## *Glossary*

### **Field School**

The Subject had ran an annual Field School designed primarily for second year students about to enter Honours, which provided training across a number of areas including: topographic survey; artifact survey; standing building survey; geophysical survey; excavation techniques; planning, section drawing, etc.

### **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 subject/school. They are paid an hourly rate by the University.

### **Learning and Teaching Centre**

The Learning and Teaching Centre is a University Service whose role is to “help implement and develop the University’s Learning and Teaching strategy, identify, assess and disseminate new developments and good practice which serve to enhance the student learning experience, and will work with colleagues throughout the University to bring about change”.

### **Mapping**

Curriculum mapping is a process which aims to ensure programmes fulfil a range of requirements in terms of aims and outcomes, whilst reducing teaching and assessment overloads (for both staff and for students), making teaching and assessment more effective overall. The mapping aspect examines what each course is doing in terms of the aims and outcomes of the full programme and in relation to other courses. The focus is on Intended Learning Outcomes and Graduate Attributes. Assessment blueprinting then is the related process of looking at the assessment in each course, again in terms of the whole programme and assessment in other courses. The curriculum map informs the assessment blueprint through alignment of objectives to assessments. This is done as a collaborative, staff-led project, so that the curriculum stays at home.

### **MaRIO**

Marketing, Recruitment and International Office

### **Periodic Subject Review or PSR**

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

**Programme Information Process (PIP)**

PIP is a University web system for staff to propose and approve new and changed programmes and courses and to view information on live programmes and courses.

**Postgraduate Taught or PGT**

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

**Research Excellence Framework (2014) REF**

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the new system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. The primary purpose of the REF is to produce quality profiles for research activity in institutions. These quality profiles are used to determine the funding for research awarded to the institutions.

**Self Evaluation Report (SER)**

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