



## Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

### Review of the English Language held on 11 March 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 English Language. *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\\_484831\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_484831_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

The members of the Review Panel very much enjoyed their engagement with English Language. A lasting impression was formed of a subject area where staff effectively communicate passion for their subject, and students feel welcomed into a vibrant learning community.

The Review Panel, guided by the views of the External Subject Specialist, confirmed that, at the time of the Review, programmes offered by English Language were current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline, and of practice in its application.

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

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

- Success in engaging students in their studies, through embedding at an early stage connections with the Honours curriculum and with staff's own research, and through the evidently inclusive attitude of staff. [*Paragraph 3.17*]

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

- The open and responsive attitude of staff, demonstrated through effective consultation and rapid response to feedback or requests for support, attested to by students, *GTAs* and *External Examiners*. [*Paragraph 5.3*]

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

- The approach adopted in reviewing assessment as part of the wider review of the Honours curriculum. The diversification of assessment schemes was ambitious and wide-ranging, and resulted from careful planning and consultation. Staff demonstrated to the Panel an awareness of the importance of evaluating these changes following implementation in 2016-17. [*Paragraph 4.15*]

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Supporting staff**

- The exemplary support and development of its *GTAs* (including opportunities offered to *PGT* students to shadow *GTAs*), and for the additional opportunities offered to *GTAs* such as lecturing on their own areas of research. [*Paragraph 4.31*]
- The approach to mainstreaming Equality and Diversity, specifically through the School Disability Officer's belonging to the School's Learning and Teaching Committee, promoting awareness of relevant issues and embedding Equality and Diversity in the consideration of developments in learning and teaching. [*Paragraph 3.9*]

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

### **Enhancing the Student experience: Internationalisation**

- Continue to explore the range of possible means for students to benefit from an international experience during the course of their studies at Glasgow, including options available to students for whom the traditional session-long or semester-long experiences would be impracticable. [*Paragraph 3.21*]

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

- Recognising the broad range of educational backgrounds from which *PGT* students come, review induction and orientation process, particularly for those who have not previously studied at Glasgow, to cover the structure of the programme and what is expected of the students, and to support continuing orientation throughout the early stages of the programme. [*Paragraph 3.13*]

### **Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Resources**

- Ensure that upgrading of the computers in the *STELLA* lab is pursued in accordance with the standard upgrading cycle, in order to ensure that this valuable learning and teaching resource is optimised. [*Paragraph 4.38*]

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

- The *VLE Governance Board* should be asked to consider the limitations of providing feedback within Moodle and, if appropriate, to identify other more effective means of facilitating the provision of feedback to students on their assessed work. [*Paragraph 4.19*]

- Clarify to students the role of GTAs and, in particular, the fact that queries arising from seminars led by a GTA should be directed to the course convener rather than to the GTA. [*Paragraph 4.30*]

## **Context and Strategy**

### *Range of Provision*

- Deans of Learning and Teaching in Arts and Social Sciences consider and then implement an approach that achieves best alignment between the generic coverage of statistics and qualitative measures provision and the specific needs of Arts PGT programmes. [*Paragraph 4.7*]
- Recognising the strategic importance of *ESRC* accreditation which is linked with its current PGT programme, proceed with its planned review of PGT provision with a view to establishing this on a sustainable footing, investigating opportunities for shared provision across the School and College, and exploring strategies for strengthening recruitment.[*Paragraph 2.10*]

### *Recruitment*

- In conjunction with the School, continue its efforts to promote recruitment to the undergraduate study of English Language at Glasgow, exploring means of: involving current students and recent alumni in this task; harnessing social media and the internet; and following up contacts made at Open Days. [*Paragraph 3.6*]

## *Glossary*

### **Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)**

The ESRC is the UK's leading research and training agency addressing economic and social concerns. It also provides funding for over 500 postgraduate students each year.

### **External Examiner**

External Examiners are appointed by the University Court on the recommendation of Senate based on advice from the relevant School. The role of External Examiner is a very important part of quality enhancement and assurance to maintain academic standards at the appropriate level and to ensure that student performance is properly judged.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Postgraduate Taught or PGT**

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

### **Software for Teaching English Language and Literature and its assessment (STELLA)**

The STELLA lab is a dedicated facility, the only one of its kind in the UK. The project supports Information and Communication Technology in teaching and research.

### **VLE Governance Board**

The VLE Board's remit is:

- 1) To establish what was currently used across the University and range of experience; range of difficulty and whether any changes would enhance provision
- 2) To identify new initiatives and associated requirements. In the longer term, the Board would establish strategy and a more governing role, particularly in relation to digital space, to ensure transparency and to prioritise initiatives.