



Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

Review of the Central and East European Studies held on 22 February 2017

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the subject area of Central and East European Studies (CEES). *Periodic Subject Review* (PSR) 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_549190_en.pdf

Further information about the PSR process can be found at:

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

Italicised words are explained in a glossary below.

Conclusions

The Review Panel noted the Subject Area's multi- and interdisciplinary approach, which had made a "positive contribution to ensuring ...a world-class student learning experience", as evidenced by a number of achievements including the Subject's global programme, the Erasmus Mundus International Master in Russian, Central and East European Studies (IMRCEES) contributed to the development of global citizens. The Subject's provision was broad and non-prescriptive with emphasis on multidisciplinary, multiple pathways, and richness of the intercultural experience. The Review Panel concluded that that Central and East European Studies was a thriving subject area, displaying creativity, flexibility and ambition in its *enquiry-based* and *research-led teaching and learning* provision. The Subject's international credentials are admirable and clearly align with the *University's Strategy*. The dedication of the staff is evident through their commitment to practices, which strengthen and enhance the student experience.

Commendations, Key Strengths and Good Practice¹

Commendations are presented separately from examples of good practice, with the former being used to identify innovative and exemplary activities for wider dissemination.

Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their Learning

- The support provided in *induction* and transition and its commitment to supporting staff and students [3.3.1];
- The integration and strong sense of community evident, which distinguishes CEES from other subjects [3.3.1].

Academic Standards

- The Subject's approach to internal review as evidenced in its responsiveness to the comments of the *external examiner* in relation to the *marking scale* [5.1.2].

Collaborative Provision

- Excellent provision of international programmes, which reveal awareness and engagement with *University's Strategy* [6.1].

The Review Panel identified the following key strengths and areas of good practice.

Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their Learning

- The Review Panel noted the Subject's commitment to nurturing student cohesion and a strong sense of identity [3.3.2].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Placement Learning

- The Subject's wide ranging and prestigious work placements [3.4.1].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Engaging and Supporting Staff

- The Subject's appointment of a lead *Graduate Teaching Assistant* (GTA) and inclusion on the Subject's staff meetings [4.4.2 and 4.4.3].

Collaborative Provision

- *Enquiry-led* and *research-led learning and teaching* [7].

Academic Standards

- Unique international programmes [6.1].

¹ Numbers refer to the paragraphs in the full report that contain the relevant discussion.

Areas to be improved or enhanced

The Review Panel made a number of recommendations where it identified opportunities for further enhancement.

Enhancing the Student Experience: Student Engagement

- A review of *Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC)* feedback mechanisms to ensure that examination and timetabling issues are fully addressed and the feedback loop is closed [3.4.5].

Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students in their Learning

- Provision of support by the Subject and University Services, most particularly the Careers Office, in the development of appropriate national and international work placements [3.4.1];
- The subject convenor to investigate the possibility of enhanced language provision for small minority languages within the extant and planned language provision [2.4.2].

Enhancing the Student Experience: Admissions, Retention and Success

- A review of documentation, including handbooks, to better articulate progression to Level 1 students and highlight the benefits of continued study of the Subject [3.1.3];
- Update the information on the Subject's webpage, particularly in relation to *Postgraduate Taught* provision to make clear that not all courses advertised would necessarily be available. The School should also undertake a review of the long-term technical support for the maintenance and updating of the Subject's web pages to ensure that all subsequent requests are actioned in a timely manner [3.1.6];
- Consultation with the Marketing, Recruitment and International Office (MaRIO) to review the current recruitment and to identify ways to increase and enhance the Subject's profile at pre-entry level [3.1.2].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Resources for Learning and Teaching

- Maintenance of current office hours and review the open door policy [4.3.3];
- A review the practice of double marking all Honours and PGT work and introduction of a form of targeted moderation in order to alleviate pressure on staff and to ensure effective and timeous feedback [4.3.2].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Curriculum Design and Development

- A review of core provision at postgraduate level to identify and address areas which require further development [3.1.7];
- The Subject and School review their practice with regard to *plagiarism* to ensure conformity to the University regulations [4.1.6].

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Engaging and Supporting Staff

- Early engagement with the *GTAs* to identify areas in which they could improve development opportunities [4.4.4 and 4.4.5];
- A review by College and School regarding the availability and/or the communication of training opportunities available for *GTAs* [4.4.5.]

Collaborative Provision

- The School and Subject jointly work on the development of a robust strategy to ensure that the Subject maintains its leading international position in the post Brexit environment [6.1].

Glossary

Enquiry-led Learning or Enquiry-based Learning

The University of Manchester's Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning describes Enquiry-Based Learning as "an environment in which learning is driven by a process of enquiry owned by the student". It can include various forms of teaching, such as problem based learning, small scale investigations, projects and research that encourage students to take responsibility for their learning experience. It is also the subject of the University's strategic aim set out in the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy 2006-10, which is for the University to "be renowned internationally for enquiry-led learning in a knowledge culture shaped by the richness and diversity of our research environment."

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.

Induction

Induction is a series of events planned by the University, Colleges, Schools, Subjects and the Student's Representative Council to welcome new students and provide them with information to prepare them for their studies and the forthcoming year at University. Events usually take place during the first week of the academic year.

Marking Scale/Assessment Schedule

The University's Code of Assessment (implemented 2002-03) is designed to provide a fair and rational means of assessing students' performance. It provides instructions to staff on how assessment should be designed and carried out. It sets out verbal descriptions of each of the eight grades from A to H. Students' work is judged against these descriptions in terms of how well they have met the stated intended learning outcomes of the course or other assessed component and the corresponding grade is awarded. A guide to the Code of Assessment for students is available from the Senate Office website.

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.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the submission or presentation of work, in any form, which is not one's own, without acknowledgement of the sources. Special cases of plagiarism can also arise from one student copying another student's work or from inappropriate collaboration.

Postgraduate Taught or PGT

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

Research-led Learning and Teaching

Research-led Learning and Teaching can mean different things in different disciplines. Broadly speaking, the term refers to the ways that the current research of staff can positively influence and support student learning and promote the development of research skills and attributes in students.

Staff:Student Liaison Committee or SSLCs

Staff:Student Liaison Committees are Subject/School committees which provide a formal opportunity for Student Representatives to discuss matters with, and give feedback to their subject area.

University Strategy (2015-20)

The University Strategy (2015-20) aims to provide students and staff with the support, development, infrastructure and environment needed to further the University's ambition. This involves transforming the way we work and improving the interactions with each other (students/partners) and growing our reputation, so that: 1) students regardless of background, are given an education that prepares them to go into the world and make change happen 2) research conducted positively impacts on the health, wealth and cultural wellbeing of the world, and 3) we engage with the city of Glasgow and the global community.