Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

Information for Students

Background

The University has for many years had a system of periodic review of subjects conducted on a six-yearly cycle. This is one of the main quality processes the University has in place to assure itself, and the Scottish Funding Council, of the quality of the provision delivered by Subjects and Schools. The reviews focus is on teaching, learning, assessment and feedback student support and the student experience. The review process is intended to be positive and constructive, supporting Subject(s) in the enhancement of their provision; it is not punitive.

The Review Process

The review is carried out by a Panel made up of a Vice Principal or the Clerk of Senate (who is the Convener), an external subject specialist\(^1\), a Senate Assessor on the University Court\(^2\), an academic from a cognate School, normally within the same College, a representative from Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Services (LEADS), a student representative from out-with the School, normally from another College, and an administrator from the Senate Office who is the secretary to the Panel.

To familiarise themselves with the Subject’s activities in advance of the visit, Panel members receive a Self-Evaluation Report (SER), which the Subject/School prepares, plus supporting background documentation. Subjects/Schools are encouraged to consult with students on the SER, perhaps at a staff: student liaison committee meeting or via Moodle, with a view to seeking feedback on whether it is a fair reflection of the subject(s) under review.

The Panel visits the Subject/School and meets with representative groups of students on taught programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate) and with groups of staff. The length of the visit and the number of meetings may vary but most visits are held one day.

After the visit, the Review Panel produces a report which highlights the strengths and achievements of the Subject(s) under review and includes a number of recommendations for changes which should be made - or at least considered - aimed at strengthening provision and thereby further enhancing the teaching provision. Some of these recommendations will be for action by the Subject/School; others will be for action by other bodies within the University such as the College, the Library, Estates and Buildings or Human Resources.

The Academic Standards Committee (ASC) then endorses the report and requests that the Subject/School and other bodies named address the recommendations. They are asked to report back in 6 months on action taken. Once the report has been endorsed by ASC, the Head of Subject or School is asked to distribute it to all who met the Review Panel during the visit. The Senate Office will provide a summary report to the Subject/School, aimed specifically

\(^1\) The external subject specialist will normally be from another Higher Education institution in the UK. In some cases there may be more than one external subject specialist on the Panel, this will depend upon on the size of the subject and/or on the range of its provision.

\(^2\) Senate is the supreme academic authority in the University. A Senate Assessor is a member of Senate, elected by the Senate to represent it on the University Court, the governing body of the University.
The views of students studying the Subject(s)

The views of students are central to the review process and we very much hope that you will participate in the review by meeting with the Review Panel. The Panel wants to meet with groups that represent the student body within the Subject(s) and will be looking for a balanced view of the Subject(s) from meetings and other feedback mechanisms. The Panel hope that those they meet, will tell them about the strengths and achievements of the Subject/School and why it is a good place to work and study in, as well as areas that could be improved or enhanced.

Detailed below are some of the areas that the Review Panel is likely to explore with you:

- The effectiveness and quality of teaching
- Your opinion of the learning experience
- How you engage with the subject and other University activities
- Your awareness of the aims and intended learning outcomes of programmes and how they match with your expectations
- The quality and usefulness of course documents
- How you find staff in the Subject/School - friendly, approachable, supportive?
- Your opinion of the adequacy of information on assessment (criteria, methods, weightings, coursework deadlines, feedback opportunities, etc)
- The opportunities and mechanisms for providing feedback and how staff respond to the feedback you provide
- Your views on admission and induction procedures
- Your awareness or use of student support services
- Availability and quality of teaching space and learning resources (Library/IT etc)

The Panel will also provide you with an opportunity to raise and discuss other issues.

No members of staff from the Subject(s) are present during the meeting and no comments will be attributed to an individual.

Previous Reports and Summaries can be found in the Senate Office web pages at: https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/gea/periodicsubjectreview/reportsandresponsehistorical/#2010-11

The meetings with students are normally held before meetings with Subject staff in order to allow students’ views to be discussed with staff.

Class representatives will be invited to ask a number of students to attend the Review, but students are welcome to volunteer to meet with the Review Panel. We hope that students will find being part of the process interesting. Please contact your Subject/School administrator for further details and to register interest in attending.

Senate Office, October 2019