**UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW**

## Academic Standards Committee – 4 October 2019

## Responses to the Recommendations arising from the Periodic Subject Review of the School of Modern Languages & Cultures held on 3 May 2018

**Jane McAllister, Clerk to the Review Panel**

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been made to support the School of Modern Languages and Cultures in its reflection and to enhance provision in relation to teaching, learning and assessment.

The recommendations have been cross-referenced to the paragraphs in the text of the report to which they refer and are **grouped together** by the areas for improvement/enhancement and are **ranked in order of priority within each section**.

*Strategy*

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**Recommendation 1**

The Review Panel recommends that the School articulates its strategic priorities in a clear School Strategic Plan in order to derive the full benefit from current and planned collective activities and effort and to maximise progress in relation to learning and teaching. [paragraph 4.1-3]

**For the attention of: Head of School**

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*Response:*

As mentioned at the PSR review, the Head of School and Head of School Administration were working on the annual Strategic Plan at the time of the review. The 2018/19 SP was discussed at the School Executive Committee in March and April. It was subsequently shared and discussed at a School Forum in April and finalized at the Exec Committee meeting in May. In its final form it contains input from all colleagues in SMLC on SMLC's strategic priorities in research, learning, teaching and scholarship.

*Management*

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**Recommendation 2**

The Review Panel recommends that the School review its management structure with a view to sharing responsibilities while maintaining the benefits of the unified structure. [paragraph 5.3-4]

**For the attention of: Head of School**

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*Response:*

The current managerial structure at SMLC involves most colleagues being line managed by the HoS and it is recognized that this is neither sustainable nor appropriate. Various

alternative options have been discussed at the School Executive Committee, none of which have been considered entirely satisfactory. Following this PSR recommendation, and after a discussion at a recent School Forum, our Head of College has agreed to support SMLC in this area, and a Management Structure Working Group and Governance Board has been set up for this purpose, which includes staff from SMLC, a member from a cognate School and an external panel member from another university. The Group has have had several meetings so far, members have consulted widely across the School, and they will be presenting their proposal to CMG in October, with a view to implementation in January 2020.

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**Recommendation 3**

The Review Panel recommends that the School discuss what support might be offered centrally for the administration of pre-sessional and other English for Academic Study courses with the recently restructured Student and Academic Services. [paragraph 5.6]

**For the attention of: Head of School and Head of English for Academic Study
For information: Executive Director of Student and Academic Services**

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*Joint response:*

There has been significant progress made in terms of support from University Central Services such as International Student Support, Registry and Student Services.  The School has been working closely with these services to ensure that Pre-sessional English students are given the same level support to those who are studying a Degree level course at the University. A meeting was held with the Executive Director of Student and Academic Services, the Deputy Director of Student Services, the Head of Registry and the Student Service Enquiry Team Manager. As a result of this meeting the following has been agreed:


*Student Support*

Registration & Enrolment – The Registry team will now take ownership of timetabling slots for Pre-sessional English Students. Registry have now incorporated all Pre-sessional Registration dates into their yearly planners and will ensure that adequate resource is in place to support this function.

Student Letters – The Student Services have been working with the MyCampus development team and have created a letter that Pre-sessional Student can directly print from MyCampus. This letter was previously held outwith MyCampus, and was produced and printed by the School Administration team.

Pastoral Support – Student Services are looking at providing a named contact within their Service that the School can communicate directly with should any pastoral care issues arise.

*HR and Recruitment*

Last year the University carried out a Recruitment Process Review and as a result of this, a new structure within Recruitment was implemented which comprises a 'Resourcing Team' and an 'Onboarding' Team. The College now also has its own Local College Resourcing Co-ordinator who is our first port of call for all recruitment matters within the College. Good working relationships have been formed between SMLC Operations, Pre-sessional Programme Director, Recruitment Operations Manager, Onboarding Team Leader and College Local Resourcing Co-Ordinator.

As a result of these changes there is a much more streamlined process in place for how and when contracts are issued. Recruitment are aware of the pressure points relating to EAS Recruitment and have been invaluable in the recruitment process this year.

While there has been significant progress made, there is still some areas for improvement relating specifically to support from Central Timetabling and adequate resourcing within SMLC to support a unit with a high volume of teaching through the summer vacation period.

### *Student support*

> **Recommendation 4**
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> The Review Panel recommends that the School review the support it provides for students, including Joint Honours students, undertaking a period of residence abroad, before departure, during the stay and on return. Full consultation with students should be central to informing enhancement in this area. [paragraph 7.1.1-5]
>
> **For the attention of: Head of School and Director of Learning & Teaching**

### *Response:*

A working group had been set up prior to the Review to consider how SMLC can best support students undertaking a placement abroad. In the light of student feedback and this recommendation in the PSR report document, the Group reconvened in December 2018 with the broader remit of discussing the support SMLC provides to all students undertaking a period of residence abroad: before departure, during the stay and on return. Prior to the meeting all students were emailed with a call with expressions of interest in taking part in a focus group discussion, however only a couple of students replied. These students were asked if they would be prepared to join the Working Group. One student agreed and attended the December meeting. The meeting agreed the following actions:

> To address the feeling some students experienced that they completely lost touch with the University when abroad, Residence Abroad Conveners will contact all students on their year abroad at various stages throughout the year. As a baseline, it was recommended that students should be contacted a month or so after departure to check how they are settling in; around Christmas to check how things are going and in particular to encourage students to contact us if they are concerned about any aspect of the year abroad, such as number of credits taken/passed at university, length of work placement/finding a follow-up placement, or any general issues; and finally, in the spring, reiterating the information regarding documentation required to ensure progression into the next session and resending the forms. These emails will act as a back up to the SMLC-wide messages sent at this time.

> To address the difficulties in finding a suitable placement, SMLC-wide meetings, which ran last academic year for the first time, now gave a general overview of what is acceptable as a placement. Ann Duff from the Careers Service attended these meetings and alerted students to the support/advice that the Service provides. It was agreed that as a next step Residence Abroad Conveners liaise with Ann Duff and with Junior and Senior Hons students to improve the country-specific information available on placements.

> Peer mentoring and the role of the Language Societies in sharing information and offering support was highlighted in the PSR report. The Language Societies have been very helpful in the past, although it was recognised that this is very dependent on each year group that takes charge. It was agreed that Language Society and

Assistantship Ambassadors contact details be placed on the Moodle pages by Residence Abroad Conveners. Junior and Senior Hons students usually attend existing information sessions to pass on their experiences, and it was agreed that Residence Abroad Conveners liaise with Language Societies more closely next academic year to further facilitate exchange of information, e.g. via student-organised meetings and social media.

To address issues of timing and finance surrounding the Term Abroad, it was agreed that students be advised of different possible scenarios as part of the information given prior to the Language Year Abroad: Students can spend three months abroad at any time before the next academic year begins in September and they might consider not leaving Glasgow until teaching finishes in April. As Term Abroad issues are very language specific, it was agreed that Residence Abroad Conveners should highlight and address specific issues in language-area meetings. General reference to the issue will also be made at SMLC-wide information sessions for Year Abroad students, so that they can plan ahead.

These recommendations were further discussed by the Learning and Teaching Committee (16.1.19) and at a School forum (13.3.19). It was suggested that the School bid for an administrative post for residence abroad matters and that the Working Group look at best practice in other institutions. The former point has been considered as part of the administration restructuring in SMLC, and it has been agreed that the new Senior Learning and Teaching Administrator should review this role. The latter point has been taken on board for the next scheduled meeting of the Working Group in S1 of next academic year.

A LTDF bid to set up a student-led peer mentoring system for residence abroad has been successful. The funds will be used to pay a Junior Honours student in each language area to set up an information page on Moodle and start up a social media site. They will also use these sites to answer queries and provide general support. The resource will be maintained by JH students on a voluntary basis in future years.

Other ideas being investigated for next academic year include a writing competition for the best destination abroad guide and a world map in the student common room where incoming and outgoing students can pin their contact details to a destination on which they can provide information and advice. The possibility of digital images will also be investigated. A presentation was made to the College Workshop on Learning Communities on 17th April with suggestions on how digital and physical installations could be used by each student cohort to document the year abroad and its significance for the individual and the group.

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**Recommendation 5**

The Review Panel recommends that the School ensures that all course Moodles apply the new "Moodle Minimum" standards and works towards all course Moodles being as consistent as possible with its best examples in the terms of the materials provided and the format. [paragraph 7.1.6-8]

**For the attention of: Head of School and Director of Learning & Teaching**

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*Joint response:*

This recommendation was discussed by the Learning and Teaching Committee (16.1.19) and at a School forum (13.3.19). It was agreed that all School Moodle courses should be overhauled and audited. Best practice should be shared, with the lead being taken by a

colleague in EAP with particular expertise in this area. Programme Directors have agreed to undertake an overview of the sites in their programme and to highlight best practice and areas for improvement in programme meetings and with individual colleagues. New level-specific language conveners' meetings, initiated this academic year to facilitate harmonisation of processes and the sharing of good practice, will include discussion of Moodle sites.

Two practical Moodle workshops have been arranged for the period of the resit diet and all convenors were expected to attend one of these. In fact it was not possible for all convenors to attend at this time, and a further workshop will be held in September/October 2019.
It was further agreed that students should be given more guidance on Moodle at the start of each session.

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**Recommendation 6**

The Review Panel recommends that the School seek to address technical issues affecting the use of TRADOS Software and consider extending provision for intermediate and advanced users. [paragraph 7.1.9]

**For the attention of: Head of School**

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*Response:*

The Trados workshops have been a technical challenge for years for numerous reasons related to trying to run the software within the University network and handing software updates and licence availability. However, in 2017-18 steps were taken to pre-empt any issues by having staff on standby, ready to address any problems immediately and liaise with IT and with SDL (who sell Trados) as necessary. The same model will be implemented this year.

Students have the opportunity to take three levels of the Trados certification exam: Getting Started, Intermediate and Advanced. It is voluntary, so not everyone sits an exam, especially at the more advanced levels, but the option is available, and we offer several alternative examination dates, arranged around the students' schedules. In addition, there was some feedback last year that the students did not have as much time to practice using Trados under supervised conditions as they would have liked, so we extended the workshops by one hour and in 2018-19 we had four three-hour workshops instead of four two-hour workshops. The ATLS tutors have also been requested to provide at least some of the translation assignments in Trados-compatible formats, so that students have authentic material to practice with.

Our Translation Studies cohorts can be somewhat heterogeneous in the sense that some students have a background in translation studies or professional translation, while others do not. Those who already have some translation experience may be familiar with translation memory software. However, they tend to be a small minority, and current resources would not allow us to organise different Trados sessions for more advanced users. However, these users can practice independently, and they have the benefit of working with an experienced translation professional who runs the workshops flexibly, so that students can work on projects at their own level.

One constant challenge is the fact that the software is being updated quite frequently. We are currently using Trados 2017, but Trados 2019 is already on the market, so we have to decide when it would make sense (and whether we have the resources) to update to the current version. The recommendation of the professional translator who runs the workshops is not to update to the new version too soon, because there may be some initial bugs early

on, but that it will be necessary to update at some stage in the future. Besides the costs, installing the new version may cause renewed technical issues if the update is not compatible with our systems.

| **Recommendation 7** |
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| The Review Panel recommends that the School, in consultation with the University Library, review resources available to the School's PGT community to ensure all students are able to access relevant material at the appropriate time in their programme. [paragraph 7.3.1]<br><br>**For the attention of: Head of School**<br>**For information: University Librarian** |

*Response:*

**Library Actions**
Measures are in place in order to ensure that students can access the material they need for their studies. In order for students to gain access to Library resources it is important for course leaders to ensure that their reading lists are available via the Reading Lists@ Glasgow system. Lists should be sent as early as possible, ideally at least four weeks before the start of a course. Information on using the system is available at https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/library/staff/readinglists/. Books that are likely to be in high demand should be marked as essential, as otherwise only one copy will be purchased, and it will have a standard loan period rather than being added to the High Demand Collection. There are existing lists for each of the PGT courses run within the School.
Policy for purchases of items on reading lists is as follows:

- The Library will purchase one print copy, if available to purchase, for each title on a list (essential and further/background texts).
- For books marked as essential on lists, we purchase one copy per 25 students on the course, up to 10 copies (unless very expensive). If there is a suitable e-book available (i.e. Digital Rights Management-free or high credit model e-books) we purchase the e-book and lower the number of print copies purchased.
- Academics can request for key chapters to be digitised via the RL@G service, if possible under the CLA licence.

The majority of journals are now available electronically.

High usage is monitored and further copies purchased, if required (though this is later in the academic year, but before exam period, as it is dependent on there still being money available in the Course Materials Budget).

There is a move in general to online books for course readings as it allows access to greater numbers of readers. This does present some issues for non-English language titles, as most of these are not currently available in e book format on a platform that can be accessed by academic libraries (NB – it is not possible for academic libraries to buy Kindle e books for stock). Separate measures are in place for students who have visual impairments. However, financial constraints mean that if an electronic copy of a book is available it is far more cost effective to buy this format than to buy multiple print copies. Students should feel welcome to talk to their course leaders or to contact their College Librarian if they have difficulty in accessing specific titles.

**Key actions for SMLC staff:**

- Ensure reading lists are added to Reading Lists @ Glasgow as early as possible.
- Ensure that books likely to be in demand are marked as Essential reading so that the right number of copies are purchased and added to the High Demand Collection.

This information will be passed to all course conveners by the L&T convener as part of preparation for next academic year.

*Staff support*

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**Recommendation 8**

The Review Panel recommends that the University develops guidance on the promotion pathways to enable Grade 6 teaching staff to progress their careers.  In addition, the School should consider whether other reported barriers to promotion are a matter of workload or are more systemic, requiring change in the School's structures or approaches. [paragraph 7.4.1-2]

**For the attention of: Convener of Recognising Excellence in Teaching Working Group/ Head of School
For information: Director of Human Resources**

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***Response:  Convener of Recognising Excellence in Teaching Working Group***

The promotions guidance for staff on the Learning, Teaching and Scholarship track now includes the following guidance in relation to Grade 6 staff.   I believe that this addresses the recommendation raised in the review.

"Grade 6

Appointments to grade 6 on the LTS track are very often to GTA positions, typically part-time positions with limited duties relating to learning and teaching. There are, however, some instances where this is not the case and a member of staff may have a full-time or part-time role that is closer to a lectureship in terms of the range of duties undertaken. Staff on Grade 6 appointments will have a job description that sets out those responsibilities within the context of their Unit (Subject / School).There are no Grade 6 promotion criteria on the HR web pages because roles at this grade are much more varied than roles on a Grade 7 lecturer position and because it is unlikely that there would be someone on an LTS track who would be on a Grade 5 appointment and looking to progress to Grade 6. For staff who are on Grade 6 LTS and looking to be promoted to grade 7 LTS, the consideration is not what duties are undertaken at Grade 6, but rather, whether an applicant can demonstrate that they meet the criteria for Grade 7. The promotions criteria are simply that, criteria for promotion, not role descriptors. The emphasis within the Grade 7 profile is on Learning and Teaching Practice (as aligned to Descriptor 1 of the UKPSF) and as someone progresses within that Grade, they will then work towards evidencing achievements appropriate to the criteria associated with Grade 8 and aligned to Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF"

***Response: Head of School***

In response to this recommendation the Head of College HR and the Dean of Learning and Teaching ran the first LTS-specific workshop to clarify promotions criteria for Grade 6 teaching staff, an event we aim to continue on an annual basis. Support in career development has also arisen as an area for action as part of the School's Athena Swan

Bronze application. In order to assess the suitability of promotions-related sessions and support for the promotion process, an anonymous questionnaire is proposed. In working to integrate EAS into SMLC and establishing it as an academic unit (7.4.1), all EAS LTS staff continue to have 10% allocated in their workload to scholarship. There has been a regular programme of Scholarship-related workshops within EAS and staff are now also directed to the enhanced provision of LEADS in this area.

In relation to workload (7.4.2), EAS and the wider School Executive are in the process of discussing how to ensure an equitable workload and parity of esteem between all LTS staff in the School (i.e. EAS staff and those teaching other modern foreign languages). This includes how to overcome the challenges of the current requirement for EAS LTS staff to teach on a year-round basis (EAS teaching runs over 38 weeks).

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**Recommendation 9**

The Review Panel recommends that the School, in consultation with College, ensure that their operation of the Workload Model is as effective as possible and is fully transparent to staff. [paragraph 7.4.3-5]

**For the attention of: Head of School**
**For information: Head of School Administration and Head of College HR**

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*Response:*

This recommendation was discussed at a School Forum (13.3.19) and by the School Executive Committee (10.4.19 and 24.4.19). Feedback from staff was that the workload allocation model and the number of admin hours allocated to School roles should be easily visible and understandable to all employees, and it was agreed that the best place for this information was on the staff information Moodle page. Details of the number of teaching hours expected of staff on R&T, LTS and NLT contracts, and the general admin allocation and the admin allocation for School roles has now been added to this site. PDs are expected to hold regular open discussions with all staff regarding the allocation of work within their programme.

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**Recommendation 10**

The Review Panel recommends Central/College Human Resources, with reference to the Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service where it relates to the PGCAP, should review the process for recognition of prior experience in the requirements for the Early Career Development Programme participation.  The Panel suggests that this work begin in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures with a view to developing a University-wide process. [paragraph 7.4.6-7]

**For the attention of: Director of Human Resources**
**For information: Director of Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service**

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*Response:*

Please see Early Career Development Programme Policy and Procedure attached at Appendix 1