Form AM2 (Abridged)

College Report of Annual Monitoring Activity
Review of Session 2020-21

The aim of Annual Monitoring is to maintain quality and improve provision through identifying action that can be taken to improve future student experience. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic annual monitoring will proceed with a significantly reduced area of focus in terms of reporting requirements.

The streamlined approach adopted for the last annual monitoring round will be continued for the review of provision 2020-21. Schools will therefore again collate feedback on courses based around reflection on two key areas: i) the student experience and ii) student performance.

In addition, information on locally approved blanket course changes will be linked into the annual monitoring process. School Annual Monitoring Summaries (SAMS) will include commentary on temporary course changes introduced in 2020-21 to adjust to the pandemic along with plans for continuation or further development of such changes in the delivery planned for 2021-22. Schools will need to report on their reflection on the impact of these changes on the student experience and opportunities for continuing any identified enhancements in the future design of learning, teaching and assessment.

The commentary on course changes will be collated in the College Annual Monitoring Summaries.

For session 2020-21 this abridged form should be used to record Annual Monitoring Activity. Its purpose is to capture a focused and concise evaluation (or a reflective summary). In undertaking annual monitoring, online meetings should take place to support reflection, reporting and development planning towards enhancement and the maintenance of academic standards.

College	Science and Engineering (UG and PGT)		
School/Subject/Discipline *(as* appropriate*)*			
Provision covered	Unit of Learning **UG and PGT degrees in the following schools**	Represented by **School Quality & Enhancement Officers**	Input received [at meeting (M)/via form (F)]
	Engineering (Eng) Computing Science (CS) Psychology (Psy) Geographical & Earth Sciences (GES) Mathematics & Statistics (M&S) Physics & Astronomy (P&A) Chemistry (Chem)	Dr Kelum Gamage Dr Yehia Elkhatib Dr Ashley Robertson Dr Iain Neill Dr Joachim Zacharias Dr Morag Casey Dr Linnea Soler	via form (AM1)
Collaborative Provision covered			

In the context of the extraordinary circumstances of this academic year, please reflect on Student Experience and Student Performance. (Please take particular account of course evaluations, data on student performance and the reports of external examiners).

What is working well?

All schools reported that staff performance in challenging circumstances was exceptional, with very engaged and committed staff (Psych, GES, ENG, P&A, M&S, Chem, CS), with particular mention of excellent admin and technical support (Psych).

Flexibility for 20-day feedback turnaround was welcomed (Psych), as was the flexibility in the evidence required for Good Cause claims (Psych), and the use of MyC for Good Cause processes. (Psych).

Schools provided some local community building, and support for students with mental health problems (Psych, Chem), with evident goodwill between staff and students (M&S).

The January start for PGT students caused significant academic, administrative and technical problems, with extremely high workloads for lecturing staff teaching large classes over the summer, and consequence staff burn-out (CS, GES). These problems are on-going, with project supervision of large cohorts overlapping with S1 delivery. All staff involved should be commended for their commitment to seeing through this difficult year while continuing to prioritise the delivery of high-quality education.

Tutorials and additional tutorial (Q&A) support sessions were well received by students (Chem); assessment and feedback calendars continue to work well in Psych.

Student achievement compared to previous years vary: similar (Psych, P&A, ENG), on average was better (Chem), noticeably better (CS).

What needs work?

Ongoing problems with student mental health, including lack of motivation (Psych, CS), and isolation – especially PGT students who remained overseas (Psych). There is a significant increase in special case students requiring individual attention (CS). Students need help in managing time and deadlines (Chem) and in English communication skills (CS, Psych); clear communications with students is essential (Chem). We expect the Student Support Officers (now appointed to all Schools in the College) to help with these issues, as has already been done in CS with great success.

Online sessions vary in success: many students simply do not engage, with video and audio turned off (M&S, ENG, CS), Q&A sessions vary in the extent of student engagement, even in online labs (CS)

Administrative resources required to support the process of setting up online exams/assessments is significant – this should not be left to academic staff (typically a dedicated few) (Chem, M&S). Staff burnout means that mistakes are easily made, with consequences for student assessment (M&S, GES, CS).

Feedback: introduction of second marking (ENG); communication about timing of feedback (GES); quicker feedback (GES) – while acknowledging that the increased extension period of 10-days affects the timing of feedback and student stress (Psych); improvements in consistency of feedback (GES, Psych) – while noting that technology limits the nature of feedback that can be provided (M&S).

Assessment: provision of practice questions (Chem), reviewing potential over-assessment in MSc programmes (GES).

Online exams: the generous ‘double-time’ policy and 24-hour policy meant that students simply spent double the time working on their exam submission (P&A, ENG) causing significant student stress (Chem).

In the context of the extraordinary circumstances of this academic year, please reflect on the impact of the course changes in 2020-21 on the student experience and opportunities for continuing any identified enhancements in the future design of learning, teaching and assessment.

(The response to this section focusses on "opportunities for continuing any identified enhancements in the future design of learning, teaching and assessment", since student experience is covered in the section above.)

What is working well?

Minor operational activities specifically associated with the need for remote delivery: the use of chat during live Zoom sessions (M&S, Eng), watch parties (Psych), rapid staff/student engagement through Teams (Psych) – although the cost is increased staff workload (Chem); explicit and increased efforts to provide community-building activities (Psych, Chem)

More significant enhancements: the provision of recorded lecture material for the purposes of pre- and post-lecture review (GES,Chem,M&S, Eng) – although students also appreciate live lectures (P&A); reduced marking load because of use of automated assessment (P&A) and MCQ quizzes (M&S, Chem); progress trackers for following up unengaged students (Psych, CS).

Subject-specific enhancements: student co-creation of online materials (Chem), innovative fieldwork sessions (GES), simulations (Eng)

What needs work?

Specific problems with remote delivery: online labs, tutorials, supervision, group work are extremely difficult to conduct online (Psych, CS, P&A, ENG), community building is challenging (CS, Chem, GES); clarity in definition of (and communication about) the meaning of "online teaching" with respect to the continuum between synchronous and asynchronous (students seem to appreciate both (M&S)); re-introducing in-person practical work (field-trips) to reduce student burnout with repetitive forms of teaching (GES); provision of appropriate on-campus resources for the creation on online resources and for online-lecturing (P&A).

Wider problems with remote delivery: remote delivery (including time to create online materials) requires significant additional time and effort on the part of all staff (academic, administrative and technical) – this needs to be acknowledged (P&A) and resourced (Chem, P&A, M&S); designing online assessments are challenging if we wish to retain integrity of the assessment (M&S, CS); academic staff do not have the time to both create online video materials as well as check the transcriptions (Chem, Eng).

Wider issues: university communications that are sent to students before staff cause unnecessary confusion and additional work at School level (Chem); acknowledgement that both staff and student home environments are not conducive to teaching and learning (P&A).

In the context of the extraordinary circumstances of this academic year, and any anticipated requirements and challenges in 2021-22, please reflect on any themes or issues that you wish to report to the responsible level of the University.

(Check with your School or College Quality Officer if advice is needed on which is the most appropriate level)

School

Psychology: dedicated administrative and technical support is required for ODL programmes; explicit support is required for community building

GES: the teaching allocation is very tight; there is little room for manoeuvre if staff are ill

College

International students would benefit from a compulsory course in written/spoken English communication (Psych)

A big thank you to Stephany Biello for all her hard work in supporting the Schools in this difficult period.

University

Issues of concern:

- Moving the start date of PGT programmes from September to January required enormous staff effort, particularly in delivering S2 in the Summer, and in battling with an university infrastructure that does not recognise the specific nature of this model of delivery (GES,CS)
- Differing views regarding open-book and online (unproctored) exams/assessments: open-book exams are welcomed (Psych); suitable in some areas (GES); online exams appear to be appreciated by students (CS). However, there is an increase the potential for cheating (P&A, M&S, ENG, Chem); it is very difficult to set appropriate exams for open-book online circumstances (CS, ENG); Senate Conduct processes make it hard to prove contract cheating (CS). Extended exam periods prevent discrimination in exam results and exams need to be time-limited to avoid this (Chem). Supervised exam conditions would be an improvement on the current processes (even for quizzes) (M&S). Future decision on online/open-book exams should consider subject-specific requirements.
- Better on-campus provision needed for staff to record lectures and/or deliver online classes (M&S, P&A)
- A university service should be provided for the task of checking the transcriptions for recorded teaching materials.
- Any continued use of online/blended learning should prioritise the student learning experience over any need to reduce resourcing requirements (CS)
- Specific requests from GES:
  - university insurance is not suitable for field trips (repeat)
  - student field trip costs should be covered by the university, not the students (repeat)
  - space is needed for students to work independently; request Molema 227, 229 and 306 be removed from central bookings
  - refurbishment of Molema 227 (repeat)
- University communications to staff have been erratic, late, and sometimes only distributed after the communications to students (M&S, GES, Chem)
- Support for Gathertown would be welcomed, to support remote community building (Chem)
- Continued use of a 20-day turnaround period for feedback (rather than the 15-day) would ease pressure on staff (Psych)
- Since academic staff are required to be much more active in response to online student communications, extension requests etc., and have additional burdens in facilitating online delivery, it must be acknowledged that there is less time for scholarship/research (Psych, Chem) – noting that the additional academic burdens for online delivery have tended to fall on the shoulders of the dedicated few (Chem)
- Academic staff need guidance on how to deal with student mental health issues, since they are usually the first people that students contact when they have problems.

Positive notes:

The high level of responsiveness from IT central services and the library has been welcomed (Chem).

A big thank you to Moira Fischbacher-Smith for all her hard work in supporting L&T across the university in this difficult period.

Additional matters

Please highlight any additional matters that you wish to raise from this year's Annual Monitoring cycle

We celebrate many successes this year:

Psych: SRC Teaching award (Emily Nordmann); College Teaching Award (Chiara Horlin)

Chem: High NSS score (highest UofG increase, highest in CoSE, & in top 4 of UofG); 4th overall in Guardian league table

Chem: SRC Teaching award shortlist (Linnea Soler, Gordon Hedley, Stephen Sproules); College Teaching Award (Frances Docherty, Hans Senn)

GES: Excellent NSS scores

P&A: College Teaching Award (Physics 1 Teaching Team)

The experience of the Schools can best be summarised by the following quote from the Chemistry AMR:

"The real challenge this year was to manage student expectations and student fears whilst managing our own….However, this was an exhausting year, requires intensive and nearly non-stop interaction to ensure that both students and staff were supported. We are delighted with the outcomes (student satisfaction, NSS, etc) but it is not sustainable to keep up this pace."

All Schools indicated in their AMR forms that they look forward to returning to face-to-face teaching.

Please list all courses that have been approved at local level i.e. temporary course changes to adjust to the Covid- 19 pandemic (an appendix is acceptable)

Psychology	Proposed changes
1A/1B PSYCH1001, PSYCH1002	Amendments to level 1 including group work as an ILO, specifying we can't reassess data skills, adding an attendance requirement, amended the course contact time to one- hour weekly labs with the new structure and changed unseen exam to just exam. Changes to Timetable/Course Aims/ILOs/Min Requirements/Reassessment Opportunities
Introduction to Biological and Cognitive Psychology PSYCH1010	Renamed Introduction to Biological and Cognitive Psychology, the ILOS came from the level 1B course where the students will attend all of the Brain, Cog Neuro, PVC, Learning and Cognitive lectures. Changes to Course Title/Short Description/Course Aims/ILOs/Short Title
Advanced Introduction to Individual Differences and Developmental Psychology PSYCH2014	Renamed Advanced Introduction to Individual Differences and Developmental Psychology, the ILOs came from the level 2A course where the students will attend all of the Individual Differences and Developmental lectures. Changes to Course Title/Short Description/Course Aims/ILOs/Short Title
PSYCH2010, PSYCH2020	For 2A added strands Individual Differences and Statistics, and removed Perception and for 2B added Statistics and Perception/removed Individual Differences. In addition, the students will be encouraged to work on their time management and study skills as a way to enhance these important graduate attributes, but also to prepare them for the honours phase. Changes Short Description/Course Aims/ILOs/Teaching and Learning Methods/Minimum Requirements/Summative Assessment 2A/B ILOs added: • Engage in groupwork on a semester-long project involving topic exploration, research question conceptualisation, methods description, data wangling/analysis, and discussion/conclusion. • Enhance time management and study skills and increase self-regulated learning.
PSYCH3002	Rationale: wanted to minimise the overlap btwn Level 1/2, to allow students to explore new topics and apply previously taught material plus considered student needs and interests in applied research and topics, to engage students, to help them see the bigger picture of research in Cognitive Psychology, and to result in employment benefits after graduating AND provide students with the opportunity to engage in science communication which further adds to graduate attributes. This resulted in shift of focus to the area of Thinking as a fundamental research area in Cognitive Psychology that students had not been previously exposed to and adding an applied phase. Changes to Short Description/ILOs New short course description: The overall aim is to broaden and deepen knowledge of Cognitive Psychology. The course has a two-part structure: The first part will look at fundamental research findings in the area of Thinking. We will look at topics such as Reasoning, Problem-Solving, Expertise, Judgment & Decision Making. In the second part, the course will take an applied approach and explore how Cognition is embedded in the real world. We will see what role our cognition plays, for example, in Education, the Court Room, Mental Health, and the Digital Age. Updated ILOs (see EE comments):

Dissertation (ODL) PSYCH5083	Shifting from the ODL dissertations being 100% just a written report grade to the same model as 4th Year dissertations with 80% based on the written report and 20% a practical skills grade. The ILOs are unchanged from the PIP, just redistributed to clarify how they are reflected in the 80:20 split. The Maxi dissertation doesn't explicitly state the 80:20 split in its PIP, just the 100% written report but I'd be more comfortable if in the ODL dissertation PIP we could clarify this. FD updated Changes to ILOs/Summative Assessment Methods/Summative Assessment The assessment will be graded using the 22-point scale and Schedule A marking criteria (see Feedback Information Sheet for more information) for two key components. These components reflect the practical skills demonstrated throughout the execution of your dissertation project (20%), and the quality of the written report that is submitted (80%). The course ILOs below are grouped to reflect the balance of these two components. Practical Skills • Demonstrate a clear understanding of issues related to research design, methodologies, and analysis • Apply appropriate methodologies relevant to psychological research generally and specifically to chosen topic • Plan and execute a significant project of research • Assess the ethical and professional issues associated with conducting psychological research Report Quality • Apply theoretical understanding to research • Demonstrate originality or creativity in the application of knowledge and understanding • Identify, conceptualise and define new and abstract problems and issues. • Disseminate their findings

GES: Courses which contained in-person field trips in previous years had minor adjustments in terms of learning outcomes and descriptions, to necessitate the change to online field courses. Almost all other courses had some form of minor adjustments to wording in the learning outcomes wherever there had previously been in-person practical activities.

P&A: Physics 1 PHYS1001, Medical Imaging PHYS4013, Environmental Radioactivity PHY5037

CS: All PGT courses offered in S2 (and therefore taught over Summer 2021) were changed to reflect two-week block teaching mode, with associated revised assessment schedules. These have now reverted to their previous form