

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	College of Social Science	
Provision covered	Unit of Learning	
Postgraduate Taught	<p>The outcome of annual monitoring across four Schools was reported to College, with the exception of the Adam Smith Business School. Academic and Digital Services has been included with the College for reporting purposes. This report has been informed by the <i>abridged</i> School AMRs provided by the Quality and Enhancement Officers responsible for PGT provision across the Schools that comprise the College. The Adam Smith Business School requested, and was granted, an extended reporting cycle, reporting to College at the end of February 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Education: Dr Julie Harvie • School of Interdisciplinary Studies: Dr Alexander Whitelaw • School of Law: Sarah Elliston • School of Social & Political Sciences: Dr Ty Solomon • <i>Academic and Digital Services</i>: Dr Vicki H.M. Dale <p>Dr Robert Doherty, College Quality Officer.</p>	
Programmes or units not compliant with annual monitoring.	School of Education	Adult Education for Social Change Adult Education, Community Development and Youth Work, MEd Assessment in Education, MSc Educational Doctorate, EdD
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?

School of Education

- Online provision: The transfer of course materials and teaching online has been successful. In some cases, supported by a Learning Technologist, others from having a blended approach already in place.
- External Examiner Comments have been very positive across many programmes.
- Academic Support – Students were well supported by staff to improve the quality of their academic work. Some courses noted this particularly for dissertations e.g. when students had to move to desk-based studies due to the pandemic.
- Student Attainment – Students attaining high standards in their assessments in many courses and dissertation projects.
- Positive Student Feedback – Feedback from students in terms of overall satisfaction indicates high levels of satisfaction in many courses.
- Course content and structure– a good balance between academic, professional and practical experiences provided for students, some of which involve partnership working. Content and materials are intellectually stimulating and promote critical thinking.
- Assessment: formative assessment (used to give students next steps) and summative approaches were well received by students.
- High quality teaching – teaching and learning practices that are challenging, engaging and innovative.

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

- Online teaching appears to have been well received and was considered particularly appropriate given the international nature of the student cohort.
- General course satisfaction has been very high and specific areas have been commended – for example, zoom technology has generally worked well.
- Despite the loss of extensive face-to-face contact, the technology facilitated high levels of group engagement and discussion.
- Some fieldtrips and guest lecture inputs were possible in the session.
- Despite the difficult learning circumstances, attainment across programmes was excellent (at least comparable with previous years).

School of Law

- Diploma in Legal Practice: Excellent levels of satisfaction were reported by students across all courses on the programme. Praise was given for both the staff, the structure and format of the courses and the materials provided. Accessibility of students to the Course Director and Deputy Director was provided readily through Zoom appointments.
- An early decision was made to run the programme online due to continued concerns over COVID-19 and the unsuitability of rooms in the Sir Alexander Stone building, where all tutorials would take place, for necessary social distancing.
- LLM: Staff were congratulated by students and by external examiners for the work performed over the year. Academic co-operation in collectively pooling expertise to adapt all of the School's LLM courses to online teaching contributed to the successful running of the programme, despite the restrictions imposed by University guidance. Despite the flattening of the grade profile this year, the grades awarded were endorsed by External Examiners and praise was given at the Exam Board for the way in which the examining process had been conducted.

School Social & Political Sciences

- Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, evidence from course evaluations and staff-student liaison committees showed that the majority of students during AY2020-21 were satisfied with their teaching provision across the School. Student performance was strong overall despite the many challenges faced by students, with many students benefitting from the no-detriment policies.
- While online teaching continued to pose challenges for both staff and students, online provision appeared to become more embedded across most Subjects in AY2020-21, and most students appeared to adapt well to the shift.
- SPS has re-organised its internal structures and committees this past year.
- Despite continued growth in key programmes in the School, staff continued to deliver high-quality provision across programmes as evidenced by continued overall positive student feedback and supportive external examiner comments.
- External Examiners also expressed satisfaction with the performance of different programs (evidenced through EE reports and Exam Boards of Study minutes).
- Staff collegiality in response to the pandemic (across academic and administrative levels) proved to be high and staff responded quickly and beyond expectations to support each other and students.

Academic and Digital Development

- In summary, the knowledge and approachability of staff is welcomed, as is good constructive alignment in terms of formative assessments preparing students for the summatives. Students also value interactions with peers.
- In SSLC, across level 3 courses, the representatives reported that the general atmosphere was very good and tutors were very knowledgeable and approachable. Representatives reported that all masters students were happy with their experience and had found it useful to check in with peers on Phase 4 to check their parity in terms of progress.
- The external examiner, in their report, commented on the well-structured programme with appropriate ILOs, which were constructively aligned with the assessments. It was also noted that the teaching, learning and assessment methods were varied, and staff lead by example. Also noted: good alignment between the feedback on a piece of work and the marking scheme, robust moderation, and marking taking account of the full 22-point scale.

What needs work?

Across an extensive portfolio, units reported common and particular areas for development, including:

- Continue development of online provision. Increase activity on forums.
- Ensure information which is normally provided at face to face sessions is communicated effectively online.
- Pastoral support for students in the online environment.
- Give students access to the range and variety of books needed to fully engage with the children's literature programme and to prepare them for assessment.
- Inclusion of Zoom sessions as a drop in where possible within workload. More 'contact' options for distance students.
- Review of assessment schemes.
- Continuing working on flipping and blended elements to maximise synchronous and/or face to face time; more use of online videos/recording if possible (eg of lessons).
- Registration and enrolment processes as they make students very anxious often at a time when they still don't have knowledge about who or contact with the programme lead and the programme administrator.
- Achieving all courses with online reading lists that students can access prior to starting the courses.
- Mismatch between expectation set centrally of all assignment feedback returned within 15 working days and staff capacity for such a turnaround given competing deadlines and other responsibilities.
- Length of Saturday sessions (particularly for distance learners) and full day sessions for FT students.
- Student confidence with academic writing.
- Feedback collected centrally (PTES/ Evasys): either not collected or not shared with teaching team.

- More administrative support required as capacity of administration staff to support the programmes is strained and under resourced.
- In teacher education, connections between the courses, especially to School Experience & consideration of the role of subject specialists. Logistical issues: timetabling, registration, room bookings and the location of back-to-back classes on campus.

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

- Students naturally looked forward to a return to face-to-face teaching generally as well as specific PGT experiences like fieldtrips and guest lecture input. This was seen as invaluable in allowing students to understand the relationship between theory and practice.
- There were some technical issues that impacted on the learning experience; on occasions there were difficulties with Zoom-based sessions that led to concerns about the quality of discussion and the level of genuine interaction with students. As such some tutors found it hard to identify students who are struggling and give them extra support.

School of Law

- Diploma in Legal Practice: Although the need to run the programme online was justified by the need to work within the context of Covid-19, this did cause dissatisfaction for some students and it is not ideal to run a vocational course online which depends on methods of learning such as advocacy. While initially comparisons were drawn by students with other providers who were running in-person classes, this distinction disappeared in 2nd semester.
- The lack of appropriate rooms remains a serious cause of concern and was part of the reason for running the course online, since the available rooms would not have allowed appropriate social distancing. While some improvements to décor have been made, fundamental problems of lack of appropriate teaching space, space for students to study and network and the conditions in rooms (e.g. inadequate temperature control) urgently require solutions. This is a postgraduate course with the consequent fees and the provision for this course compares unfavourably with direct competitors, in addition to impacting on the learning experience of current students. This issue has been reported many times before, but no satisfactory solutions have been offered by the University or College. Some comments were received regarding length and complexity of materials and consistency of marking and feedback, these are being addressed by the course team.
- LLM Grade Profile and Academic Misconduct: The move to online assessment is to be welcomed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there has been a flattening of the grade profile which may be due to a combination of the adoption for Covid-19 of a 24 hour return format, and the accessibility of materials online. It also raises concerns about inappropriate collaboration, plagiarism, poor academic referencing, and the potential use of essay/exam mills. In addition, there is no way of knowing for certain who is actually submitting the work, since student id could be shared. The use of this assessment format requires further evaluation, along with additional measures being taken to detect such academic misconduct.

School Social & Political Sciences

- Despite overall positive student evaluations, rapidly increasing student numbers in some programmes, along with associated knock-on effects across other programmes, is affecting student experience at the PGT level, increases in student numbers are impacting delivery of teaching (under current staffing and resourcing) and well-being.
- Disconnects between central admissions targets and SPS teaching capacity across key programmes continued in AY20-21, significantly impacting resource and teaching planning, including requirement option-only subject courses to absorb additional capacity for large programmes.
- Increases in student numbers also led to significant workload increases for staff with pastoral responsibilities, in addition to professional and administrative staff workloads.
- Continued online delivery and implementation of pandemic specific teaching policy changes continued to necessitate additional time to develop materials and continued to place added pressures on workload and work-life balance and integration. Although staff have delivered on this in a strong a positive manner the knock-on effects linked to mental exhaustion and wider costs to well-being are taking a toll.
- Online Teaching and University Policy: Staff and students have also raised the problem of lack of person-to-person engagement within some teaching elements (both synchronously and a-synchronously)

delivered) due to the move online and that this may be related to issues including lack of confidence, IT capabilities etc. As a result, staff often have to engage more time and effort into encouraging participation.

- Although the No-detriment policy proved to be beneficial for students during the pandemic it did prove challenging to understand and apply at PGT level with staff feeling guidance was often slow to be received compounded by a heavy sense of bureaucratic oversight that often was perceived to be unhelpful even if it was undertaken with the best of intention. The ban on research with human subjects, even if they could be contacted online, caused stress and anxiety and dissatisfaction across the board. Travel restrictions created mobility issues and additional problems for International Masters programmes.
- Language Challenges: For AY2020-21, the level of in-class engagement and assessment performance continued to pose challenges both for students and staff. The disconnect between university entry requirements and SPS-specific programme expectations continued to be large amongst international cohorts.

Academic and Digital Development

- In summary, workload is a recurring theme (our students are academic staff, a number of which have significant teaching commitments). Contributions from peers is noted to be variable; however, this is also a reflection of workload. Another issue is a request for clearer structure/signposting; this perhaps again reflects the circumstances of our time-poor students (and is noted for the future).
- In SSLC, across all phase 1 courses, the student representative raised the issue of student workload (raised as an issue for the attention of the university). For courses 1b and 1c, the student representative communicated some dissatisfaction about the flipped course design.

In the context of the extraordinary circumstances of this academic year, and any anticipated requirements and challenges in 2020-21, 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

School of Education

The dominant themes identified are outlined below and the programmes to which they apply are listed after each.

- Workload – recognition needs to be given in the workload for
 - a. the extra work required of staff in moving to online provision.
 - b. Programme Leaders who are responsible for very large programmes and teaching teams.
 - c. Course leaders who manage and support Associate Tutors.
 - d. Longer dissertations mean supervisors time allocation should be increased.

(MScEd) (TESOL) (ES) (MScPS) (IMCLMC)

- More technical support /Computing Capacity – training for staff and employing more Learning Technologists for example (CLL) (MScPS) (TLL) (MEdEL) ES)
- Academic Staffing – more staff required (ESACYC) (EPPE) (MScPS)
- GTA Support – this should be increased (EPPE) (ES) (IMCLMC)
- Administrative Staff – below capacity in terms of new demands being made on them. Increased staffing and support is required as a priority - (ES) (MScPS)(IMCLMC)
- Overwhelming amount of information (CP)
- Additional resources for desk based dissertations (TESOL)
- Staff wellbeing – concern about staff resilience in the face of increased workload and working from home (ES)
- Clearer Guidance – clearer guidance needed about what is expected for online provision to ensure consistency (PGDE)

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

- Given that ‘blended’ models of delivery are likely to continue, there is a need to continue to enhance various aspects of the technology that supports this model (basic IT kit and software).
- There are challenges in transitioning back to more face-to-face teaching and how this relates to the online materials that colleagues have already developed and how best to retain some level of online delivery (without losing the value of the created content, whilst remaining attentive to students’ competing priorities).
- The on-going presence of COVID will continue to place challenges on procedures to mitigate its spread and this will be particularly challenging when moving into winter and Semester 2 when social distancing rules are removed.
- More information on specific issues such as plagiarism will be needed. Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and often do not necessarily realise what the consequences of plagiarism can be. It would therefore be important to emphasise this early in the academic year and to reiterate it during their semester before they embark on the dissertation. Also, further guidance on referencing is needed for some students.
- More regular information to all students to join DYAW workshops is needed, as well as information about the new project (MGT5020P) option designed by ASBS as an alternative to the dissertation would be needed throughout semester 1 and semester 2.
- A different system of monitoring of attendance for the Social Sciences Research Methods course (DUMF5096) – which introduces students to necessary skills for the implementation of the interdisciplinary work they are increasingly requesting to undertake in tourism dissertations, will be needed for the 2021-2022. For the 2020-2021 academic year, unfortunately very few students followed it as it was offered on audit. In the academic year 2021-2022, students will need to demonstrate they have attended most of the sessions of the course (by completing a week-by-week tick box) before being able to undertake their dissertation.
- Attention to moderation processes requires some scrutiny and further advice from L&T to ensure the EE does not have to raise queries about marking quality.

School Social & Political Sciences

- Subjects expressed appreciation for the School’s efforts to accommodate requests for resources and to find ways to address continued unprecedented growth in student numbers at the PGT level.
- Subjects expressed appreciation with regards to the School’s efforts to streamline administrative processes and looked forward to plans to reshape School L&T committee structures.
- Further work to enhance the digital learning strategy for the School is required especially as the school seeks to make better and enhanced use of online and blended learning as an approach to L&T which is likely to remain post-pandemic.

College

School of Education

- Workload Capacity – more staff needed with expertise and profiles to match course demands and growing numbers on courses. Making Associate Tutor contracts more secure may help and / or capping student numbers (GLOBED) (MScPS).
- Earlier cut off point for registrations – to allow for adequate course planning (EPPE) (MScPS).
- ICT support systems for staff – although support sessions have been offered, staff have often not been able to attend these due to workload issues. GTAs and learning technologists were appointed late and are stretched. More required (ES) (IMCLMC).
- Staff Wellbeing – concern that issues relating to working from home and converting courses online will affect the wellbeing of academic and administrative staff (ES).
- Administrative Support - Increasing administrative support is a priority, this is a high-risk factor in managing growth in PGT student numbers and in maintaining quality and standards (ES).
- Revisiting Course Entry Requirements – entry requirements may need revisited to address student drop out rates (MScPS).
- College EMJMD “group” guidance - has been very helpful (IMCLMC).

School Social & Political Sciences

- Rapid growth in student numbers at the PGT level is by far the dominant concern of the Subjects. The over-recruitment of students creates challenges in many areas. Student experience suffers, as expressed in some staff-student liaison meetings. Allowance of late admissions – often after the teaching semester has begun – makes accurate forward planning impossible and creates challenges across the board to accommodate numbers beyond what have been forecasted by Subjects. Re-allocation of teaching resources at the last minute creates significant knock-on effects for staff and administrative workloads, student experience, and staff and student well-being. While this AMR focuses on PGT, Subjects emphasised that over-recruitment at PGT level is inseparable from over-recruitment and workload issues at the undergraduate level.
- Closer collaboration between Subjects' self-assessment of teaching capacities and College admissions targets at PGT is necessary going forward.
- Closer collaboration and more transparent information flows between admissions processes and Subjects is necessary going forward.
- Subjects expressed the desire and necessity of a longer-term conversation between College, School, and Subjects about levels of recruitment, disconnect between College targets and Subject capacity, the balancing of recruitment across programmes both within Subjects and across the School, all with a view towards more sustainable and managed admissions.
- Concerns were raised about a time-lag in the appointment of new teaching and administrative staff, such that by the time new staff are in post student targets and admissions have since increased. This leaves students, staff, and administrative staff in the same situation.

University

School of Education

- Library Resources – investment needed for online materials to be provided for students and managing copyright regulations (CLL) (TESOL).
- ICT Support Systems – adequate ICT support for staff required e.g. more learning technologists (MScEd) (ES) (MScME).
- Workload Allocation – needs increased to accommodate extra workload resulting in transition to online provision (TESOL).
- Staffing – more subject specific support required (TESOL).
- Consistent Guidance - having many technological options makes staff spend a lot of time trying different things and gives students a more disparate experience (IE).
- Staff Wellbeing – concern about increased workload for staff and issues arising from working from home (ES).
- Communication – communication from the centre needs to be timelier and more consistent (ES).
- Administrative Issues – at the start of the academic session the registration process, room bookings and online timetabling systems need to be improved.

School of Law

Accommodation

- Assistance to the PG.Dip team to secure appropriate accommodation. This issue has been reported many times and urgent action is required.

Impact of Online Examinations

- Analysis of the grade impact of the move to online exams would be beneficial. While genuine student achievements over this difficult period are to be welcomed, the increase in cases being referred for suspected plagiarism or collusion is a cause for concern. The general trend of a flattening of grades seen in conjunction with online 24 hour, open book assessments requires further evaluation.

Quality Procedures

- The University requires a better approach for providing the information needed to generate Quality Monitoring information and Reports. The forms available are often located in different systems, the forms themselves are not readily compatible with editing and the procedures are contained in numerous

separate documents, which can lead to confusion and considerable unnecessary time being spent on establishing what the requirements are. The information on the University website on quality monitoring is hard to navigate and would benefit from being amalgamated into a more streamlined set of materials. Additional consideration should be given to the timetabling of procedures for reporting which need to align with when information is available and with when disseminating the outcome of review would be most useful to Schools.

School Social & Political Sciences

- Concerns were raised about plagiarism procedures. It was noted that several months often pass between when cases are reported to Senate and the interview. Some Subjects stated that they are addressing this at PGT level by increasing the amount of information and research/writing training that students are given, but concerns remain about the formal process.
- The above concerns about rapidly increasing student numbers expressed to College must also be raised at University level.
- Increased reporting of racism experienced by Chinese students within the context of the pandemic.

Academic and Digital Development

- The issue of staff workload has been raised in a number of courses, and we are aware of this continuing to be an issue at the start of the 2021/22 session. Our students are academic staff, a number of which have significant teaching commitments. While some schools seem supportive of their staff participating in PGCAP, there is an ongoing issue of some managers not recognising the need for participants to study beyond the timetabled contact hours).
- We do not have adequate administrative support to manage EvaSys, i.e. We have only one staff member who is trained in using EvaSys, which creates a bottleneck in the system. This has created problems over the last two academic sessions in that courses ending in semester 2 were not surveyed, as that member of staff had to prioritise other work (in 2019/20) and has been off on long-term sick leave (in 2021/22).
- Some of the Academic and Digital Development Team are using their own personal home computers to work in the absence of an up to date, reasonably spec'd laptop provided by the institution (and office desktop computers are also several years old). Appropriately high-spec laptops are necessary given the flexible working required during a pandemic and to deliver a high-quality experience, especially for live online classes.

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.

What is working well?

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

- Various new 'blended' approaches to teaching have clearly been delivered, generally with great success. There is a broad view that this is particularly welcome and effective at PGT level and that significant aspects of the approach need be retained and accommodated alongside face-to-face interaction.

School of Law

- The flexibility that may be offered by having blended approaches to learning, though this approach works less well for some courses and programmes than others and can pose significant challenges. 'Double teaching' is to be avoided.

School Social & Political Sciences

- While most changes in assessment occurred at the undergraduate level, changes and the move to online at PGT appears to have worked similarly well. Many of the most pressing challenges at PGT revolved around the issues discussed above regarding student numbers and language issues.

- Despite some challenges and concerns around digital exclusion issues, most students adapted well to online teaching in AY2020-21.
- After the early and rapid move online at the end of AY2019-20, most staff felt generally positive about teaching online and managed to embed more substantively online teaching materials and resources aimed and aligned with continued ILO fulfilment.
- The school implemented a 'light-touch' approach to request and approval of temporary course assessment changes. This was welcomed by staff as it allowed for a quicker approval process. It also enabled staff to respond quickly to the need to reflect on necessary changes that would enable students to engage and be tested on their learning in ways that were more appropriate to the teaching methods. We anticipate that some of the changes to assessment may have had a positive impact on attainment levels although this needs more careful review and reflection

Academic and Digital Development

- Staff continue to reflect on their teaching approach, and the structure of their courses in terms of continually ensuring constructively aligned courses which are relevant to practice and underpinned by appropriate up to date literature.

What needs work?

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

- Further work is needed to ensure the blended approach to learning and teaching is effective and gives students the same opportunities of group-discussion with peers and colleagues that the on-campus classes afford.

School of Law

- Support for blended learning.
- Appropriate accommodation
- Timely and accessible information on changes required of the School (University policies often being last minute, made without proper consultation and being provided in emails without also updating website materials).

School Social & Political Sciences

- Some Subjects expressed the need for more technical training for staff with the move to full-time online. While there was much online assistance and materials provided by the University and available elsewhere, teaching online full-time nevertheless proved highly time-consuming. Short workshops for staff were suggested.
- The school recognises the need to focus more attention on the relationship of ILOs and assessment, especially in light of changes to mode of teaching delivery and expectations to respond to high stakes assessment. This may require more focused work with colleagues and improved guidance during the course design and approval process so that lessons learned during this period can be maintained as the school returns to normal working practices'

Academic and Digital Development

- Students value face-to-face interaction with staff and their peers. During the pandemic, we made the decision to switch from a blended provision to a fully online provision, in order to offer participants more flexibility, and to protect our teaching team, some of whom are clinically vulnerable. With some return to campus, some face-to-face teaching observations have begun, and we will investigate the possibility of moving the object-based learning session in course 2b back into the museum for 2022/23, if circumstances allow.
- We continue to provide clearer assessment guidance including the development of rubrics for all courses.

Form AM2 – College Report of Annual Monitoring Activity - Review of Session 2020-21

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)

Additional matters

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

School of Interdisciplinary Studies

- Online teaching has generally been successful (for students, teachers and ultimately in relation to standards/ grades).
- Post-Covid, elements from the online version will be maintained across many of the courses and work will be needed in relation to this transition.
- The place of the (non-compulsory) Social Science Research Methods course on Tourism programmes remain a problem (e.g. it seems to have been taken as 'audit only' by many, leading to minimal engagement).
- All students on the new End of Life Studies programme have been very positive about experience; though some higher-level issues are evident in relation to its status as a formally designated full online course (e.g. university's relationship with FutureLearn; the suitability of workload model metrics to online learning and comparative insight as to content/expectations of other F2F and online PGT programs within the SolS and CoSS).

School Social & Political Sciences

- While the move to online was largely effective due to staff diligence and attention, student experience at PGT is directly linked to the above issues over over-recruitment, student numbers in the classroom, and programme/subject teaching and marking capacities.