

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Periodic Subject Review of Academic & Digital Development

24 and 25 February 2022

Review Panel

Convener	Professor Moira Fischbacher-Smith
External Subject Specialist, University of Durham	Professor Sam Nolan
Student Member	Mr Kevin Leomo
Cognate Member	Professor Stephany Biello
Elected Member from the University Court	Professor Kirsteen McCue
Review Manager	Ms Lesley Fielding

Overview

The Review Panel was extremely impressed by the considerable amount and excellent quality of work that the team had undertaken since the last review. This included, but was not limited to, the expansion of credit bearing courses and the introduction and development of a further new PG programme: Master of Education. The Panel **commends** the team ADD for their exceptional team ethos and their sector leading engagement with the wider community. The commitment to provide a high quality learning experience had continued throughout the pandemic and the team response to the pivot to online was exemplary as evidenced from their development work and interaction with colleges. The students recognised and appreciated the level of support, professional advice and guidance provided by the team, particularly through the turbulence of the pandemic. It was evident that the team had a sense of responsibility for the shared experiences of colleagues and students and had worked hard to juggle teaching and being responsive within their service role to the University. The Panel recognised many outstanding good practices within ADD (see sections 9.1), however, there were several issues that impacted negatively on staff, including inability to plan for increases in student numbers due to a lack of information on projected staff growth planning from colleges. In addition, the staff team workloads needed to be articulated more clearly in terms of expectations about the balance between their academic and service work. Crucially, the level of administrative support requires to be reviewed as it was evident that current staffing levels are impacting on the student experience, quality processes and the team as a whole who absorb additional administration as a consequence.

1. Context and Strategy**Context**

- 1.1 Academic & Digital Development (which will be referred to as the ADD in the report) was formerly the Academic Development Unit of the Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service until 2016-17. More recently, in an ongoing process of restructure from 2019-20, ADD became part of Academic Services (AS) which constitutes one half of the Student & Academic Services Directorate. The programmes under review were:

Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP)

Master of Education in Academic Practice (MEd AP)

There are currently 13, permanent, full-time members of staff, comprised of 8 academic staff, 1 Good Practice Adviser, and 4 Media and Digital development specialists. The Academic Advisers and the Deputy Director form the PGCAP/MEd AP programme team.

- 1.2 Further to the adoption of a new approach to teaching, learning and assessment in 2017-18, the team undertook a programme review in 2019 after the first iteration of the redesigned curriculum and currently offers a larger portfolio of 15 courses.
- 1.3 Student numbers have increased substantially from approximately 140-150 students in 2015 to approximately 250 individuals registered at any one time on the PGCAP/MEd AP.
- 1.4 At the Review, the Panel met with Mx Nicole Kipar, Deputy Director, Dr Janis Davidson, Principal Academic Adviser, Dr Michael McEwan Head of Subject, 4 PGCAP students, 7 MEd AP students. It further met with 11 academic, media and administrative staff. In the final session, the Panel met with Mx Nicole Kipar and Dr Janis Davidson. The Director of Academic Services was unable to attend this meeting.

Strategy

- 1.5 The Review Panel **commends** the team for the considerable amount and excellent quality of work undertaken since the last review and in particular, the shape of the PGCAP and MEd programmes, the flexibility offered, and focus of provision. The Panel noted from the Deputy Director that the team had been operating well within the new structure and it had provided ADD with a level of autonomy regarding their provision.
- 1.6 The Review Panel noted that ADD, as a service, was required to react to the needs of the University in supporting and developing others and this was evident in ADD's instrumental role in the University's online pivot in response to the pandemic. As noted in the RA, the team's creation and provision of guidance by significantly expanding the How to Moodle site, resulted in a 216% user increase in the first half year. In addition to meeting the University's requirements, the team also had to pivot the full range of their own taught provision. These obligations, in addition to the restructuring process, had been particularly challenging and stressful for the team. From discussions, the Panel discerned that ADD had no bespoke planning strategy which made the team vulnerable to changes, including increased student enrolment; 220 new academic staff had been enrolled onto the PGCAP over the past two years. The Panel was surprised to learn that the College five-year staff growth forecasts were not shared with ADD, and staff relied on applications for indications of increased recruitment. The Review Panel **recommends** that a formal reporting arrangement is defined through which ADD are sighted on College staff recruitment objectives and can plan and scale PGCAP provision accordingly. The Review Panel also **recommends** that ADD develop a plan / expression of priorities that align to the L&T strategy and the staff growth intentions of the University. This in turn, will allow a clear articulation of core activity, focus for ADD staff recruitment and development, and will allow the time for service activities to be transparent and effectively managed. Staff workloads can then be reviewed in light of that wider planning which will help the team to prioritise work regarding their various roles and responsibilities. Such forward planning could involve approaches such as partial sabbaticals for the ADD team, and/or seconding College staff into ADD for a specified period where appropriate. These or other initiatives may emerge from this planning activity.

- 1.7 As detailed at 1.3 the team had experienced a considerable amount of organisational change over recent years, including during the pandemic. This had impacted on the organisational positioning of the team, the profile of the team and to an extent, the sense of community. Colleagues displayed high levels of empathy and respect towards one another, but there was also evidence of a need to rebuild confidence and community, and to co-develop new ways of working post-pandemic. ADD are encouraged to agree an approach to support such development, and to draw on colleagues across the University (or externally) should they value facilitation.

2. The Student Experience

Admission and Progression

- 2.1 As indicated in the RA, since the previous review in 2015, there had been a substantial increase in student numbers for PGCAP from 140-150 in 2015 to approximately 250 individuals registered at any one time on the PGCAP/MEd AP in total. It was evident from discussions with the leadership team that there were several challenges regarding admissions. This issue is addressed under 1.6.

Student location

- 2.2 The RA outlined that a major challenge for the PGCAP/MEd AP was the geographical location of their students which incorporated the entire university, with staff located in multiple sites covering China and Singapore, Dumfries, Garscube and the Dental School. In response to the teaching and learning challenges, ADD introduced the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) programme in 2018 which enabled students to undertake learning through a hybrid learning, thereby supporting the concept of a 'One Glasgow' where all staff were colleagues at a single institution. This served the team well when further adaptations were required because of the pandemic.

3. Enhancement in Learning & Teaching

3.1 Curriculum Design and Development

As indicated in 1.3, the ADD PGCAP and MEd AP curriculum had been completely revised since 2015 to adopt a more streamlined one size fits all approach rather than the fragmented versions of the previous programme. In addition to the 15 new credit bearing courses, an additional Designing Online Education: MOOCs, microcredentials and online, distance learning course is under development. The Review Panel considered that this reflected the connectedness of the ADD team in developing more innovative teaching and assessment methods for PGCAP and the MEd AP. As stated in 2.3, the move to online delivery, enabled, more easily, colleagues in other places and in international campuses to be part of the regular student cohort on the main campus in Glasgow.

- 3.2 Whilst recognising that the PGCAP is, by nature, designed to support participants from all disciplines, some PGCAP students commented that the general nature of the courses was not always useful and did not address the students' specific disciplines. Similarly, feedback which was sometimes seen as less helpful than it might be due to the markers' lack of knowledge of the students' discipline. (See also 3.8 below). Some students considered that peer review was not particularly useful.

- 3.3 As detailed in the RA, engagement with the PGCAP/Med is reflected in the promotion criteria for academic staff and aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) in terms of teaching and supporting learning and facilitating the career development of students. PGCAP/MEd is a work-based, practice-based programme which can support carer progression, engagement with scholarship of learning and teaching, and personal development.

- 3.4 Those members of staff enrolled on the PGCAP/MEd were eligible to join the University's networks for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Additionally, staff with aims of further professional development can progress this through the Recognising Excellence in teaching (RET) programme.

Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching

- 3.5 The Review Panel was most impressed with the abundance of active learning including in online settings, and with the use of tools such as Padlet. It was obvious that considerable effort was put into authentic assessments and evidence of students being asked to undertake practice-based tasks which the Panel considered was innovative and ground breaking as evidenced by its commendation by external examiners.

Equality and Diversity

- 3.6 The RA outlined ADD's commitment to Inclusivity and Accessibility and the Panel noted very positively the newly developed course on this topic acknowledging the significance of this development, the timeliness of it and the distinctiveness of it as part of PGCAP (not necessarily observable in other Universities). The Panel explored the issue of diversity within the staff team, and noted that, while ADD was keen to have a more diverse profile, they had received no applications from non-traditional groups. In discussing this further the Convener noted that the advertising of the post may be a root cause of the lack of diversity in applications and proposed that the advertising process could be reviewed. The Review Panel **recommends** that ADD seek advice from the Equality and Diversity Unit on inclusive job adverts, to inform future recruitment activities.

Range of Assessment

- 3.7 The Review Panel welcomed the emphasis on authentic assessment as outlined in the RA. While the documentation indicated that assessments were predominantly written, the Panel, when considering whether ADD could explore more diverse forms of assessment noted from the RA that the Team wished to implement more practice-oriented assessments as part of a rolling programme.

Timeliness of Feedback

- 3.8 As indicated in the RA, the team's use of formative assessment facilitated early feedback to students on drafts or elements of their summative work. The Panel noted the use of peer review feedback on formative tasks. As stated in 3.2, peer review was not uniformly welcomed and some feedback from markers was perceived as less useful due to a lack of specialist knowledge. Overall, however, students considered that feedback was timely and helpful.

Supporting Staff

- 3.9 The Review Panel noted from the RA and discussions with staff and students, significant capacity constraints associated with the current administration arrangements. At present, there was one part-time member of staff who is highly valued and deemed to be excellent, but who is not able to incorporate within the time available all the key aspects of programme and student administration that are needed. There is evidence of insufficient support for key quality processes and student on-boarding among other things. The current arrangement also creates a single point of failure during periods of annual leave or sickness absence resulting in delays to the upload of exam grades for example. Such delays impact downstream on aspects such as recording PCGAP completion and thus reporting compliance with ECDP requirements for staff and in turn, creating uncertainties concerning eligibility for promotion. The Review Panel **recommends** that this issue is addressed in advance of the start of the academic session.

- 3.10 The Review Panel was most impressed by the level of support that the staff team afforded each other. The respect evident among colleagues and their relationships with one another, was mirrored by the students who were equally appreciative of the staff as mentioned in item 4.1. The staff commitment to their work was obvious and the Panel noted, that, despite the workload pressures, staff enjoyed the variety of their work covering both service and academic roles. The staff had advised the Panel that the high level of engagement in their work was possible due to the Learning & Teaching related projects aligned with their individual interests and strategic priorities. However, this did not conceal the challenges that the team faced in managing such a diverse workload and the Panel considered that it was essential that steps were taken to address these issues which are detailed in item 1.6.
- 3.11 The Review Panel noted that staff did not necessarily wish to return to their previous accommodation and acknowledged that the move to online delivery and hybrid working had reduced the need for traditional office spaces. However, staff considered that a dedicated space for staff to gather on occasion was an important factor in maintaining team relationships and wellbeing and particularly in terms of integrating new colleagues into the team. The Review Panel concurred this was an important element in building the sense of community among staff particularly for the new members of staff to meet and integrate with their colleagues. The Review Panel **recommends** that the ADD team meet to talk through future models of working and works through with the leadership team in Academic Services, how best to develop this approach and accommodate the team within the physical estate, drawing on the University's growing set of resources and principles associated with hybrid working.
- 3.12 The Review Panel noted that there were issues with regard to the ADD's website. The University website had not been updated to reflect the restructuring and the branding renamed as LEADS, which created a lack of clarity and impacted on the perception of the service among staff. The ADD team members advised the Panel that they used other means (such as WordPress) to create web pages and guidance because of the lack of fit with and support for web page creation and development. Given the crucial role of web resources for ADD to support the University community, the Panel considers this a priority and **recommends** that the webpages are updated at the earliest opportunity and as a priority in support of encouraging good practice in teaching.

4. Enhancing the Student Experience

Supporting Students

- 4.1 Many of the students who met with the Review Panel expressed their appreciation for the high level of support received from the ADD staff, which they considered motivational, encouraging and enthusiastic. The Review Panel **commends** ADD for their exceptional team and their sector leading practices. This is evident from the range of people undertaking the MEd and the range of engagement with the wider community.
- 4.2 The Panel explored with the PGCAP participants whether participation on the programme was incorporated into School workload models. It was confirmed that participation was not universally included, and that, in general, participation in the PGCAP did not take precedence with institutional needs taking priority within individual teaching staff workloads. This issue was also identified in the PSR of ADU in 2015 and, while staff had developed strong affiliations with Schools, there was a need for Schools to have an in-depth awareness of what the PGCAP entailed. Therefore, the Review Panel **recommends** that consideration be given to the development of an induction pack for circulation with Heads of Schools to ensure that the participants on the PGCAP are afforded the time required to meet the

requirements of the programme in conjunction with their other duties. This recommendation should be pursued in harmony with the approach to ECDP and guidance provided therein. Particularly pertinent here is the need for Heads of Schools to allow PGCAP participants time to undertake learning and assessment as well as attend PGCAP classes – i.e. to recognise the notional learning hours.

Early Career Development Programme

- 4.3 The Review Panel noted that due to the PGCAP being one of the few mandatory elements of the Early Career Development Programme (ECDP), it was necessary to reserve the number of spaces necessary for participants in the ECDP. However, with more staff keen to participate in PGCAP on a voluntary basis for staff development, the number of individuals eligible for the programme was challenging and demand could not necessarily be met.

The Review Panel considered that the inability to manage numbers as part of a formalised strategic planning process was a major drawback for ADD. The Panel **recommends** that ADD reviews this element of numbers planning to build in capacity for voluntary participants in combination with planned staff recruitment as outlined earlier in the report (at 1.6).

Student wellbeing

- 4.4 The Review Panel noted that while there were a number of mechanisms in place to support students, including the peer tutor system, there was no formal advising system. The Panel explored with both staff and students whether a formal advisory system was necessary and the consensus among both groups was that this was unnecessary due to level of assistance and responsiveness already provided by staff.

5. Student Voice

Evidence of Student-staff partnership

- 5.1 The Review Panel was most impressed with the evidence of the student staff partnerships which arose from a number of their courses and supported students with their first Scholarship of Teaching & Learning publications which was considered sector-leading by the External Subject Specialist. Also of note was recent activity listed on the ADD Teaching-related Scholarship document within the RA.

Responding to student feedback

- 5.2 The Review Panel noted from the RA the various mechanisms for collecting student feedback including the end of course EvaSys surveys administered after the end of each course. Student Staff Liaison Committees took place once per semester and in addition, individual course leads conducted their own evaluations. There had been some challenges in following up feedback with course leads due to staff diverting their time into supporting the University to pivot online. It was also highlighted that there had been an issue regarding EvaSys data which had not been collected for the 2019-20 semester 2 and 2020-21 semester 2 courses. Further to discussion with the leadership team and staff this was attributed to the loss of administrative support and institutional knowledge over a period of time. This was discussed fully at 3.10.

6. Academic Standards

Academic Standards

- 6.1 The Panel **confirmed** there were no concerns regarding the academic standards of programmes delivered by ADD and recommended the validation of all programmes for a further six years.

- 6.2 The Panel **confirmed** ADD had a transparent academic governance and quality assurance structure which aligns to the University regulatory framework.

7. Summary

The Panel was impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff and the supportive and innovative environment. Their work was termed 'sector leading and innovative' by the External Subject Specialist on the Panel. The student groups were extremely positive about the staff team.

ADD demonstrated a number of strengths, as well as an awareness of the areas requiring improvement. The most substantive of these are reflected in the commendations and recommendations below.

8. Commendations

- 8.1 The Review Panel **commends** the team for the considerable amount and excellent quality of work that they had undertaken since the last review and in particular, the shape of the PGCAP and MEd programmes, flexibility offered, and focus of provision.
- 8.2 The Review Panel **commends** ADD for their exceptional team and their sector leading practices. This is evident from the range of people undertaking the MEd and the range of engagement with the wider University and HE community.
- 8.3 The Review Panel **commends** ADD for their impressive engagement with Scholarship of Teaching and Learning which is clearly embedded into the PGCAP programme, the MEd and the wider University community.
- 8.4 The Review Panel **commends** the embedding of Inclusivity within the PGCAP programme which was considered excellent and a distinctive feature of the UoG teaching.
- 8.5 The Review Panel **commends** the Team's efforts in developing productive relationships with colleges and in particular through the pandemic with their support for the pivot to online.

9. Good Practice

- 9.1 Design and delivery of CPD programmes
- 9.2 Reference to aligned ILOs in assessments
- 9.3 Individual course leads conducting evaluations in the context of scholarship, as well as providing students with interim opportunities to provide informal feedback during the course
- 9.4 Dissemination of Good practice throughout university

10 Recommendations for Enhancement

To aid the sustainable development of ADD, attached are several recommendations for it to consider. Some are being proposed to enable ADD to address issues raised during the Review in the short term while others are for longer term consideration, in relation to future growth and development.

The table of recommendations for enhancement is attached. The table also identifies those responsible for taking forward.

**PERIODIC SUBJECT REVIEW OF ADD
RECOMMENDATIONS**

PHASE 1: To be addressed within 6 months

	THEMATIC ACTIVITY: Strategy	Enhancement Benefits	For the attention of	For information
1.	<p>The Review Panel recommends that a formal reporting arrangement is defined through which ADD are sighted on College staff recruitment objectives and can plan and scale PGCAP provision accordingly. The Review Panel also recommends that ADD develop a plan / expression of priorities that align to the L&T strategy and the staff growth intentions of the University. This in turn, will allow a clear articulation of core activity, focus for ADD staff recruitment and development, and will allow the time for service activities to be transparent and effectively managed. Staff workloads can then be reviewed in light of that wider planning which will help the team to prioritise work regarding their various roles and responsibilities. Such forward planning could involve approaches such as partial sabbaticals for the ADD team, and/or seconding College staff into ADD for a specified period where appropriate. These or other initiatives may emerge from this planning activity. Section 1, para 1.6</p> <p>The Review Panel noted that due to the PGCAP being one of the few mandatory elements of the Early Carer Development Programme (ECDP), it was necessary to reserve the number of spaces necessary for participants in the ECDP. However, with more staff keen to participate in PGCAP on a voluntary basis for staff development, the number of individuals eligible for the programme was</p>	This would allow better planning of intake and staff workload	Deputy Director	

	<p>challenging and demand could not necessarily be met.</p> <p>The Review Panel considered that the inability to manage numbers as part of a formalised strategic planning process was a major drawback for ADD. The Panel recommends that ADD reviews this element of numbers planning to build in capacity for voluntary participants in combination with planned staff recruitment as outlined earlier in the report (at 1.6). Ref: Section 4, para 4.3</p>			
	Enhancement Theme: Enhancement in Learning and Teaching	Enhancement Benefits	For the attention of	For information
2	Staff Support			
	<p>The Review Panel noted from the RA and discussions with staff and students, significant capacity constraints associated with the current administration arrangements. At present, there was one part-time member of staff who is highly valued and deemed to be excellent, but who is not able to incorporate within the time available all the key aspects of programme and student administration that are needed. There is evidence of insufficient support for key quality processes and student on-boarding among other things. The current arrangement also creates a single point of failure during periods of annual leave or sickness absence resulting in delays to the upload of exam grades for example. Such delays impact downstream on aspects such as recording PCGAP completion and thus reporting compliance with ECDP requirements for staff and in turn, creating uncertainties concerning eligibility for promotion. The Review Panel recommends that this issue is addressed in advance of the start of the academic session. Ref: Section 3, para 3.9</p>	Improved staff support and maintenance of quality standards	Director of Academic Services	
3.	The Review Panel noted that there were issues with regard to the ADD's website. The University	An accurate website would raise staff awareness of the work of ADD.	Deputy Director and	

	<p>website had not been updated to reflect the restructuring and the branding renamed as LEADS, which created a lack of clarity and impacted on the perception of the service among staff. Given the crucial role of web resources for ADD to support the University community, the Panel considers this a priority and recommends that the webpages are updated at the earliest opportunity and as a priority in support of encouraging good practice in teaching. Ref: Section 3 para 3.12</p>		<p>Drew McConnell, Business Relationship Management</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>The Review Panel noted that staff did not necessarily wish to return to their previous accommodation and acknowledged that the move to online delivery and hybrid working had reduced the need for traditional office spaces. However, staff considered that a dedicated space for staff to gather on occasion was an important factor in maintaining team relationships and wellbeing and particularly in terms of integrating new colleagues into the team. The Review Panel concurred this was an important element in building the sense of community among staff particularly for the new members of staff to meet and integrate with their colleagues. The Review Panel recommends that the ADD team meet to talk through future models of working and works through with the leadership team in Academic Services, how best to develop this approach and accommodate the team within the physical estate, drawing on the University's growing set of resources and principles associated with hybrid working. Ref: Section 3, para 3.11</p>	<p>To assist in developing a sense of community among staff</p>	<p>Deputy Director and Director, Academic Services</p>	

PHASE 2:

	Recommendations	Expected Impact	For the attention of	For information
	<i>Enhancing the Student Experience: Supporting Students</i>			
5.	The Panel explored with the PGCAP participants whether participation on the programme was incorporated into School workload models. It was confirmed that participation was not universally included, and that, in general, participation in the PGCAP did not take precedence with institutional needs taking priority. This issue was also identified in the PSR of ADU in 2015 and, while staff had developed strong affiliations with Schools, there was a need for Schools to have an in-depth awareness of what the PGCAP entailed. Therefore, the Review Panel recommends that consideration be given to the development of an induction pack for circulation with Heads of Schools to ensure that the participants on the PGCAP are afforded the time required to meet the requirements of the programme in conjunction with their other duties. This recommendation should be pursued in harmony with the approach to ECDP and guidance provided therein. Particularly pertinent here is the need for Heads of Schools to allow PGCAP participants time to undertake learning and assessment as well as attend PGCAP classes – i.e. to recognise the notional learning hours. Ref: Section 4 para 4.2	Improved awareness of the requirements of the PGCAP should encourage colleges to reflect this within students' workload models.	Michael McEwan, ECDP review group member and PGCAP Coordinator.	Lesley Cummings (POD), Murray Pittock (ECDP Lead)
5.	The Review Panel recommends that ADD seek advice from the Equality and Diversity Unit on inclusive job adverts, to inform future recruitment activities. Ref: Section 3, para 3.6	To widen the diversity of job applicant	Deputy Director	Mhairi Taylor, Head EDU