

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee: 27 May 2022

Responses to Report of Periodic Subject Review of Urban Studies 25 & 26 May 2021

	Thematic Activity (Section 1 - Strategy for Development)	Shared enhancement benefits	For the attention of:
1.	<p>Strategy for Growth The Panel recommends the School and Subject review their strategy for growth, in collaboration with External Relations, to enable them to have greater control over how they grow. This will also allow them to address the issues related to the impact of increased numbers of students on small group teaching.</p> <p>Ref: Section 3 para 3.1.1</p> <p>The Panel recommends that the School and Subject collaborate with colleagues responsible for Admissions within External Relations on the standard of English of international students and to establish the appropriate definition of the terms borderline and marginal. These terms are used during the admissions process to signal that, in those cases where there was any doubt over the applicants' suitability or language competence, the Subject wishes to be involved in the decision-making pre-admission.</p> <p>Ref: Section 3 para 3.1.2</p>	<p>This should enable the School and Subject area to manage and plan for new intakes ensuring acceptable staffing levels.</p> <p>This would ensure that the School would have candidates with the appropriate level of English to thrive in the programmes</p>	<p>Head of School Head of School Administration</p> <p>Head of External Relations</p> <p>Head of College Head of College Finance</p>

Joint Response College/School/Subject:

This work is ongoing via the monthly Admissions Management Group with ER and soon-to-commence meetings with Income Growth Board.

On English Language requirements we are undertaking a benchmarking exercise and liaising with ER to develop a recommendation paper to bring forward to School LTC.

Response: Vice Principal – External Relations

Awaited.

2.	Workload Allocation Model (WAM) The Panel recommends that the Subject, School and College review the current Workload Model to identify current inequities and ensure a productive way forward, ensuring clear communication with staff surrounding how the model is operationalised”. Ref: Section 3 para 3.1.3 The Panel recommends that the Subject ensures that sufficient time is allocated within the WLM for all staff involved in the accreditation process. Ref: Section 3 para 3.1.4	A review of the WLM would facilitate equity in staff workloads with time identified for innovation.	Head of Subject, Head of School Head of College
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Joint Response:

The WLM Review Group reported to School Exec in April 2022 and recommendations regarding increasing allocation for accreditation to 40 from 27 hours are being taken forward.

Additional changes to increase allocations for teaching and assessment have also been made. This will hopefully support improvements to student feedback

The school WAM handbook will be revised to improve transparency and information about implementation. Staff will have access to the WAM template.

3.	Teaching Accommodation The Panel recommends the School and Subject conduct strategic discussions with	This would improve the student experience and alleviate the pressures on the Subject by ensuring appropriate	Head of School Head of Subject
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	<p>University Estates and Administration to resolve the recurring challenges of incompatible accommodation for small group teaching, particularly in relation to Postgraduate Taught programmes and the specialist requirements of postgraduate students and accrediting bodies. Ref: Section 3, para 3.1.5</p> <p>¹In view of the legislative implications as outlined in the Equalities Act 2010, the Panel recommends that disabled access to accommodation both for staff and students is reviewed to see if there is any remedy possible for the problem. Ref: Section 3 para 3.1.6</p>	<p>accommodation is provided, including as necessary to meet the specification of accrediting bodies.</p> <p>This issue was identified in the PSR in 2015. An update should be provided early in session 2021.</p>	<p>Director of Strategy, Performance and Transformation, Estates and Administration</p> <p>Executive Director, Estates</p>
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Response – School/Subject:

Discussions ongoing with Ian Campbell to gather further details on School needs and planning to repurpose space will ensue.

Response: Executive Director - Estates

Reading through the report it's not clear to me the exact accessibility issue and it would probably be best I come along to see it. If its ok with you I will ask Aileen to I will establish a time for the lead on our inclusivity matters and I to visit the relevant premises.

Response: Director of Strategy, Performance and Transformation

Over the course of the current academic year there has been close collaboration between the academic teaching team in Urban Studies and the central Space Management and Timetabling Team to fully understand the space requirements and options for on campus teaching, the adoption of active learning and the optimum size of teaching groups. This has enhanced awareness and understanding on both sides and resulted in well-developed plans and rooming solutions for the 2022/23 academic year. Providing there are no unforeseen variations (e.g. significantly different student numbers), then I am confident that significant progress and improvement will be achieved in the coming year to ensure appropriate teaching space is secured for the subject.

4.	<p>Tutors The Panel supports the School's plans to review the role and recommends the School considers</p>	<p>This would clarify the role of tutors and would provide support for their student-facing role.</p>	<p>Head of School</p>
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¹ The second item under Recommendation 3 has been amended as requested by Academic Standards Committee and has been agreed by the PSR Panel Convener

	in the review, the role of Tutor together with the post title. Ref: Section 3 para 3.1.8		
Response:			
The review has concluded and Tutors have been offered new open ended contracts where the work is ongoing. The role of Tutor has also been reframed as Teaching Fellow.			
5.	Graduate Teaching Assistants The Panel recommends the Subject develop more formal mechanisms to ensure Subject oversight of GTAs' workload and wider activities including mentoring, upskilling and training and support for new appointees. The new GTA Code will be useful in this context. Ref: Section 3 para 3.1.9	Subject oversight will create parity of experience for the GTAs and will provide the Subject with an opportunity to monitor workloads. Additionally, assigned mentors will encourage confidence in new GTAs.	Head of Subject
Response:			
The Subject management team agreed to convene a first meeting with GTAs in Spring 2022 to integrate them better into teaching practice and planning. Subsequent meetings, chaired by the UG Director of L&T will be held on a regular basis.			
6.	Good Practice The Panel recommends that the Subject explore how good practice could be more widely disseminated and embedded throughout the Subject and School through the establishment of a short-life working group. Ref: Section 3, para 3.1.10	The Curricula would benefit from more even dissemination of good practice to all staff.	Head of Subject
Response:			
The Subject management team and staff meeting decided to focus the bi-monthly L&T meetings on good practice sharing/learning, with administrative and planning matters to be dealt with at the staff meeting. All teaching staff (incl. Tutors and GTAs) are encouraged to participate in the L&T meetings.			

	Thematic Activity (Section 2 - Learning and Teaching Enhancement)	Shared Enhancement Benefits	For the attention of
7.	<p>Staff Community The Panel recommends that the School and Subject continue to support the collegial culture within the Subject to ensure it is maintained going forward as this would enhance the staff experience. Ref: Section 4, para 4.2</p>	This will enhance the staff experience	Head of School Head of Subject
<p>Response: Teams channels and lunchtime sessions plus additional mentoring arrangements are being put in place for LTS staff.</p>			
8.	<p>Teaching and Learning The Panel recommends the School/Subject leadership consider ways of continuing to embed teaching and learning culture (student centred learning, impact led teaching etc) across the subject. Ref: Section 4 para 4.3</p>	This will enhance the student experience and also the staff experience.	Head of Subject
<p>Response: See response to 6 (above). The L&T meeting series acts a forum for information exchange, critical reflection, and development and sharing of L&T innovation. Additionally, part of the Subject away day is devoted to nurturing our L&T culture.</p>			
9.	<p>Communication The Panel recommends that the Subject review the current procedures for disseminating information and consultation processes with staff. Ref: Section 4 para 4.4</p>	This will enhance staff experience and ensure that all staff are involved in good practice initiatives.	Head of Subject

Response:

See response to 6. The regular Staff meetings (minimum of 6 per year) include a set agenda item on L&T, under which programme planning and delivery issues are discussed. The additional, regular L&T meetings (min. 6 p.a.) serve as forum for good practice sharing and fostering innovation. In addition, the annual Subject away day provides opportunity for consultation and information sharing.

10.	<p>The Panel noted the Subject's use of MS Teams to encourage peer feedback within courses and the Panel would encourage the Subject to consider ways to further embed this alongside the other interactive tools across the programme. Ref: Section 4, para 4.9</p> <p>The Panel encourages the Subject to provide students with additional guidance on the peer review process. Ref: Section 4, para 4.13</p> <p>The Panel suggests that the Subject provide guidance to staff regarding the importance of providing sufficient and timely feedback and may wish to consider the introduction of a feedback template. Ref: Section 4, para 4.14</p>	<p>This would enrich the value of the peer review process for students</p>	<p>Head of Subject Head of School</p> <p>Head of Subject</p> <p>Head of Subject</p>
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Response:

Integrated peer feedback is one of the issues discussed in the Subject L&T meetings. It is also being considered in the ongoing programme reviews.

Several courses already include bespoke feedback templates. The issue is also discussed in the Subject L&T meetings, and is being considered in the ongoing programme reviews. Staff are regularly reminded of the importance of timely and sufficient feedback. The subject in line with others in the school will continue to feed into the assessment and feedback calendar to ensure transparency of deadlines.

11.	<p>IT The Panel recommends that the Subject consult with central University IT services and</p>	<p>This would address the lack of consistency in the Moodle set-up throughout the School to enhance the student experience (students found it confusing).</p>	<p>Head of Subject Head of School</p>
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	LEADS to consider a uniform template for Moodle set-up where possible. Ref: Section 4 para 4.10		Mr Dave Anderson, Director of IT Services Director, LEADS
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Response School/Subject:

The subject has been involved with decision making at school LTC in conjunction with SRC to confirm introduction of a moodle course template across UG levels and it is hoped this will also be applied at PG level 2 from AY 22/23. The Head of Subject and Subject L&T directors will consult with IT services and LEADS, with a view to achieving further improvements and consistency for academic year 22/23 onwards.

Response Director of IT Services

I have checked with both the Moodle team and the Learning Innovation Support Unit and neither have been contacted by the school. It may be that they have made use of the updated guidance "[Accessible and Inclusive Moodle template](#)"

Response – LEADS

Elliott Spaeth had at some stage before the pandemic invited members of the Moodle User Group to share and discuss templates, with several areas of the university doing so. However, that was a user-led endeavour.

12.	<p>Graduate Attributes The Panel recommends that the Subject consider how to ensure that alumni and industry engagement within the curriculum is of sufficiently high quality alongside how this can be more systematically and successfully leveraged across UG and PG programmes Ref: Section 4 para 4.17</p>	Building on the existing links with alumni and industry should enhance the student experience and encourage alumni participation.	Head of Subject
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Response:

This is on the agenda as part of the ongoing programme reviews. While industry engagement is an integral part of our accredited programmes, additional links can be established for other programmes.

	Thematic Activity (Section 3 - The Student Voice)	Shared Enhancement Benefits	For the attention of
13.	In view of the uncertainty of the University's engagement with the PTES, the Panel would encourage the Subject to consider what could potentially be done to communicate with PGTs	This would ensure the PGT students' feedback was noted	Head of School

	the importance of providing feedback by alternative routes such as Evasys. Ref: Section 5 para 5.1		
Response: The subject will participate in discussions to be held through the school student engagement forum in conjunction with school L&T committee to identify ways to improve communication and engagement with PGT students. Opportunities for in-session feedback and improved Staff-student liaison tailored to programmes and courses will also be explored and enacted.			
14.	Student Representatives The Panel would encourage the Subject to look at additional methods to raise student awareness of the student rep role and purpose. Ref: Section 5 para 5.2	Increased student awareness of the role of student rep should improve the engagement of students and facilitate the resolution of the feedback loop.	Head of Subject
Response: The two staff with student engagement roles will explore additional methods of communicating the student rep role.			
	Thematic Activity (Section 4 Supporting Student Wellbeing)	Shared Enhancement Benefits	For the attention
15.	Adviser of Studies The Panel recommends that the School/Subject review the Advising System to enhance visibility of the formal elements of, and improve engagement with the Advisory System, particularly the first meeting with Advisers of Studies. Ref Section 6 para 6.2 The Panel recommends that the College review the allocation of advisers to ensure that Social and Public Policy students are allocated an adviser from Urban Studies where possible. Ref Section 6 para 6.3	This would complement the work of the Social Sciences administrative advising team through the provision of academic advice to students. This would ensure that Advisers of Studies had a knowledge of the specific academic challenges that Urban Studies students may face.	Head of College

Response:

Role of Academic Adviser and benefits of student engagement in the process will be defined/articulated by Chief Adviser and highlighted to new UG students via MA(SocSc) extended orientation for AY22/23.

Chief Adviser/ Dean L&T to investigate alternative models to enable allocation of academic advisers on subject basis within context of general degree.

16.	Student Community The Panel encourages the Subject to consider initiatives and resources to further develop the sense of student community, including the continuing support/promotion of the Social and Public Policy Society to support students to feel more 'at home' in Glasgow, particularly postgraduate taught students. Ref: Section 6 para 6.4	This should support students feel more 'at home' in Glasgow, particularly for postgraduate PGT who only have a year and particularly upon the emergence from lockdown.	Head of Subject
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Response:

The Subject will return to in-person social events, as was established practice pre-Covid.

	Thematic Activity (Section 5 - Collaborative Provision)	Shared Enhancement Benefits	For the attention
17.	Strategy The Panel recommends that the Subject undertake a review of their strategic direction and reflect on how to progress future collaborations and to encourage current staff collaboration between Nankai and GU for postgraduate taught provision. Ref: Section 7 para 7.1.1 It is recommended that the Subject and School consider the staffing strategy for Nankai to introduce flexibility and a blended approach to teaching. Ref: Section 7 para 7.1.2	Using experiences of the Nankai collaboration would be beneficial in developing a strategy for current and future collaborations.	Head of Subject Transnational Education Dean Head of Subject Head of School

Response: School

The Subject plans to review the strategic direction of the Nankai collaboration, following receipt of a position paper from the School of Economics at Nankai.

In light of University-level discussion about a move towards a blended approach to teaching in Nankai, the Subject will review current staffing and teaching arrangements.

We are currently engaged in renegotiating our agreement with Nankai. This has also involved discussions with the convenor of our urban studies programme in Nankai with a Consideration will be given to blended learning approaches. This review will be completed in June 2022. (RB-TNE Dean)

Response: TNE Dean

The paper from Nankai is part of the overall review of the programme and modes of delivery such as blended learning.

Staffing levels are likely to remain constant to deliver the programme but of course this will be on line for the foreseeable future. Therefore in terms of delivery and staffing the situation in 2022/3 will be the same as this is subject to the original contract.

The new contract for a three year period 2023-26 is being worked on currently and will be subject to a further joint meeting with Nankai in the autumn. The June period referred to below is in terms of our own review to feed into further talks.

Obviously we cant pre judge but blended learning is likely to feature heavily in the report.

18.	Workload Model The Panel recommends that the workload model for Nankai teaching staff is reviewed to incorporate time for staff to reflect on teaching methods and to recognise the additional pressures on GU and visiting Nankai staff arising from these visits. Ref: Section 7 para 7.2	This would encourage staff to build on their current practice and to develop innovative learning and teaching methods.	Head of Subject
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Response:

This can be accommodated through the revised Workload Allocation Model and, dependent on the strategic review (see 17).

19.	<p>Student Community It is recommended that the Subject should ensure conversational English classes are in the pre sessional sessions for visiting Nankai students. Ref: Section 7 para 7.3</p>	<p>This provision would aid visiting students to maintain and develop their English language skills, and facilitate their greater assimilation into the community</p>	<p>English for Academic Study Transnational Education Dean</p>
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Response: English for Academic Study
The EAP Manager for Pre-and In-sessional English would be happy to discuss the needs of visiting Nankai students with regard to conversational English classes, evaluate the appropriacy of existing provision for this group, and/or develop bespoke provision if required.'