



## **Response to Recommendations for Periodic Subject Review: Review of MVLS Graduate School Health & Wellbeing, Medical & Clinical Sciences, and Medical Professions Clusters held on 17 and 18 June 2021**

### **Strategy for development**

#### **Recommendation 1**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School, in conjunction with the College Management Group, develops mechanisms to ensure that teaching and MPA staff are appropriately consulted and involved in the Graduate School's planning for student and programme growth as part of the annual planning process.

**For the attention of: Dean of Postgraduate Teaching,  
Head of Academic & Student Administration, and College Management Group  
For information: Head of College**

#### **Response:**

Since the review the college has undergone a restructure process. Through this we have seen greater alignment between the management of teaching and the staff delivering it. Therefore, the process of communication has been improved. In addition, the new process of controlled cycle admissions through the inactive rounds will help us work to fixed targets and monitor the recruitment process more accurately.

### **Learning and teaching enhancement**

#### **Recommendation 2**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School should review the provision of careers advice given to students, particularly in relation to non-academic careers and the timing of guidance, to meet the specific needs of students.

**For the attention of: Dean of Postgraduate Teaching,  
and Cluster Leads  
For information: Careers Service**

#### **Response:**

Information around careers is included within the Induction Moodle site and individual programmes sites. We have been able to have pockets of good practice, however if anything this has now become more difficult. Our previous contact in careers, Archie Roy, has left the University and not been replaced. Across UG, they have built in careers courses/workshops as part of the curriculum. While this is not possible to add to the curriculum at PGT level we would like to find specific dates and times to offer open careers sessions for students, possibly as online events. However, the colleges UG careers manager does not have the time to do this, so this point is dependent on resource from the careers service which I believe is under review.

### **Recommendation 3**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School should consider how more value might be derived from existing external and professional linkages in order to further enhance Graduate School programmes.

**For the attention of: Dean of Postgraduate Teaching,  
Cluster Leads, and affiliate staff**

#### **Response:**

The Graduate School is looking to expand the PGT links with local industry and especially the NHS GGC. We have new innovation strategy with key aims to expand the links between the college and these areas. The delivery of this strategy also references the development of new training courses for both external and internal learners to provide professional links to enhance our programmes. In addition we have a graduate school member of staff that will take on a key liaison role to promote professional partnerships with our post graduate teaching.

### **Recommendation 4**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School evaluates the current level of support for the Graduate Skills Award to ensure its future sustainability and long-term success.

**For the attention of: Dean of Postgraduate Teaching, Cluster Leads,  
MVLS College Head of Academic & Student Administration,  
and Tracy Maxwell (MVLS PGT Academic Governance Manager)**

#### **Response:**

We have recently appointed a Student Employment & Skills Development Manager (Tracy Maxwell) who will oversee the award with additional staff resource to support the longevity of this role. Tracy's role as Academic Governance Manager has been replaced.

### **Recommendation 5**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School should build on the excellent existing examples of authentic assessment to deploy these types of assessment more pervasively across the portfolio.

**For the attention of: Dean of Postgraduate Teaching, Cluster Leads,  
and Graduate School Learning, Teaching & Scholarship staff  
For information: Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service**

#### **Response:**

We are working to develop a SharePoint site repository, showing examples of assessment, rubric marking and linking back to intended learning outcomes. Our college course and programme approvals meeting has also taken on a training role, where staff thinking about developing new content, or those on PGCap, are able to come and observe the process and read paperwork. It is hoped this will both highlight and promote areas of good practice. Working with the undergraduate areas of the college we will be looking to reinstate the learning and teaching forums to raise awareness, identify areas of good practice coming through in the AMRs and PSR reports. Each new school will have a scholarship champion and it is hoped the new structure of the college will promote a smoother sharing of information and expertise across all levels of teaching.

### **Recommendation 6**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School should draw on the lessons learned during the COVID-19 Pandemic to encourage a move away from high-stakes assessments towards types of assessment that align more closely with intended learning outcomes and ensure the effective development of subject expertise.

**For the attention of: Dean of Postgraduate Teaching, Cluster Leads,  
and Graduate School Learning, Teaching & Scholarship staff  
For information: Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service**

#### **Response:**

Now we are exiting the pandemic there are definitely lessons that have been learned in regard to assessment and high-stakes exams. Overall very few areas wish to return to pre-pandemic assessment, and where they do there is good reason, such as accreditation requirements. Student feedback also shows that continual assessment is much preferred and more successful than end of year exams. This is something we are also addressing through course development and the review process.

### **Recommendation 7**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School ensures that assessment outcomes and feedback are consistently aligned to the grade related criteria across all programmes and that consideration be given as to how feed forward could effectively be used to support student development.

**For the attention of: Dean of Postgraduate Teaching, Cluster Leads,  
and Graduate School Learning, Teaching & Scholarship staff  
For information: Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service**

#### **Response:**

The Graduate School exists to try and aid the process of continuity across the college, we will endeavor to add clarity to the alignment of assessment to the grade criteria, however we have found that while much information is available for UG marking criteria, very little exists for PGT. A point we will take forward with our college contacts in LEADS.

### **Recommendation 8**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School reviews, with a view to strengthening, the effectiveness and consistency of formal mentoring and local support for all staff engaged in teaching on Graduate School programmes, including early-career staff, Learning, Teaching & Scholarship staff, and affiliate staff, to assure the quality of the student learning experience across the portfolio.

**For the attention of: Dean of Postgraduate Teaching, and Cluster Leads  
For information: Learning Enhancement & Academic Development Service**

#### **Response:**

Since this review we have established a mentoring system for the early career LTS staff within the graduate school. In addition, where we have short 1 year contracts, these have been extended to 3 years, which not only adds stability to our staff, but allows them to engage and complete the PGCap training courses with LEADS. With the restructure of the college, we now have larger groups of teaching staff in each school who can provide mentorship and support. As mentioned above, we are looking to establish strong areas of

scholarship which include staff who support both UG and PGT teaching. We believe this added stability for staff will lead to a better student learning experience.

#### **Recommendation 9**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the College Management Group develops and deploys further mechanisms to reinforce the value of teaching in Research Institutes in order to underpin the high quality portfolio of programmes currently offered by the Graduate School.

**For the attention of: Head of College and College Management Group  
For information: Professor Moira Fischbacher-Smith (Vice-Principal, Learning & Teaching)**

#### **Response:**

Since August 2022 the college has now restructured from 3 schools and 7 research institutes, to a structure of 8 schools. Each school now delivers both UG teaching and PGT, as well as PGR support and research. Our aim is therefore to increase the value and recognition of teaching among all staff. The Graduate School will continue to provide the oversight and administration of all programmes to maintain consistency and governance. It is hoped that this restructure promotes the connectivity of teaching and research across the college.

#### **Recommendation 10**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the College Management Group takes action to dispel any perceptions within the College that PGT programmes are of less importance than UG programmes.

**For the attention of: Head of College and College Management Group  
For information: Professor Moira Fischbacher-Smith (Vice-Principal, Learning & Teaching)**

#### **Response:**

As above it is hoped the restructure promotes this feeling of equality. In addition, parts of the education strategy, both at college and university levels are looking to dispel this. Various work streams are in place to help with this and our Head of Academic and Student Administration is taking a more central role to ensure equity.

### **The student Voice**

#### **Recommendation 11**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School liaises with the Senate Office to develop a strategy for increasing student response rates for EvaSys course evaluation surveys, and that the Graduate School explores the possibility of sending mid-semester surveys to students to enhance student engagement. To facilitate the closure of feedback loops, the Review Panel also **recommends** that the Graduate School develops a mechanism to ensure that Summary and Response Documents are completed for all courses and that SSLC minutes are recorded and stored centrally for every programme. The Graduate School should also ensure that there is effective communication of the actions taken in response to feedback to both students and staff.

**For the attention of: Dean of Postgraduate Teaching, Linda Atkinson (PGT Manager, MVLS Graduate School), Tracy Maxwell (MVLS PGT Academic Governance Manager) and Richard Lowdon (Senate Office)**

**Response:**

We do realise that our EvaSys responses are not what they should be. Our major problem is the volume of these reports, and we did discuss this with Richard Lowdon after the previous PSR as well. When we are running many short courses, each programme needs to complete 3 or 4 EvaSys reports a semester. Students find this repetitive, and staff buy in to this is also an issue. We would like to look at what we are surveying, do we need to survey every single course? Do we need to survey every course every year? if we could find a way to survey and feedback once a semester this would improve engagement and meaningfulness of the outcomes. Constantly chasing EvaSys results and staff feedback is also very time consuming for our administrative staff. This is an action we will take forward with the Senate Office.

We will also be looking to improve reporting, with the previous years report being made available at the SSLC as a standing agenda item so students can see what was changed/developed from one year to the next and made available on the Moodle sites.

Dr Lowdon has agreed follow up with the Graduate School to see if together they can come to an agreement about reducing the survey burden for staff and students.

**Supporting student wellbeing****Recommendation 12**

The Review Panel **recommends** that the College clarifies the lines of responsibility for student support in the Graduate School, including ensuring that the new Student Support Officer role interfaces effectively with Graduate School MPA staff and University student support services.

**For the attention of: Dean of Postgraduate Teaching,  
MVLS College Head of Academic & Student Administration and the new Student  
Support Officer  
For information: Counselling & Psychological Services**

**Response:**

The new student support officer (SSO) has been very effective for us in the graduate school. Our SSO has been able to advise and direct students working in collaboration with our MPA staff, we have found this very effective, especially during the induction week this year. With the SSO clearly visible at the start of term we also hope that students will be able to approach the SSO where sometimes they are reluctant to approach other staff.

Another new development is the installation of a Chief Adviser for PGT within MVLS this summer, this role will oversee the advising network for all out PGT students across the college, they are also already making great improvements to the identification and signposting of resources and working closely with our SSO and our quality officer in areas such as good cause and fitness to study.