University of Glasgow

Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

Review of Music held on 13 and 14 February 2018

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the subject area of Music. *Periodic Subject Review* (PSR) is an internal subject review focused on the quality of provision as experienced by students. The review looks at the range of programmes, course content, the teaching methods employed, assessment, facilities and much more.

The full report of the review is available publicly at:

https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_613786_en.pdf

Further information about the PSR process can be found at:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/periodicsubjectreview/

Italicised words are explained in a glossary below.

Conclusions

The Subject was experiencing a number of issues clearly stated within the *Self Evaluation Report (SER)*, in relation to workload and accommodation, but the developing relationship between the Subject of Music and the School of Culture and Creative Arts indicated that careful consideration was being given to sustainability of future provision with the creation of a strategy for increased co-operation.

The degree programmes reviewed showed strong academic vision, alongside a broad and thorough approach to the discipline of Music. There was clearly care for the development of all aspects of the student experience, and the range of courses available, along with their planning and delivery, demonstrated excellent, research-led teaching. The processes for support and review of these courses and programmes were effective and have delivered recent, significant change. In terms of improvement, the *National Student Survey (NSS)* responses indicate that certain aspects of student support and engagement require further work. The SER draws attention to questions of sustainability around the complement of core academic staff, and academic workloads more generally. These areas for improvement will benefit from a firmer vision of Music's position within the School.

Overall, the Panel's perception was that Music was offering an exciting range of courses, keeping pace with developments in theory and in practice, and that the student body was engaged and excited by these offerings. The diverse range of courses was matched by variety in modes of delivery and assessment. That said, the feedback from *Graduate Teaching*

Assistants (GTAs), the student survey and from *Staff:Student Liaison Committee (SSLC)* minutes suggested that a strategy for assessment and feedback with improved clarity and consistency around assessment criteria would benefit the Subject Area.

Commendations, Key Strengths and Good Practice[1]

Commendations are practices identified as innovative and exemplary activities for potentially wider dissemination.

Supporting Students in Their Learning: Undergraduate students

- The "Welcome" event, in particular, the innovative 'ice-breaking' induction event of "Academic Speed Dating" created to welcome new students and put them at ease. [Paragraph 3.3.1]

Enhancement of Learning and Teaching: Approach to *Intended Learning Outcomes*

- The School's strategy to reflect and develop all School provision to ensure opportunities for cohesion and collaboration were maximised. [Paragraph 4.1.9]

The Review Panel identified the following key strengths and areas of good practice.

Strategic Approach to Enhancing Learning and Teaching

- The Subject's ability to provide a research-led teaching environment whilst fully committed to the student experience (paragraph 2.4.4)

Supporting Students in their Learning: Undergraduate students

- Provision of after hour access and online booking system (paragraph 3.3.6)

Supporting Students in their Learning: *Graduate Attributes*

- 'Composition in the Classroom' course and *outreach projects* (paragraph 3.3.9)

Supporting Students in their Learning: Student feedback mechanisms

- The availability of SSLC minutes which were regularly placed on *Moodle* (paragraph 3.3.13)

- Opportunities given to allow students to provide feedback (paragraph 3.3.14)

- The recently established 'Music Council' to provide opportunities for wider discussion across the Subject(paragraph 3.3.16)

- The provision of Subject level class representative training [Paragraph 3.3.17]

- The use of the 'minute paper' by Sonics Arts to seek student feedback mid-course, allowing for quick response to feedback. The Panel encourages this practice to be used across the Subject (paragraph 3.3.19)

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[1] Numbers refer to the paragraphs in the full report that contain the relevant discussion.

- Full involvement of staff and students in the PSR process, incorporating a survey undertaken by both staff and students into the SER (paragraphs 1.3 and 3.3.20)

Enhancement of Learning and Teaching: Curriculum Design

- Small and individual tutorials with performative interaction providing the students with opportunity to engage and work alongside staff (paragraph 4.1.5)
- The establishment of 'Away Days' giving staff an opportunity to reflect on strategy for both learning and teaching and research (paragraph 4.1.8)

Enhancement of Learning and Teaching: Assessment and Feedback

- The range of assessment modes (paragraph 4.2.1)

Areas to be improved or enhanced

The Review Panel made a number of recommendations where it identified opportunities for further enhancement. The Head of Subject commented that the review had been timely given the Subject's recent transition and that the recommendations would enable the Subject's strategic objectives.

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching*: Study Abroad*

- Streamline processes to improve Study Abroad opportunities. Attempts should be made to explore
  - Potential networks and or partnerships, identifying viable curricula
  - Establish formal networks with other institutions alleviating pressure from students wishing to undertake a year abroad
  - Consider Semester visits or other short-term opportunities
  - Put together a number of case studies to inform students of potential pathways making it easier for students
  - Arrangements in other Schools and what potential platforms are available for exchange programmes of various lengths [Paragraph 4.1.2]

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching*: Assessment and Feedback*

- Review the weighting of assessments and review the assessment and feedback strategy ensuring criteria across programmes are clear and consistent and available to all students in advance. Students should be involved with this review. In addition, the Subject should consult with *Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Services (LEADS)* in relation to this. The Subject should engage with the School NSS plan, particularly in the area of assessment and feedback. [Paragraph 4.2.1]

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Sharing of good practice

- Introduce a formal teaching forum to enable staff to exchange ideas on alternative forms of assessment and different styles of teaching. The annual course review should also provide an opportunity for exchange of good practice. [Paragraph 4.1.3]

Supporting Students in their Learning: Graduate Attributes

- Provide a suite of career information throughout programmes of study. [Paragraph 3.3.11]

Supporting Students in their Learning: Progression

- The Subject and School should continue to monitor degree award classifications across programmes to measure whether amendments made in assessment have addressed variation in degree classification. If variation continues, further support should be provided for single honours MA students. [Paragraph 3.1.7]

Supporting Students in their Learning: *Widening participation*

- Examine alternative measures to promote widening participation. [Paragraph 3.2.3]

Supporting Students in their Learning*:* Course information

- Review handbooks, course material, and provide this in a standardised format. This should include assessment, feedback and marking criteria. [Paragraph 3.3.7]

- Clearer instructions are communicated to students to clarify instructions in relation to what software students are expected to use and what level of support will be offered. Material for self-directed learning should also be considered. [Paragraph 4.1.12]

Supporting Students in their Learning: Review of the BEng

- Initiate a review with the School of Engineering in relation to future administration and content of the degree. Formal arrangements should be established to enable both disciplines to share ideas for enhancing the programme as well as consider the wider market potential of this programme. [Paragraph 3.1.3]

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching*:* Courses offered

- Review the range of courses offered. This should include the effective use of staff time and efficient delivery of courses exploring different modes of teaching with a view to rationalise the number of courses where possible. The Subject should consult with the School L&T Convener, Dean (L&T) and Head of College in relation to this. Credit standardisation does not necessarily require offering more courses. [Paragraph 4.1.7]

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: GTA Support

- GTAs should not be acting as second markers who simply agree with first markers and should be supported in this role. [Paragraph 4.3.12]

- The School and Subject undertake GTA training which should include: clarity of role and responsibilities, office hours and time expected to prepare, teach and mark. This should include a breakdown of rate of pay. Training should include clarification of the *Code of Assessment*, and what level of feedback should be provided. [Paragraph 4.3.12]

- The Subject provides regular meetings between staff and GTAs to discuss lecture and seminar material and; assessment and feedback and marking to provide support and ensure consistency; particularly in light of the complexity of Music and that the GTAs are paid for their time at these meetings. [Paragraph 4.3.12]

- The School works with the Dean of Learning and Teaching to introduce a peer mentoring scheme across College which would provide GTAs an opportunity to meet other GTAs plus enable more senior GTAs to observe more junior GTAs and provide feedback on teaching, marking and feedback. [Paragraph 4.3.13]

- The Subject invite GTAs to staff and course review meetings. This would promote their inclusion in the teaching community as well as provide them with valuable insight into course provision and review. The GTAs should be paid for their time when attending these meetings. [Paragraph 4.3.15]

Supporting Students in their Learning: Equality and Diversity

- Review potential equality and diversity implications of additional costs associated with the programme as well as highlight this in course documentation / student handbooks. [Paragraph 3.1.8]

Supporting Students in their Learning: *Postgraduate Taught (PGT)* support

- Other School, College or University-wide events include PGT students from across subjects and that the Subject consider including PGTs in staff events. [Paragraph 3.3.8]

Supporting Students in their Learning: PGT recruitment

- Consult with *External Relations* in relation as to how PGT recruitment could be enhanced

Enhancement in Learning and Teaching: Support for Early Career Staff

- Consider introducing a formal mechanism for *peer observation*. [Paragraph 4.3.9]

Glossary

Code of Assessment

The University's Code of Assessment is designed to provide a fair and rational means of assessing students' performance. It provides instructions to staff on how assessment should be designed and carried out. It sets out verbal descriptions of each of the eight grades from A to H. Students' work is judged against these descriptions in terms of how well they have met the stated intended learning outcomes of the course or other assessed component and the corresponding grade is awarded.

External Relations

The External Relations Directorate is part of University Services bringing together the existing teams from within the Marketing, Recruitment & International Office with the Development & Alumni Office and the Centre for Open Studies, now Short Courses.

Graduate Attributes

Graduate attributes are the skills, knowledge and qualities or attitudes developed by individuals through their programme of study that they will use to contribute effectively in work or other aspects of society in the future.

Graduate Teaching Assistant or GTAs

Graduate Teaching Assistants, Tutors and Laboratory Demonstrators are students, usually research students, who assist with teaching in the form of tutorials, labs and other activities that are part of undergraduate programmes in the subject/school. They are paid an hourly rate by the University.

Intended Learning Outcomes or ILOs

Intended Learning Outcomes or ILOs describe what all students should be able to do or demonstrate, in terms of particular knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes when they successfully complete the course or programme that the ILOs relate to.

Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service (LEADS)

LEADS is a University Service whose role is to 'help implement and develop the University's Learning and Teaching strategy, identify, assess and disseminate new developments and good practice which serve to enhance the student learning experience, and will work with colleagues throughout the University to bring about change'.

Moodle

Moodle is the University's supported Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

National Student Survey (NSS)

The NSS is a national initiative that has been conducted annually since 2005. The survey asks students in their final year of a programme to provide feedback on their student learning experience. There are 22 questions in all, this can be found at: http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/

Outreach

Providing services to populations who might not otherwise have access to those services.

Peer Observation

Colleagues observe fellow peers in order to identify different types of activity and provide feedback and support as necessary.

Periodic Subject Review or PSR

The University has a six yearly cycle of review of the Subjects/Schools within it. The PSR is one of the main ways by which the University assures itself of the quality of the provision delivered by Subjects/Schools.

Postgraduate Taught or PGT

Postgraduate Taught refers to taught programmes at postgraduate level, usually Masters.

Self Evaluation Report (SER)

A Self Evaluation Report is a document prepared by the Subject(s)/School in advance of a PSR Review. Its purpose is to provide the Review Panel with an insight into the Subject(s)/School's view of itself, its strengths and areas it would wish to develop. It is normally prepared by the Head of School in conjunction with other staff but students should also be offered the opportunity to comment on whether or not it reflects the Subject(s)/School they know.

Staff:Student Liaison Committee or SSLCs

Staff:Student Liaison Committees are Subject/School committees which provide a formal opportunity for Student Representatives to discuss matters with, and give feedback to their subject area.

Study abroad

Study abroad is a term that is often used to refer to several programmes that offer opportunities for students to study in a European University, or one further afield, for a term, semester or year as part of their undergraduate degree programme. (The University's "Study Abroad Programme" is specifically for designed for visiting students who elect to come to the University of Glasgow.)

Widening Participation

The objective of widening participation is to develop, implement, co-ordinate and monitor initiatives which further: the increased recruitment of students to Higher Education from those areas and groups where there is low participation; the provision of educational support for all students once they have entered the University in order to improve student retention and to facilitate the successful completion of students' programmes of study; and the flexible provision of learning opportunities. More information can be found at the Widening Participation at http://www.gla.ac.uk/wideningparticipation/.