University of Glasgow

Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

Review of School of Education: 27 and 28 February 2012

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the School of Education. *Periodic Subject Review* 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:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_239519_en.pdf

Further information about the PSR process can be found at:

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

Italicised words are explained in a glossary below.

Conclusions

The Review Panel concluded that the School of Education's provision was of a high quality overall. Since the last review in 2007, the School has had to deal with a huge transformation of education teaching driven by the external environment and internal realignment of the University impacting on student and staffing numbers, and has dealt with these changes very effectively. Evidence was found of a strong partnership with local schools and professional and statutory bodies and felt assured that the School had positioned itself well to deal with further changes.

The students who met with the Panel were articulate and their satisfaction with the quality of their educational experience and with the standard of programmes and courses offered by the School was evident. The School had emerged from the difficult times as an integrated team of staff, fully committed to the provision of high quality research-informed programmes and courses and to the expansion of international recruitment.

The Panel was particularly impressed by the innovative and creative ways with which the School used *Moodle* and there was clear evidence that engagement in virtual learning had enhanced the learning process for students. However the Panel was aware that a number of innovative practices were taking place in the School which they had not demonstrated in either the *Self Evaluation Report (SER)* or during the Review.

Key Strengths (Commendations) [1]

1. Student Support

- One of the School's strengths was the strong relationship it had with its students and the School was commended for this. *[Paragraph 6.1]*

- The *Modern Educational Thought* course (designed to support international students who might not be accustomed to expressing their own views which also included excellent *Moodle* material). The School is encouraged to consider rolling this out across the College/University as an example of good practice. *[Paragraph 4.4.13]*

2. Assessment

- The practice of linking *Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)* closely to assessment, in particular the development by BEd year one staff in 2010 of 'exemplified criteria', an extended version of the 'success criteria', as described in the SER. *[Paragraph 4.2.1]*

3. Learning and Teaching Resources

- Appointment of a Senior Associate Tutor (who encourages tutors to attend lectures) and the School is encouraged, through the Senior Associate Tutor, to consider establishing a mentoring process similar to that in existence for *Probationary* staff. *[Paragraph 4.8.13]*

4. Quality Assurance/Enhancement

- The high level of positive feedback from its *External Examiners*. *[Paragraph 5.3]*

Areas to be improved or enhanced

1. Curriculum Design, Development and Content

- The lack of training in quantitative research methods to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Meet with the *student representatives* to demonstrate how seriously the School views the situation. [*Paragraph 4.4.6*]

- Subject to external influences on curriculum design, as part of the forthcoming review of the BEd programme, ensure that the need of the students for more exposure to the practical requirements of teaching is taken into consideration. [*Paragraph 4.4.3*]

- Address the recommendation outlined in the 2007 *Departmental Review of Programmes Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DPTLA)* report by reviewing its *postgraduate* portfolio to assess the viability of those courses with fewer than the University guideline of fifteen students. [*Paragraph 4.5.2*]

2. Student Support

- Give consideration as to how staff resource could be deployed to maintain and enhance the quality of student support, whilst safeguarding staff wellbeing through a balanced

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

and achievable workload.   Seriously consider investing in additional administrative support.   *[Paragraph 4.8.3]*

- Review procedures in relation to placements with a view to providing more notice to students and support teachers and, where possible, to take cognisance of the students' personal circumstances. [*Paragraph 4.4.9*]

3. Feedback

- Review assessment processes to ensure that feedback is provided to the students in a consistent manner and within the University's policy of a three week turnaround time. [*Paragraph 4.3.6*]

4. Learning and Teaching Resources

- Outstanding maintenance issues across the School to be undertaken as a priority with particular emphasis on the gymnasium which currently suffers from a leaking roof and associated problems with mould. *[Paragraph 4.8.13]*

5. Quality Assurance/Enhancement

- Develop an overview of programmes for the School's web pages, outlining briefly what each programme provides and who it is aimed at. *[Paragraph 4.6.2]*

- Introduce a standard template for the preparation of its programme and course handbooks (see central guidance on the Senate Office website (http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/progdesignapproval/centralguidanceonstudenthandbooks/). [*Paragraph 4.8.1*]

- Use the University guidance on double marking to inform standard practice across all its programmes. *[Paragraph 4.3.3]*

- The *College Learning and Teaching Committee* reviews the quality and consistency of the *Annual Monitoring Reports* with a view to improving the quality of the data and ensures consistency across all programmes. The Annual Monitoring Report for BEd Honours (2010-11) is cited as an example of good practice. To assist with consistency the School should adopt the University-wide documentation outlined in the Senate Office website at
  http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/annualmonitoring/ *[Paragraph 5.6]*

Glossary of terms/acronyms used

Annual Monitoring (of courses)
Annual Monitoring is a process undertaken at the end of each session by Course or Programme Leaders designed to encourage reflection on the operation of course and programmes – what went right, what could be improved, what students did and didn't like etc. – with a view to enhancing the student experience next year. The work done by the course or programme leaders is followed by a full reporting process through Schools and Colleges to Senate, with responses being made, as appropriate, at each level. The reporting procedure is designed to ensure that issues arising from monitoring are properly considered and responded to, and that enhancements and the sharing of good practice are promoted. Annual monitoring reports are

reviewed by Periodic Subject Review Panels as part of the documentation provided by the Subject(s)/School.

Review of Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DPLA)
Following the restructuring of the University in Session 2009-10 and the translation of departments and faculties to Schools and Colleges, the University's institution-led Internal Subject Review process, DPTLA, was re-named Periodic Subject Review (PSR). The review process remains largely the same but takes a subject-based approach, combining closely related subjects where it is feasible and in line with the new School and College structure.

External Examiners
External Examiners are appointed by the University Court on the recommendation of Senate based on advice from the relevant School. The role of External Examiner is a very important part of quality enhancement and assurance to maintain academic standards at the appropriate level and to ensure that student performance is properly judged.

Intended Learning Outcomes (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 and Teaching Committee
Each College has a Learning & Teaching Committee to discuss, advise and make recommendations to College on all matters relating to teaching across the College, including educational policy, strategy and resource issues in relation to the development and enhancement of Learning and Teaching activities. It is chaired by the Dean of Learning & Teaching.

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

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

Probationary Staff
Lecturers/Teachers, on appointment are required to serve a period of probation to ensure that a new lecturer/teacher has an opportunity of familiarising him or herself with the academic environment; it also provides the University with an opportunity of ensuring that the lecturer/teacher is capable of undertaking the work for which he or she has been employed.

Self Evaluation Report
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.

Student Representation
Student Representation involves the election by groups of students of one or more of their number to represent their views and opinions in meetings at school, college or University level. There are many activities and where the input of student representatives provides valuable feedback to the University on the quality of the student experience.