

Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

Review of School of Law: 1 and 2 March 2012

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the School of Law. *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_239522_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 School was commended on the overall scope and quality of its provision. Despite the number of recommendations, the Review Panel would stress that the School of Law has many commendable attributes and an impressive record, particularly in the high quality of their students and results which were consistently impressive. The School's *Study Abroad programme* was particularly noteworthy and the School should be congratulated for this. The Quality Assurance standards initiatives were also impressive. In order to sustain and improve on the School's successes, it is imperative that the School establishes a strong and innovative strategic plan to address current issues and to ensure that the aims of the strategic plan reflect those of the University's. The College of Social Sciences is urged to support the School in its endeavours to maintain and develop its reputation and status within the global community.

Key Strengths (Commendations)¹

1. Students

- Its success in the high calibre of student. [*paragraph 3.5.1*]

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

2. Curriculum Design, Development and Content

- Positive and strong *study overseas programme*. The Panel was most impressed with the high uptake of students for this experience and with the large number of partner institutions and considered that there are certainly elements of the programme that could be shared with other Schools as Examples of Good Practice. [paragraph 3.7.1]
- Investment that the School of Law has made in a number of cases including the study abroad programme and excellent links with the profession. [paragraph 5]
- On its development of LLM courses which had been excellent for the internationalisation strategy. Further developments such as a programme for North American students were planned. [paragraph 3.4.1]

3. Learning and Teaching Resources

- The School's library and excellent range of provision. [paragraph 3.3.10]

4. Quality Assurance/Enhancement

- *Aims* of the School which were innovative, interdisciplinary, research-led and internationally relevant. [paragraph 3.1]
 - Many of its procedures for enhancing and maintaining quality assurance. There was good evidence of appropriately rigorous procedures for course design, course evaluation with a number of highly satisfactory examination outcomes. [paragraph 4]
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Areas to be improved or enhanced

1. Student Support

- Ensure students are made aware of any pre-requisites or grades which would affect their eligibility or choice of Honours options at varying points during their years of study. [paragraph 3.3.6]
- Ensure that all staff are made aware of the importance of the role of adviser and that procedures are developed to ensure the advising system is robust and pro-active including the requirements that *Advisers of Study* should meet with their advisees at least once per academic session [paragraph 3.6.1]
- In cooperation with the *Learning and Teaching Centre*, the School should develop a systematic structure to address the issue of communication and, simultaneously, to review the provision of feedback to students, including providing more detailed information on what feedback entailed. [paragraph 3.3.5]
- In conjunction with the Learning and Teaching Centre and Careers Service, explore ways in which *Graduate Attributes* could be developed further for those students who did not intend to pursue a career in law. [paragraph 3.4.2]

2. Assessment

- Resolve the problem pertaining to the variability of marking by staff and ensure that the marking scheme is fully implemented. [paragraph 3.3.2]

- Review its current provision at Levels 3 and 4 to identify opportunities to incorporate additional oral assessments. [paragraph 3.4.3]

3. Learning and Teaching Resources

- In order to address the ongoing problem of staff shortages due to leave of absence and academic staff turnover, the College and School review the current level of staffing and invest accordingly. [paragraph 3.8.4]
- College of Social Sciences should consult with the School of Law regarding the resourcing of the establishment of a law clinic. [paragraph 3.4.4]
- Consideration is given to resolving the issues of room size and technological limitations experienced by students and staff on the DLP course. [paragraph 3.8.5]
- College of Social Sciences provide resources to enable the School of Law to undertake a project to develop a practical and comprehensive on-line overseas grade conversion table. [paragraph 3.7.1]

4. Recruitment

- *Recruitment and International Office (RIO)* should review the language entry requirements for overseas students to the School of Law and that the School and the *English and Foreign Language Unit (EFL)* should review the language support for overseas students. [paragraph 3.3.9]
- College of Social Sciences provide resources to enable the School of Law to undertake an intensive marketing and advertising exercise for postgraduate study. [paragraph 3.5.2]
- Devolve responsibility for some of its recruitment procedures to RIO. [paragraph 3.5.1]

5. Quality Assurance/Enhancement

- As a matter of priority, revise the current strategic plan, including the formulation of a *Learning and Teaching Strategy*, in order to identify a more clearly defined and focussed way forward for the School of Law and to further meet the aims of the University's Strategic Plan [paragraph 2]
 - As a matter of priority, the School develops a Learning and Teaching Strategy to address the issues of training and the development of the role of *Graduate Training Assistants (GTAs)* within the School. [paragraph 3.8.1]
 - Implement appropriate procedures to ensure that communication with the School's *external examiners* is improved. [paragraph 3.8.3]
 - Implement policy to ensure there is more consistency in the provision of information in the *Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)*. [paragraph 3.2.1]
 - Head of School clarifies the role of the Head of Administration to ensure that the time for the supervision of administrative processes is adequate. [paragraph 3.8.4]
 - The University review the *Performance & Development Review (PDR) policy* to consider whether procedures should be implemented to ensure that all staff members, including probationers, undergo an annual PDR. [paragraph 3.8.2]
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Glossary of terms/acronyms used

Advisers of Studies

Advisers of Studies play an important role in the support of students in respect of academic matters and, where necessary, help with any social or personal issues.

Aims

Programme or course aims describe what the University/School aims to provide to students through the delivery of the programme or course overall.

English and Foreign Language Unit (EFL)

The English and Foreign Language Unit support students and staff whose first language is not English.

External Examiner

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.

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 Assistants 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 and Teaching Centre

The Learning and Teaching Centre 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”.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The University’s Learning and Teaching Strategy is central to the maintenance and enhancement of the University’s intellectually stimulating learning environment to deliver an excellent student experience. A particular strength of the Strategy is the extent to which it has evolved through consultation and discussion with the staff and students of the University.

Performance and Development Review or P&DR (staff)

Performance and Development Review is a scheme that provides all University employees with opportunity to discuss important information about their job, to give and receive constructive information and feedback, and establish any relevant learning and development needs. It also provides a mechanism through which individual job responsibilities and contributions can be linked to school/college strategic objectives.

Recruitment and International Office (RIO)

The Recruitment and International Office (RIO) provides applicants, parents and teachers with a single point of contact for information and advice on the range of programmes available at the University of Glasgow. The Service also develops, implements, co-ordinates and monitors widening participation initiatives within the University and with other partners. The Recruitment and International Office (RIO) is situated in the Fraser Building.

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 designed for visiting students who elect to come to the University of Glasgow.)