

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

14 week response report

PPR of: School of GeoSciences

Date of review: 20 & 21 March 2019

Date of 14 week response: 9 August 2019

Date of year on response: 1 May 2020

The School is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action.

If any recommendation has been fully addressed please record the action taken and date completed. Any barriers to progress should be highlighted on this report.

Recommendation no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	The review team strongly recommends that the planned model for Advisors is implemented and that Advisors meet students twice per year, and be available as needed for pastoral support.	Sept 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be implemented from September 2019. Students will meet their Advisor twice in the first year (at the start and to prepare for the Confirmation Panel) and at least once in year 2 and 3 to prepare for the annual reviews. Advisors will also reach out half-way through year 2 and 3 to ask how things are going and offer an optional meeting should the student wish to have one. 	
2	The review team recommends that the first year confirmation process is used as the basis for the first year annual review, and subsequent reviews should take place annually.	Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will streamline the confirmation and annual review process in Year 1, providing better guidance and avoiding duplication where possible. However, the two activities have slightly different objectives and there are potential conflicts in the best timing for both activities (confirmation between month 6 and 9; annual review between month 9 and 12). This will require some careful thought over the coming year and will be implemented in AY 2020/2021. 	
3	The review team recommends a system of oversight to ensure the minimum threshold of supervisory meetings is met, as stated in the University's Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students.	Sept 2020 Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of practice requires 2 meetings per 3-month period, and the University-wide annual review form already asks whether there have been supervisor meetings twice per semester. We will request that the annual review form is harmonised to reflect the Code of Practice We will also add this requirement to a template of topics for the Advisor to discuss during meetings with the student and during annual reviews. 	

4	The review team recommends that a workload allocation model is implemented that reflects the work of co-supervision.	Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed by SPARC (Social Policy & Resource Committee) in November 2018 that Advisors would get a tariff when the new workload model is implemented in AY19/20. A tariff of 5-7 hours per year per student was discussed but has not been finalised yet. 	
5	The review team recommends that the School identifies appropriate space for informal/social discussions, including coffee/tea facilities on each of their sites.	Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each site has a coffee room with coffee and tea facilities, which are used to different degrees by PGR students – we will continue to encourage their use of this space, e.g. during welcome week. More broadly, the School has been investigating options regarding reallocation of space, and this recommendation will be discussed at the School’s SPARC management committee meeting. However, there are considerable issues regarding lack of space across the School (especially within Grant and the Crew buildings), and any significant action would require a radical review of how space is used, and a major investment in capital, which may be difficult to secure. We will continue to investigate all possibilities and make the most of any available opportunities. 	
6	The review team recommends that the School ensures that Course Organisers (CO) adopt best practice consistently in inducting, training, and supporting tutors and demonstrators (T&D)	Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our T&D training has received good feedback, but we acknowledge that at course level there is variability in practice. We will review and expand the guidance given to Course Organisers to help with training and supporting their tutors and demonstrators We will ask CO’s to hold briefing sessions with their T&D’s halfway through semester and again at the end of semester to ensure they are supported and any gaps in knowledge/ experience identified and addressed. The new Academic Head for T&D will hold twice-yearly feedback events with all T&D’s to gather their feedback and input on what we could do to further support them, and ensure any issues around training. Induction or support are resolved. Student Services Projects team will be piloting a regular newsletter for PGR students involved in Tutoring and Demonstrating. This will contain information on various opportunities related to training and personal development, and we will use this as a means to regularly 	

			showcase and signpost the Edinburgh Teaching Award scheme, along with other training and CPD opportunities.	
7	The review team recommends that the School resources additional supports for the anticipated increase in international student numbers.	<p>Oct 2019</p> <p>Oct 2019</p> <p>Nov 2019</p> <p>Jan 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before requesting additional resource, we will need to ensure we are making efficient use of existing resources, identify any specific additional support required and ascertain whether the numbers support a business case for more resource. • We will improve sign-posting to student support outside the School, in collaboration with IAD and English Language Communication • We will assess and monitor trends in increases in international student intake • We will use focus groups to understand awareness and uptake of available support, including study skills, academic support and socialising opportunities • We will then work with GCRF (Global Challenge Research Fund) team to explore what can be offered and whether we need to make request for additional resource to SPARC. • We will also work with the Students' Association to explore the merits of introducing a School buddy system in Sept 2020, as well as signposting other support initiatives by the Students' Association to our students (Global Buddies and Tandem Language cafes) 	
8	The review team recommends that the School ensures that students are aware that clear structures exist for elected student reps to feed into School level meetings, including the Equality and Diversity Committee.	<p>Jan 2021</p> <p>March 2021</p> <p>June 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop and implement a policy for this which will include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Providing an overview of committees with PGR representation (or link to suitable webpage) on the PGR LEARN student hub , with descriptions of the roles ○ Ensuring committee names accurately represent the purpose, remit and membership of the committee ○ Implementing a transparent application process for appointing student representatives 	
9	The review team encourages any planned activity to streamline and edit the website content, and recommends that there is a strategic review of the website to include scope for self-editable research	Jan 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will update a review of PGR-specific web pages carried out a year ago and make a proposal for the required changes and resources needed to undertake this 	

	student profiles, an overview of current activities, opportunities, and funding across the School.	Sept 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our School's IT support is working on system to allow students to create and edit their own website • We are unable to make any major changes to website infrastructure for PGR alone, as this is a planned School-wide project for the next few years and will require dedicated, School funded resource 	
10	The review team recommends that the Service Excellence Programme prioritise required changes to the EUCLID system to ease administrative burden on managing annual reviews.	uncertain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have strongly indicated to the Service Excellence Programme to prioritise relevant changes to EUCLID and know that other Schools have done the same. We have not been given any information on timelines for the improvements. <p>Response from Service Excellence Programme: this recommendation is not part of the scope of the Student Administration and Support programme within SEP.</p>	