The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review 2018/19

Postgraduate Programme Review (PPR) of GeoSciences (20 and 21 March 2019)

Final report

Section A- Introduction

Range of provision considered by the review

Current Programme	Programme Code	Type (UG/ PGT/PGR)	No of Students 2018/9
Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences (Environmental Sustainability) (Joint with Macquarie - UoE Non Lead) (PhD) - 3 Years (Full-time)	PRPHDAESES2F	PGR	0
Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences (MPhil)	PRMPHECORM1F	PGR	
Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences (MPhil)	PRMPHECORM1P	PGR	
Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences (PhD)	PRPHDECORM1F	PGR	110
Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences (PhD) (Part-time)	PRPHDECORM1P	PGR	9
Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences (PhD) with Aarhus University	PRPHDATENS1F	PGR	2
Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences (PhD) with McGill University	PRPHDATENS2F	PGR	1
Geography (MPhil) (Full-time)	PRMPHGEOPY1F	PGR	
Geography (MPhil) (Part-time)	PRMPHGEOPY1P	PGR	
Geography (PhD) (Full-time)	PRPHDGEOPY1F	PGR	35
Geography (PhD) (Part-time) - 6 Years	PRPHDGEOPY1P	PGR	5
Geology and Geophysics (MPhil) (Full-time)	PRMPHGEOGE1F	PGR	3
Geology and Geophysics (MPhil) (Part-time) - 4 Years	PRMPHGEOGE1P	PGR	
Geology and Geophysics (PhD) (Full-time)	PRPHDGEOGE1F	PGR	71
Geology and Geophysics (PhD) (Part-time)	PRPHDGEOGE1P	PGR	
GeoSciences (Individual Project) (MSc by Research) (Full-time)	PRMSCGSATS1F	PGR	11
GeoSciences (Individual Project) (MSc by Research) (Part-time)	PRMSCGSATS1P	PGR	3
Human Geography (MSc by Research) (Full-time)	PRMSCGEOPY3F	PGR	2
Human Geography (MSc by Research) (Part-time)	PRMSCGEOPY1P	PGR	
Palaeontology and Geobiology (MSc)(R) - 1 Year (Full-time)	PRMSCPALGE1F	PGR	12
Palaeontology and Geobiology (MSc)(R) - 2 Years (Part-time)	PRMSCPALGE1P	PGR	2
Programmes live but not recruiting			
MSc by Research GeoSciences (Individual Project)	PRMSCGEOIP1F	PGR	

The PPR of GeoSciences consisted of:

- the University's remit for internal review (listed in Appendix 1);
- the reflective report and additional material provided in advance of the review;
- the visit by the review team including consideration of further material (listed in Appendix 2);
- the final report produced by the review team;
- action by the School and others to whom recommendations were remitted following the review;
- the subject specific remit for the review:
  1) pastoral care, student welfare and communication (Pastoral care and student welfare - it has become apparent in recent years (e.g. through PRES) that the level of pastoral care provided by supervisors and advisors in the School is variable, and that in several serious cases students did not know where to turn for advice or support. Communication - despite significant improvements in recent years we are still struggling to communicate basic information to both students and supervisors);
  2) research culture, and the impact of this culture on the student experience. PRES and recent focus groups revealed that several students are disappointed in the research culture in the school. This includes perceptions of their role within the academic community, and anxiety caused arising from the perceived expectations from supervisors.

Membership of the review team

Convener	Dr Michael Seery, Reader in Chemistry Education
External Member	Professor Cheryl McEwan, Department of Geography Durham University
External Member	Dr John Howe, Senior Lecturer in Marine Geology, Scottish Marine Institute, Oban
Internal Member	Dr Emma Hunter, Senior Lecturer African History, School of History, Classics and Archaeology
Student Member	Ms Alice Shan, Moray House School of Education
Review Team Administrator	Ms Ailsa Taylor, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services

Situation of School within its College

The School of GeoSciences is situated within the College of Science and Engineering.

Physical location and summary of facilities

The School of GeoSciences is located across three sites. The Institute of Geography is located on Drummond Street in the central area. The Grant Institute and Crew Building are based on the King's Buildings Campus.

Date of previous review

14 and 15 May 2013.

Reflective report

The reflective report was prepared by Dr Marc Metzger (Director of PGR) Mrs Katy Cameron (PGR Team Leader) and Ms Susan Orr (Head of Student Services). Students were consulted during a series of focus groups in 2018 to suggest and discuss remit items, which were discussed further in the PGR Staff Student Liaison Committee.

Section B - main report

1. **Strategic overview**

   1.1 The School of GeoSciences at the University of Edinburgh is the largest grouping of geoscientists in the UK, with over 120 academics, 100 researchers and 250 research students. A distinguishing and possibly unique feature of the School is the combination of breadth, relevance and strength of its research. The School's research embraces issues relating to equality and vulnerability, development and sustainability, climate and environmental change, energy, food and water security, mitigation of anthropogenic environmental change, natural resources, waste management and natural disasters.

   1.2 All academics, research staff and postgraduate research students are affiliated with one of the School's three research institutes: Global Change (GC), Earth and Planetary Science (EPS); and Geography and the Lived Environment (GLE). The research institutes house wide-ranging research and teaching facilities and provide staff and research students with identity, links with national and international learned societies, and a base from which to develop cross-disciplinary research.

   1.3 The School offers three PhD programmes with associated MPhil programmes by the same names: Geology and Geophysics, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, Human Geography and Environmental Sciences. In addition, there are three MSc programmes that are offered by the School: GeoSciences Individual Project, Paleontology and GeoBiology and Human Geography. Postgraduate research (PGR) student numbers have been fairly stable in recent years (there are currently 272 PGR students) but are considerably higher than a decade ago when the PGR intake was around 40 students per year. This reflects the overall growth of the School.

   1.4 The School continues to be successful in attracting a very diverse range of external sources of funding towards postgraduate research (PGR) studentships, with supervisors proactively seeking out collaborative projects with Associated Institutes such as Scotland's Rural College, British Geological Survey, National Library of Scotland and Forest Research, as well as industrial partners.

   1.5 The review team heard that growth in PGR recruitment in the School is limited by three principal challenges: funders are increasingly expecting match-funding of PhD studentships, and the School's financial situation limits PGR ability to leverage these funds; PGR is at maximum capacity for desk space; and several academics are overcommitted and unable to supervise additional students.

   1.6 The School has recently committed to support nine international studentships associated with the recently funded Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF) hubs. The review team recognise that this is likely to bring resource challenges for the PGR staff. The review team **recommends** that the School resources additional support for the anticipated increase in international student numbers.

   1.7 PGR students in the School are funded from a wide range of sources. There is competitive funding, partnerships with various international government programmes, students are funded through research grants, third-party and private-sector contributions and a few students are self-funded. Funding issues have been raised by students in relation to the equity of student experience, for example when it comes to additional costs. The perception of unevenness does cause some tension amongst students, and the School are actively exploring ways to equalise the student experience wherever possible. The review team **suggests** that

the School seeks to ensure, where possible, the equity of student experience with regards to considerations such as the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), and the length of internal scholarships.

1.8   Many PGR students in the School are members of a research group, but the review team heard from PGR staff that this was not uniform, and some PGR students did not belong to a research group at all. This could be detrimental for the student, as belonging to a research group provides excellent opportunities for development of lateral thinking and transferable skills, and provides a sense of belonging. The review team **suggests** the School considers aligning all incoming students to a research group. It is recognised that the students will be free to join other research groups as they wish. In addition, research groups could report annually on work to incorporate research students into the activities of the group.

1.9   A recent structural re-organisation, for example with the appointment of a Head of Student Services which is an overall management role, and a revised PGR Team Leader role has brought positive benefits. A new part-time PGR administrator has just been appointed, who will be based in King's Buildings. The review team heard that the current PGR team composition is stable, but the PGR staff have no additional capacity to do any strategic work. The PGR Director is now on the School Planning and Resources Committee (SPARC), which has improved the integration of postgraduate research provision into the School. Postgraduate research provision is more integrated into the School than it was at the time of the previous review, and this is **commended** by the review team.

1.10   In recent years there have been attempts to improve the School PGR webpages, but it is recognised by the PGR team that there are still lots of improvements that could be made. The School has recently appointed a new Head of Marketing, Recruitment and Communication who will concentrate on branding and the taught programme website pages. A full review of the website (including student pages) is planned within the next six months by the Director of Professional Services but is dependent on additional resources being allocated. 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 student profiles, an overview of current activities, opportunities, and funding across the School.

2.   Enhancing the student experience

2.1 Supporting students in their learning

2.1.1   The supervisors are the primary source of PGR student support and advice. Each student has a minimum of two supervisors from the School or an associated institution. In the 2017 Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 93% of students responded that their supervisors had the skills and subject knowledge to support their research. While the general 2017 PRES results are positive, and there are improvements from the 2015 PRES results, there are concerning comments in the open text responses in relation to supervision.

2.1.2   The Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students sets out minimum standards for supervisory meetings. Students are asked to maintain contact with their supervisor as required and at least twice in every three month period. However, some students described their supervisory contact as minimal, and in one case a final year student had only met with her supervisor on average about once every three months, over the course of her studies. 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. At the start of the programme, the

student and supervisory team should agree how often meetings will be held and the purpose of meetings. Students could initiate meetings, but supervisors needed to ensure that the minimum contact requirements were met.

2.1.3 A co-supervision model is occasionally chosen in the School when it is clear the student's project involves inter-disciplinary research. If the student has co-supervisors, both will play a major role in supervising the research project. However, the review team heard that there were currently issues with the workload allocation model, in that it only recognised one supervisor. There were plans to replace the software to manage workload allocation with another that was used elsewhere within the University (in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), and this was anticipated to bring major benefits. The review team **recommends** that a workload allocation model is implemented that reflects the work of co-supervision. This workload allocation model should seek to include supervision models for all supervisory teams e.g. for those that have a 50:50 split, and those Primary/Assistant Supervisor models where there is typically a 70:30 split.

2.1.4 Each student also currently has an adviser, nominated by the Supervisor. The principle role of the Advisor is to provide an independent source of advice to the student out-with the supervisory team. It has become apparent through the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and the recent PGR focus groups that the level of pastoral care provided by Advisors in the School is variable, and that in several serious cases, students did not know where to go to for advice or support. The review team strongly **recommends** that the planned revised model for Advisors is implemented and that Advisors meet students twice per year, and be available as needed for pastoral support.

2.1.5 Given that recent PGR focus groups have suggested that some students do not know where to go to for advice and support, and students who met with the review team suggested they felt a little overwhelmed at the start of their programme, the review team **suggests** the School could also give consideration to the establishment of a buddy system to mentor Year 1 students by e.g. Year 3 students.

2.1.6 The PGR office provides administrative support from admission until graduation. Students are encouraged to drop by the PGR office in the Grant Institute or Drummond Street with any queries that they have. Students described being well supported by PGR team during the review, and lots of good practice was identified. The administrative team introduced themselves to students at welcome week, are managing the split site well, and have worked exceptionally hard to develop the customer relations aspect. The administrative PGR office have recently re-introduced a part time grade 4 position which will be wholly based at King's Buildings and will provide a regular presence and will further increase administrative visibility and accessibility. The PGR office is **commended** by the review team for their dedication and hard work.

2.1.7 Events such as the annual PGR conference, and regular research seminars provide opportunities for cross-disciplinary networking, and there are good levels of participation. The annual PGR conference is extremely well-received by students, has a variety of keynote speakers, and includes the presence of careers service representatives which is really appreciated by the students. The review team **commends** the School for organising the annual PGR conference.

2.2 Listening to and responding to the student voice

2.2.1 The review team was impressed with the level of integration and peer support evident across the School. The School postgraduate student society, GradSchool, plays a key role in providing social support and networking opportunities for new and continuing

postgraduate students. The annual student-led GradSchool conference provides good opportunities for students to interact with students across the School. The conference is an important part of building a research culture and preparing students for the PGR conference, and the students are **commended** for organising such an event.

2.2.2 The review team met with nine students at lunchtime meetings over the course of the review. Some students had found the induction process fairly overwhelming in terms of the volume of new information, but overall they felt that the School provided a supportive environment, and that they were engaged with by PGR in a variety of formal and informal ways.

2.2.3 The PGR Student Representative Committee met at least once per semester, a PGR student sits on the PGR Policy Committee and various other School-level committees, and PGR have recently held focus groups for PGR students to discuss concerns. The School is **commended** for holding focus groups recently for PGR students. However, many of the students who met with the review team were uncertain about the structures that existed for elected student reps to feed into School level meetings. The review team **recommends** that the School ensures students are aware that clear structures exist for elected student reps to feed into School level meetings, including the Equality and Diversity Committee.

2.3 Learning and teaching

2.3.1 Students conduct their own research project and are largely responsible for formulating their own research proposal (unless they have applied for a funded project/are funded by research grants). Students are supported by their supervisors in this, which means that every student's learning experience is unique.

2.3.2 The School employs PGR students as tutors and demonstrators on undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses. The 2013 Postgraduate Programme Review recommended a review of support for tutors and demonstrators. In response to this recommendation, a major review of tutoring and demonstrating has taken place, involving PGR students and the Teaching Organisation. The review team **commends** the huge amount of work done in the School to overhaul the tutor and demonstrator system, and to make the application process much more transparent.

2.3.3 The tutors and demonstrators who met with the review team showed an obvious motivation to do a good job in teaching, and they are **commended** by the review team. The review team were very impressed by their enthusiasm.

2.4 Assessment and feedback

2.4.1 Feedback from supervisors, the first-year confirmation process, and the annual reviews committee is used to support the student throughout their degree.

2.4.2 The review team meeting heard from tutors and demonstrators during the review and they referred to good practice in teaching them how to assess and give feedback on undergraduate student work. The review team **commended** the good practice identified in parts of the School on grading students in assessment, through co-marking and feedback on feedback.

2.5 Accessibility, inclusivity and widening participation

2.5.1 The overall gender balance in the School is fairly equal, although the exact percentages vary between years. Approximately 65% of students are from the UK/EU with 35% being

from overseas. There are very few entrants that identify themselves as Black and Minority Ethnicity. Around half of the PGR entrants are above 25 years of age, with entrants to the Geography PhD programme generally older than the other programmes.

2.5.2   The review team **commends** the work of the School in promoting equality and diversity: the activity of the Equality and Diversity committee; inviting female keynote speakers to the PGR conference; and the consideration of students' requests regarding the gender balance of their supervisory/advisory team.

2.5.3   The review team **suggests** the School continue to give consideration to the gender balance in the supervisor/adviser team, where requested, and where possible.

2.6 Learning environment (physical and virtual)

2.6.1   The review team **commends** the School for the development of the LEARN (virtual learning environment) hub for PGR, rolled out recently. Information on LEARN now provided a resource library for students, and included a noticeboard about training opportunities, progression and milestones, the programme handbook, information about how to use the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), and signposting to various sources of help and support.

2.6.2   The review team heard from students that social space was very limited. The review team **recommends** that the School identifies appropriate space for informal/social discussions, including coffee/tea facilities on each of their sites.

2.6.3   The review team **suggests** the School tries to create more social space for mingling and the exchange of ideas between post-doctoral and PhD students.

2.7 Development of employability and graduate attributes

2.7.1   Available evidence on student destinations after graduation suggests that postgraduate students are highly employable, and have high levels of success in gaining employment in their field. The PGR staff try to develop the employability of their PGR students by ensuing they have attributes that transfer to a multitude of disciplines by working with the Institute of Academic Development (IAD) and Careers Service. Students are encouraged to take interruptions for placements and other work experience opportunities.

2.7.2   In 2017 the PGR staff organised a careers event in collaboration with the Careers Service where an external trainer gave a brief introduction to successful networking and eight alumni in a diverse range of jobs gave 10 minute pitches to explain how they used skills developed in the PhDs at Edinburgh to develop their careers. This careers event was extremely well received by the students who attended, and there a plans to run another in 2019.

2.7.3   Careers advice has been made available to students at induction, and students have received general advice on both academic and non-academic pathways, and this has been really appreciated by the students who met with the review team. Careers service representatives were in attendance at the recent annual PGR conference. This provision of careers advice to students is **commended** by the review team.

2.8 Supporting and developing staff

2.8.1   The Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students requires that supervisors undergo training every five years. The main vehicle for supervision training for PGR is

through the broad-scope Post-Graduate Supervisor training course run in conjunction with the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), and College briefings. External and associated staff are also encouraged to attend this training but are always paired with an experience in-house academic who leads the project supervision. The PGR team is aware that there is considerable diversity in supervision approaches and that supervisor quality assurance is limited. The review team **suggests** the School give consideration to further training for supervisors e.g. a programme of continuing professional development (CPD)/training circulated annually for supervisors.

2.8.2   The review team heard from tutors and demonstrators during the review team visit that the support they received from Course Organisers was variable. Some tutors and demonstrators had extremely strong support, and some referred to having a great deal of uncertainty about expectations of them, for example in relation to marking requirements. The review team **recommends** that the School ensures that Course Organisers adopt best practice consistently in inducting, training, and supporting tutors and demonstrators.

2.8.3   Tutors and demonstrators suggested to the review team that they had no experience of peer observation of teaching. The review team **suggests** introducing peer observation of teaching for tutors and demonstrators.

2.8.4   The School recognises that there is work to be done with Course Organisers regarding the information they provide when advertising a tutor and demonstrator position. Tutors and demonstrators who met with the review team suggested that when posts were advertised, it either seemed obvious which individual the advertisement was aimed at, or it didn't make clear the specific necessary requirements. The review team **suggests** the School provides further clarity when advertising tutoring and demonstrating roles, so that advertisements are directed at appropriate candidates.

2.8.5   The review team **suggests** that the School nominates a named contact for tutors and demonstrators, in the event that they are experiencing any problems that they feel unable to raise with a Course Organiser (e.g. a named senior adviser).

2.8.6   The review team **commends** the work of the School in promoting associate fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA); it was clear to the review team that there was a good awareness of this across the School.

3.   **Assurance and enhancement of provision**

3.1 Setting and maintaining academic standards

3.1.1.   A new online annual review process through the student records system EUCLID was introduced in 2015. The review team heard that the online system presented a number of administrative challenges. There was no administrative/editorial functionality, which meant that when a participant submitted their section but wished to make a change, this was very difficult to action, as it involved the next person in the workflow rejecting the review. This frequently caused the review to stick in the system, with no alerts sent to anyone. External supervisors frequently experienced problems in accessing the system, which caused frustration and annoyance. Students were sent messages about administrative issues that made them worry unnecessarily that something was wrong with their review. Furthermore, if the annual review was rejected at any stage and returned to the previous contributor the comments already made were removed which could make the reasons seem unclear and difficult to resolve. The review team **recommends** that the Service Excellence Programme prioritise required changes to the EUCLID system to ease administrative burden on managing annual reviews.

3.1.2 The PGR team have suggested to the review team that they are finding it extremely challenging to hit targets in relation to annual review reporting. The review team were keen to encourage the School to simplify processes in the first year so that there was no duplication of effort between the confirmation process and the annual review. 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. This is similar to the method currently used in other Schools within the University, and should make the process less administratively burdensome, and save student and staff time.

3.1.3 External examiner report are predominantly actioned at College level and examined by a College-level Board of Examiners. Corrections are thoroughly checked by the internal examiner (and external if requested) prior to final thesis approval.

3.1.4 Assessment of PhD degrees is focussed around the final PhD thesis. Upon submission of the thesis to the College, the Internal Examiner arranges the oral examination, which is almost always held on-site. For all new-to-Edinburgh internal examiners, an experienced Non-Examining Chair is also appointed who attends the viva but does not comment on the thesis content. Oral examinations are in the region of three hours in length and include intensive discussion. Failure at this stage is rare, as students are encouraged to write up for lesser degrees if they are not meeting expected standards.

3.2 Key themes and actions taken

3.2.1 In general, external examiner reports following oral examinations show that the student population is strong. Students who struggle are usually identified early. Students recruited are of a very high quality, and the exit route to MPhil or MRes after the confirmation process is considered effective for the small number of students for whom it is appropriate.

3.2.2 The confirmation process and annual reviews provide a reflective assessment of the student's progress. Unfortunately the new online annual reporting system has some major limitations and there is anecdotal evidence that annual reviews are not conducted as rigorously as they were when reporting was paper-based. The online annual review system has also resulted in considerable variability in student and supervisor feedback. In many cases students and supervisors do not follow the process outlined in handbooks and provide minimal feedback on the online form. The review team has made recommendations both for the School and for the Service Excellence Programme (see 3.1.1 and 3.1.2) which aims to have a positive impact on this process.

Section C – Review conclusions

Confidence statement

The review team found that the School of GeoSciences (PGR) has effective management of the quality of the student learning experience, academic standards, and enhancement and good practice

Key strengths and areas of positive practice for sharing more widely across the institution

No	Commendation	Section in report
1	Postgraduate research provision is more integrated into the School than it was at the time of the previous review, and this is **commended** by the review team.	1.9

2	The administrative PGR office is **commended** by the review team for their dedication and hard work.	2.1.6
3	The review team **commends** the School for organising the annual PGR conference.	2.1.7
4	The Student-led GradSchool conference is an important part of building a research culture and preparing students for the PGR conference, and the students are **commended** for organising such an event.	2.2.1
5	The School is **commended** for holding focus groups recently for PGR students	2.2.3
6	The review team **commends** the huge amount of work done in the School to overhaul the tutor and demonstrator system, and to make the application process much more transparent.	2.3.2
7	The tutors and demonstrators who met with the review team showed an obvious motivation to do a good job in teaching, and they are **commended** by the review team. The review team were very impressed by their enthusiasm.	2.3.3
8	The review team **commended** the good practice identified in parts of the School on grading students in assessment, through co-marking and feedback on feedback.	2.4.1
9	The review team **commends** the work of the School in promoting equality and diversity: the activity of the Equality and Diversity committee; inviting a female keynote speaker to the PGR conference; and the consideration of students' requests regarding the gender balance of their supervisory/advisory team.	2.5.2
10	The review team **commends** the School for the development of the LEARN (virtual learning environment) hub for PGR, rolled out recently. Information on LEARN now provided a resource library for students, and included a noticeboard about training opportunities, progression and milestones, the programme handbook, information about how to use the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), and signposting to various sources of help and support.	2.6.1
11	Careers advice has been made available to students at induction, and students have been advised generally on non-academic career pathways, and this has been really appreciated by the students who met with the review team. Careers service representatives were in attendance at the recent annual PGR conference. This provision of careers advice to students is **commended** by the review team.	2.7.3
12	The review team **commends** the work of the School in promoting associate fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA).	2.8.6

Prioritised recommendations for enhancement/areas for further development

Priority	Recommendation	Section in report	Responsibility of
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.	2.1.4	School of GeoSciences

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.	3.1.2	School of GeoSciences
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.	2.1.2	School of GeoSciences
4	The review team **recommends** that a workload allocation model is implemented that reflects the work of co-supervision.	2.1.3	School of GeoSciences
5	The review team **recommends** that the School identifies appropriate space for informal/social discussions, including coffee/tea facilities on each of their sites.	2.6.2	School of GeoSciences
6	The review team **recommends** that the School ensures that Course Organisers adopt best practice consistently in inducting, training, and supporting tutors and demonstrators.	2.8.2	School of GeoSciences
7	The review team **recommends** that the School resources additional supports for the anticipated increase in international student numbers.	1.6	School of GeoSciences
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.	2.2.3	School of GeoSciences
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 student profiles, an overview of current activities, opportunities, and funding across the School.	1.10	School of GeoSciences
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.	3.1.1	Service Excellence Programme

Suggestions for noting

No	Suggestion	Section in report
1	The review team **suggests** that the School seeks to ensure, where possible, the equity of student experience with regards to considerations such as the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), and the length of internal scholarships.	1.7
2	The review team **suggests** the School considers aligning all incoming students to a research group. In addition, research groups could report annually on work to incorporate research students into the activities of the group.	1.8

3	The review team **suggests** the School gives consideration to the establishment of a buddy system to mentor Year 1 students by e.g. Year 3 students.	2.1.5
4	The review team **suggests** the School continues to give consideration to the gender balance in the supervisor/adviser team, where requested, and where possible.	2.5.3
5	The review team **suggests** the School tries to create more social space - for mingling and the exchange of ideas between post-doctoral and PhD students.	2.6.3
6	The review team **suggests** the School give consideration to further training for supervisors e.g. a programme of CPD/training circulated annually for supervisors	2.8.1
7	The review team **suggests** introducing peer observation of teaching for tutors and demonstrators.	2.8.3
8	The review team **suggests** the School provides further clarity when advertising tutoring and demonstrating roles, so that advertisements are directed at appropriate candidates.	2.8.4
9	The review team **suggests** that the School nominates a named contact for tutors and demonstrators, in the event that they are experiencing any problems that they feel unable to raise with a Course Organiser (e.g. a named senior adviser).	2.8.5

Appendix 1 University remit

The University remit provides consistent coverage of key elements across all of the University's internal reviews (undergraduate and postgraduate).

It covers all credit bearing provision within the scope of the review, including:
- Provision delivered in collaboration with others
- Transnational education
- Work-based provision and placements
- Online and distance learning
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD)
- Provision which provides only small volumes of credit
- Joint/dual degrees
- Massive Open Online Courses MOOCs (even if non-credit bearing)

1. **Strategic overview**
   The strategic approach to:

   - The management and resourcing of learning and teaching experience
   - The forward direction and the structures in place to support this
   - Developing business cases for new programmes and courses
   - Managing and reviewing its portfolio
   - Closing courses and programmes

2. **Enhancing the student experience**
   The approach to and effectiveness of:

   - Supporting students in their learning
   - Listening to and responding to the student voice
   - Learning and teaching
   - Assessment and feedback
   - Accessibility, inclusivity and widening participation
   - Learning environment (physical and virtual)
   - Development of employability and graduate attributes
   - Supporting and developing staff

3. **Assurance and enhancement of provision**
   The approach to and effectiveness of maintaining and enhancing academic standards and quality of provision in alignment with the University Quality Framework:

   - Admissions and recruitment
   - Assessment, progression and achievement
   - Programme and course approval
   - Annual monitoring, review and reporting
   - Operation of Boards of Studies, Exam Boards, Special Circumstances Committees
   - External examining, themes and actions taken
   - Alignment with SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework) level, relevant benchmark statements, UK Quality Code
   - Accreditation and collaborative activity and relationship with professional/accrediting bodies (if applicable)

Appendix 2 Additional information considered by review team

Prior to the review visit:

- Reflective report
- School Quality Assurance Reports (2017/18, 2016/17, 2015/16)
- School Organisation Chart (PGR School Structure and PGR Staffing)
- Current School staff information - Supervisors within School
- PhD Student Handbook
- Statistical information: Entrants report, PGR progression and outcomes report, Subject area background data for first destination statistics (DHLE survey), Students studying abroad, Equality and diversity student report
- Postgraduate Research Experience (PRES) results (results, reflection and free text comments)
- PG Student Committee meeting - 10 December 2018
- Responses from external body contacts in relation to remit (comments from SRUC)
- PhD Supervisor Handbook
- Summary of PGR focus groups - spring 2018.

During the review visit:

- Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students

Appendix 3 Number of students

School of GeoSciences - entrants by entry session (2014/15-2018/19)

	2014/5	2015/6	2016/7	2017/8	2018/9
Postgraduate Research*	62	54	57	57	44
TOTAL	**62**	**54**	**57**	**57**	**44**

*Programme code(s)
PRMPHECORM1P; PRMPHGEOGE1F;
PRMPHGEOGE1P; PRMPHGEOPY1F; PRMPHGEOPY1P;
PRMSCGEOIP1F; PRMSCGEOPY1P; PRMSCGEOPY3F;
PRMSCGSATS1F; PRMSCGSATS1P; PRMSCPALGE1F;
PRMSCPALGE1P; PRPHDATENS1F; PRPHDATENS2F;
PRPHDGEOGE1F; PRPHDGEOGE1P; PRPHDGEOGE3F;
PRPHDGEOPY1F; PRPHDGEOPY1P; PRMPHECORM1F;
PRPHDAESES2F; PRPHDECORM1F; PRPHDECORM1P