

Internal Periodic Review of: Geography

Date of review: 6th-7th February 2020

Date of 14 week response: 27th October 2020

Date of year on response: 3rd June 2021

The School/Subject Area 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 felt from discussions throughout the review that the School needs to reflect on where Geography sits within the wider School strategic vision and recommends that the School prioritises this exercise to enable the vision to inform further strategic thinking about teaching and other areas of development (e.g. admissions)	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geography remains a vital part of the School's teaching plan. The adoption of a Course Delivery Framework by School – with a planned introduction in AY2022-3- will ensue a better, more sustainable resourcing for the teaching area. Admissions requirements have been adjusted for the differentiated BSc and MA programmes and marketing activities revised. The intake for the BSc has grown whilst the intake on the MA has been capped and the balance between Scottish and RUK students has improved. Beyond these changes, Covid-19, its impact on working practices and the implications for managing a large and diverse school have meant there have been limited opportunities to further developing thinking about where Geography sits within the School's strategic vision in relation to teaching and admissions. 	
2	It is recommended that the School reflect on their structures to ensure that they best facilitate and encourage enhancements to learning and teaching provision and empower and support staff to make change.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since March 2020 there have significant changes in working practices and the delivery of teaching and student support across the school. The focus has necessarily on implementing and supporting change. The major disruption due to Covid has meant there have not been opportunities for the School to reflect on structures and how these might encourage enhancements to learning and teaching provision and empower and support staff to make change. 	
3	It is recommended that the School reflects on the capacity of the Student Support Coordinator and Student Support Office and subsequently sustainably resource the team.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School included additional FTE staffing for student support in the annual plan for 2021-22. We had intended to implement this in alignment with the PTSSRR outcomes that are now delayed until 2022-23. We will proceed with the case for additional SSC 	

			support as soon as we know what the University's financial constraints will allow in terms of School devolved funds for posts.	
4	The review team recommends that the School reflect on and revise the WAM appropriately to take account of large courses, equitable distribution of workload and facilitating teaching innovation through explicit resourcing of innovation.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School has implemented new WAM software for allocating teaching in 2021-22. • In 2019-20 the School established a Course Delivery Framework Project to develop and implement principles that define the amount of work (academic and tutor/demonstrator time) that should be allocated to the delivery of a course. The principles focus on developing a more equitable distribution of resources across the school that reflects student numbers on programmes and courses, and aims to deliver consistent contact hours for students across courses and programmes. Recommendations from the project, including principle, proposed tariffs and an implementation plan have been approved by SPARC (School Planning and Resource Committee). The intention is to implement this plus revised tariffs linked to student numbers in the WAM in 2022-23. 	Completed January 2021 Ongoing
5	The review team recommends that the subject area consider effective communication on curricular reform. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how best to communicate changes to staff and students (matriculated and prospective) • how to engage the community of students in curriculum reform • how to work effectively with the School and College curriculum approval processes to ensure a robust consideration is given to such matters for future changes. 	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the review we have communicated planned curricular changes with matriculated students via Year Group meetings and through student handbooks. As part of our strategies for keeping students informed during the pandemic we are hosting 2 town hall meetings each semester for all students. • We have set up Geography programme Learn pages to improve programme specific communication and information sharing. • Since 2019 recruitment cycle all materials for prospective students have included information on planner curricular changes. Materials for 2021 and 2022 will emphasise any proposed reforms. • We continue to use SSLC as a key forum for engaging with our student community. We are considering how we can enhance student engagement and involvement, including appointing student representatives to working groups (for example on the Joint Honours working groups). A student representative also regularly attends the School Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee. In June 2021 the SSLC Year Reps are leading focus groups to review experiences of the academic year. The aim of the review is to focus on i) student journeys, ii) the student experience of curriculum reforms, iii) the experience of hybrid learning and teaching, and iv) experiment with, and reflect on, methods for listening to the student voice. 	AY 2021-22 September 2020 December 2020 AY 2021-22

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Geography Programme Teams page has enhanced communication, collaboration and sharing information and documents among staff. The page was established early in lockdown and has enhanced how we work together. It supported our adaptation to hybrid teaching and provides a shared repository for information and documents; and a transparent space for keeping all staff informed about developments with working grounds • In 2021-22 the School Board of Studies procedures have been refined, enhancements improve the consideration given to changes at both School and College level. 	<p>March 2020</p> <p>AY 2020-21</p>
6	<p>The review team recommends that the subject area's review of Tutor and Demonstrator provision remit is directed to ensure that Tutors and Demonstrators have good support in their work, are well trained, and have transparent processes for appointment and allocation of work in their roles in line with the Policy for the recruitment, support and development of tutors and demonstrators.</p> <p>To this end the review team recommends that the review considers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarifying appointment processes • ensuring job descriptions are accurate and informative • monitoring Tutor and Demonstrator experience on courses • providing a structured approach to CPD • providing clear redress procedures in the case of Tutors and Demonstrators having issues with their management 	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of changes have been implemented for 2020-21: guidance for course organisers has been revised to provide greater clarity on what can be expected from tutor and demonstrators. This guidance has been accompanied by guidance on training and a course organiser checklist. Course organisers have also been required to attend a briefing, which includes recommendations for further support for tutors and demonstrators with the move to hybrid teaching. • All tutoring and demonstrating roles are advertised to all PGR students in the school. The revised guidance for course organisers emphasises the need to follow this process and information on the appointment process is available to PGR students via the School intranet: https://www.ed.ac.uk/geosciences/intranet/student-support/postgraduate-research-support/tutoring-and-demonstrating/tutoring-demonstrating-process • Training and CPD opportunities are advertised to tutor and demonstrators, including routes to professional accreditation via Advance HE: https://www.ed.ac.uk/geosciences/intranet/student-support/postgraduate-research-support/tutoring-and-demonstrating/tutoring-demonstrating-training • Current redress procedures for tutors and demonstrators are via the PGR committee. This committee includes PGR student representative and the academic-lead for tutoring and demonstrating. We have clarified existing redress procedures and will review tutor and demonstrator representation and redress procedures at a programme level in 2021-22. 	Implemented September 2021-22
7	<p>The review team recommends that the Subject Area investigates how to work more closely with College Admissions to ensure transparency and exchange of information to facilitate understanding</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DPC and admissions advisors for Geography will meet with the Head of School, the Director of Professional Services and Head of Marketing and recruitment to discuss recruitment targets for 2021-22 and how best to influence College 	April 2020

	recruitment patterns and how to achieve goals of greater diversity and rebalancing recruitment across the School.		<p>Admissions processes to achieve goals of diversifying and rebalancing recruitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPC and admissions advisors to develop an action plan to ensure regular communication with school leadership and college admissions. • The School has established a Student Recruitment Committee, Chaired by DoUGT that includes all Degree Programme Admissions Advisors and the Marketing and Recruitment team. The committee meeting regularly (every 2 months) to improve communications and planning of recruitment. • Admissions requirements have been adjusted for the differentiated BSc and MA programmes and marketing activities revised. The intake for the BSc has grown whilst the intake on the MA has been capped- and the balance between Scottish and RUK students has improved. • The School has secured a greater allocation of Scottish and EU students in recruitment for 2021-22. 	<p>September 2020</p> <p>December 2020</p> <p>April 2021</p>
8	The review team recommends that the School works with students to better understand the challenges students face due to the social composition of the cohort and how to combat this.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rachel Hunt and Clare Barnes are leading a PTAS research project in the School on Inclusive Student Cultures that will focus in particular on how best to support students from widening participation backgrounds. The research will provide an important evidence base for directing ongoing work on building a more inclusive programme. • DPC, senior tutor, and honours and pre-honours coordinators will meet with Inclusive Student Cultures project team to identify complementary ways of working with student to understand and address the challenges arising from the social composition of the cohort. The research is ongoing and Geography will continue to engage closely with the project team. • Diversifying and decolonising curriculum: the School Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee implemented an initiative in summer 2020 to promote reflection and shift citation practices. This extends work on decolonising curricula across the programme, including the work of sharing practice led by Julie Cupples and Carol Dixon. • Staff and students are working together on a series of projects to diversify the Geography building, including introduction gender neutral bathrooms and thinking about how we are represented as an academic community by and in the building. Progress has been stalled with home-working. 	<p>January 2021-</p> <p>July 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
	The review team recommends that the review team for Joint Honours provision fully engage with	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately after the Review the School established a Joint Honours working group led by William Mackaness. The remit of 	Ongoing

9	Joint Honours students to identify the key issues of provision for Joint Honours students and work to better integrate them into the academic life of the subject area.		<p>the working group is to define principles that define a successful joint degree, before reflecting on how our existing joint honours degrees measure up to these principles. The working group includes academic representatives, professional services staff in the teaching organisation and recruitment and marketing; and student representatives. The working group will report its recommendations to the School Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee and School Planning and Resource Committee. Progress has been delayed by Covid-19 but the working group is reconvening this summer to progress work towards their remit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a programme we are interested in the opportunities that the Edinburgh Futures Institute may present for refocusing our Joint Honours provision. We are engaging actively with opportunities to shape and contribute to EFI UG programmes as part of a strategic approach to reviewing our involvement in joint honours programmes (e.g. Tim Cresswell is a critical friend to the team developing the UGT programme; Dan Swanton is contributing to new Creating Edinburgh EFI UGT course). 	
10	The review team recommends that the School considers how to incorporate an element of Teaching Professional Development into the Annual Review Process.	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review Process forms have been revised at School level to emphasise teaching contributions. Feedback on the inclusion of Teaching Professional Development will be discussed at the Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Committee, with recommendations then made to SPARC. 	January 2021
11	The review team recommends that the subject area better communicates employability and personal development opportunities to students and incorporate more external employer engagements as well as greater support for those interested in careers in academia earlier in the student lifecycle.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the move to hybrid teaching has delayed on our ambitions for 2020-21. • In partnership with the Careers Service, Geography we are piloting pilot an alumni mentoring scheme. Targeted to Year 3 students we have recruited 13 students who have been matched with recent UoE Geography alumni, who will act as mentors with a focus on professional development. The pilot started in May 2016 and runs for 6-months, with monthly mentoring meetings planned. The pilot will be reviewed in November 2021 with the ambition to extend the scheme to other UGT programmes in the School. • In partnership with the careers service and GeogSoc organised a careers week in week 7 of semester 1. We ran a series of workshops on i) internships; ii) PGT applications and iii) Geography careers with presentations from current students and recent graduates. In semester 2 we ran workshops on the future of work and normalising uncertainty about careers for final year students. 	<p>March 2021-</p> <p>AY 2020-21</p>

		2021-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have revised and updated our programme level learning outcomes. The revisions have drawn on the Geography Subject Benchmark Statements; the University's curriculum toolkit (https://www.ed.ac.uk/employability/staff/curriculum-toolkit/elements) and the careers compass (https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers/students/undergraduates/careers-compass). The programme learning outcomes help students understand that skills and experiences they have developed in each year of study, and how these progress through their undergraduate career. The learning outcomes include a section on 'personal development activities that clearly sets out expectations of what employment and personal development related activities students should be undertaking under the themes of values, engagement and reflection. The programme level learning outcomes have been shared with students in year group town hall meetings and via the programme Learn pages. They will form part of the resources that support our personal tutors from 2021-22. 	February 2021
12	The review team recommends that the School works with students to identify better ways to close the feedback loop with the wider student body.	Completed, but also ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have working with our SSLC to identify ways of closing the feedback loop, particularly with the move to hybrid teaching. • In semester 1 2020-21 piloted monthly town hall meetings for all geography students with a standing item reporting back key discussions raised at SSLC meetings. In Semester 2 we shifted the focus to year group town hall meetings to target information and improve engagement. • Working with the SLLC Year reps we are experimenting with, and reviewing how we gather, listen to, and respond to student feedback in semester 2. Drawing on good practice within and beyond the university (including SPARQs) we are trialling the use of Padlet and focus groups led by Year Reps to gather feedback and maintain an ongoing conversations with students. 	AY 2021-22 May 2021
13	The review team recommends that the School works with students to enhance peer assisted learning opportunities for Pre-Honours students (particularly second year students) to improve student engagement.	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course organisers for Year 1 and Year 2 courses have worked closely with the GeogPals leaders to design activities that support students' adjustment to hybrid learning and teaching. Course organisers and personal tutors have also been asked to promote GeogPals activities. The result was a well-targeted and timely programme of GeogPals activities, although student engagement remained a challenge, in large part because activities had to be online. • A priority for the pre-honours coordinator in Summer 2021 will be to develop an action plan to improve student engagement with peer assisted learning opportunities for 2021-22. 	AY 2020-21 June 2021

	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	<p>The final report has been shared with the student representatives on the SSLC and the School EUSA undergraduate representative.</p> <p>Key commendations and recommendations have been shared with all students during online town hall and welcome meetings. These include specific meetings for Joint Honours and pathway students.</p>
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review	<p>The last year has been a period of significant upheaval and change and it is hard to disentangle the impact of Covid-19 and the changes that have taken place as a result of the review.</p> <p>Communicating change with staff and students:</p> <p>There has been significant change and uncertainty for both staff and students over the last year. We have successfully moved the programme online, and then into a hybrid mode of delivery; we have adapted field courses developing innovative approaches that have included virtual field trips or online delivery blended with local fieldwork; and we have effective significant changes to our assessment methods and patterns (e.g. increasing coursework; moving to online and take-home examinations). These changes, and communication of changes, has been improved by reflections during the review process and build on changes we had implemented in recent years.</p> <p>In planning, making and communicating changes in teaching and assessment this year we have been able to draw on our strong collaborations with students via the SSLC. The SSLC met through April to July 2020 as the transition to hybrid delivery was being planned. The SSLC has met more regularly throughout AT 2020-21 to ensure regular opportunities for students to feedback - and for the programme to respond. The review helped us consider how we communicate changes to the entire student body, and this has helped us communicate regularly and transparently with our students at a time of considerable uncertainty and change. In particular we have used regular town hall meetings to follow up email communications and provide students a space to ask questions, raise concerns and make suggestions. We have also created programme pages in Learn to share and archive information. As a result our students have told us that they have felt well supported, and that we have communicated in a timely and transparent manner with them.</p> <p>We continue to develop how we work with our student representatives on the SSLC. We're excited to be collaborating on a review of teaching this year where we're going to trial new methods of gathering feedback and reflections via Padlet and focus groups.</p> <p>Regular programme meetings and the new Teams site has provided an effective infrastructure for managing the shift to homeworking, and planning, communicating and implementing change in teaching and assessment. The programme developed principles for hybrid teaching that set expectations and provided guidance as staff adapted their teaching, including field courses. We also established assessment guideline for take-home examinations. These principles and guidelines have been adopted and adapted by other UGT programmes in the school.</p> <p>The dedication and hard work of all the staff on the programmes, the engagement of our students, alongside these efforts to communicate change, have meant the Geography programmes made a</p>

successful transition to hybrid teaching and learning. Student feedback via SSLC, mid-semester feedback and course evaluations has been very positive. There have been a very large number of student nominations for EUSA teaching awards for staff and courses on the programme, including the Geography Small Research project which was shortlisted for outstanding course.

Employability and personal development:

This year we have taken significant steps to enhance how we communicate employability and personal development opportunities to students. In particular, the **revised programme-level learning outcomes** provide a resource for students to map and communicate their skills and experiences, and also helps to set expectations about how they will engage with, and reflect on, opportunities. **We have organised workshops with alumni and recent students focused on internships, postgraduate degrees and Geography careers. We are piloting alumni mentoring programme focusing on professional development.**

In the coming years we intend to consolidate collaborations with the careers service and GeogSoc to offer our students a range of employability and personal development opportunities. We will also work to explore opportunities for greater external employer engagement in the programme.

Tutor and demonstrating:

Some teething issues with the implementation of new processes for administering tutoring and demonstrating have been addressed this year. Alongside this new guidance and training for academic staff and tutor and demonstrators has led to a clarification of roles and expectations, training and professional development opportunities, and redress procedures. As a result there has been a more consistent experience for tutors and demonstrators, and improved support, during a difficult year.