

Internal Periodic Review of: Ecological and Environmental Sciences

Date of review: 27th-28th February

Date of 14 week response: 14 August 2023

Date of year on response:

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	<p>The review team recommends that there is more transparency between the School management and Programme teams when discussing managing admission numbers on the programme. These discussions should involve all staff involved in delivering teaching and support to the cohort. Wider conversations should consider the positive and negative impacts and consequences that a larger cohort has on School staff and resources.</p> <p>The School should consider the feasibility and risk assessments required for larger numbers of students and in particular look at the maximum threshold of the field courses and cohort embedded courses. This will futureproof the quality of the courses going forward.</p>	2023-24	<p>The School Student Recruitment Committee has an admissions advisor for EES who is part of the decision-making processes about student recruitment.</p> <p>The School is establishing new School Education Committee structures in 2023-24. There will be a new position of Deputy Director of Teaching: Student recruitment to lead on communications with programmes about student recruitment. Transparent annual cycles of business will also better provide alignment and visibility in decision-making about student numbers.</p> <p>The School is undertaking a portfolio review of taught programmes, supported by a market research consultancy starting in June 2023. The review will feed into a consultative process for renewing the School's Education Strategy, including future plans for student numbers in our portfolio of programmes.</p> <p>In 2023-24 EES will review existing field teaching and identify various scenarios for running the programmes with different student numbers. Scenarios may include double teaching of field courses and will specify additional staff resource that would be required to support any growth in student numbers.</p>	
2	<p>The review team recommends that the School review the quantity of assessments for students. A strategic review of the assessment points through all years of the programmes will look to avoid repetitive assessment or overassessment and help to manage the fixed resources available for assessments.</p>	<p>June 2023</p> <p>2023-24</p>	<p>EES will conduct an assessment mapping exercise during an away day in June 2023. The ambition is to map all assessments to programme level learning outcomes to identify repeated or over assessment.</p>	

			In 2023-24 all UGT programmes will be supported through a further mapping exercise to ensure alignment with School's taught assessment regulations and the University's feedback and assessment principles and priorities.	
3	<p>The review team recommends that there needs to be a much better formal mechanism for the student voice within the School.</p> <p>The School should look to involve more student representation on all relevant School committees and Boards in particular, teaching committees and Board of Studies.</p> <p>The review team also recommends that there should be more transparent publishing of committee minutes relevant to all students. Further, the School should be highlighting the methods by which students can give feedback whilst ensuring that any actions taken are fed-back to the students to close the feedback loop e.g. "You Said, We Did."</p> <p>The review team recognises that this recommendation follows on from Recommendations 6 & 7 from the previous 2017 review. The review team felt these recommendations were not sufficiently met in the School responses and should be reviewed and implemented.</p>	2023-24	<p>In 2023-24 we will launch revised learning and teaching committees. The School Education Committee, Undergraduate Education Committee, Postgraduate Education Committee, and Board of Studies will all have student representation from EUSA representatives.</p> <p>Degree programmes will be encouraged to include student representatives in their meetings.</p> <p>SSLCs: The School's Student Experience Team has a project reviewing and revising Student Staff Liaison Committees focusing on how student feedback is gathered and ways in which the feedback loop can be closed.</p> <p>There is a project migrating all student support information currently hosted on the School Intranet to SharePoint. Minutes of Education committees will be hosted on the new SharePoint and we will explore whether it is possible to provide student access to minutes.</p>	
4	<p>Given that the EES programme applications are moving to a selection process rather than rolling offers, the review team recommends the School uses its data to track the students that are being recruited and their level of attainment to allow for diversity of cohort.</p> <p>The School should look at gender, ethnicity, mature student status and widening access to ensure the course is in keeping with the University EDI vision.</p> <p>Furthermore, with the increasing student numbers, the School should look at what support can be provided for a greater diversity of student backgrounds.</p>	2023-24	<p>The annual Quality Report tracks and reviews student recruitment and attainment according to a range of characteristics. The DoQA will be asked to support the programme Team in reviewing this data.</p> <p>In the School Student Recruitment Committee we will share practice on diversifying student recruitment. Our PGT programmes, for example, have successfully worked with the School Marketing Team and College Recruitment and Admissions to diversify our international student cohorts. The incoming Deputy Director of Teaching: Student Recruitment will facilitate sharing practice.</p>	
5	The review team recommends that the School provides guidance to incoming Year 1 students on course choices before they arrive, building upon the Academic Fairs that run for continuing students. Providing additional information, such as a course prospectus suggesting	September 2023	Work is in progress with implementation of phase 2 of the new model of student support. The School has developed processes for pre-enrolment on courses and is participating in university-wide working groups on course enrolment.	

	recommended education paths, pre-requisites, suitability for Year 1 or 2 students and possible career projections will enable students to choose the most appropriate courses.		<p>The EES programmes have identified 4 pathways through the EES programme based on student interests: Ecological; Environmental (involving chemistry courses), Quantitative (data science); EES with Management. These pathways will curate choices of outside courses.</p> <p>Improved guidance has been provided to student experience teams to support students choosing outside courses.</p> <p>The School is sharing practices and resources from PGT programmes and Geography where early enrolment in optional courses has been in place for a number of years.</p>	
6	The review team recommends that staff should be encouraged to participate in the Postgraduate Certificate of Academic Practice. The review team felt that incoming staff should be enrolled into this course as part of their initial training when their teaching load is not as heavy.	Ongoing	<p>Staff are encouraged and supported to undertake professional development in student education. We support our staff to follow the Edinburgh Teaching Award route to professional accreditation for Fellowship of the HEA. The School also has a number of staff who mentor on the Edinburgh Teaching Award. We support staff participation via a 50 hour tariff in the Schools WAM.</p> <p>We encourage staff to pursue PGCAP. However, the time demands of the PGCAP are high (600 hours) and teaching need in programmes, alongside other commitments to research, knowledge exchange and citizenship means we cannot provide protected time to fully support participation.</p>	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	The School will aim to use current mechanisms of SSLC to update students on the outcome of the review in the coming academic year.		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review			