

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

14 week response report

Internal Periodic Review of: Economics

Date of review: 26-10-2022

Date of 14 week response: 19-05-2023

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	Recruitment: The review team recommend that the School employ ten additional academic staff members to address the current student:staff ratio which is currently below the sector-wide ratio for Economics	Ongoing	<p>College response: “There are well established processes within the College that enable Schools to prepare evidence based proposals for staffing within the standard planning rounds including provision of comparator data from within the College as well as support to provide sector comparisons on request from the Head of School or Director of Professional Services. The Head of School and Director of Professional Services share the responsibility and accountability for the preparation of the appropriate business cases and funding rationales for each staff appointment and are routinely guided and advised by the College Registrar in how best to approach planning proposals. Staffing levels within each School are carefully considered throughout the year and are based on a broad range of complex factors that extend beyond the learning and teaching provision and need to be viewed in that wider context. There are also mechanisms using the now well established College Workload Allocation Tariffs for academic staff and the College WAM Forum to enable Schools to raise broader concerns about staff workloads and, where necessary, escalate issues via the College People Committee.”</p> <p>School response: Extensive staff time and other resources were devoted to the process of hiring of Lecturers in 2022-23. Unfortunately, none of the posts were filled and so 7 further Early Career Researchers (3-year posts) were hired to address the School’s immediate teaching needs. The School is extremely thankful for the support it received from College (HR Partner, Head of HR, Head of College and Registrar) to the School for this process. However, the issue has not been successfully resolved, despite the unwavering support from College. Looking ahead, we are concerned that any restrictions on hiring resulting from the budget settlement for the next academic year will further exacerbate the issue.</p>	
2	Recruitment: The review team recommend that the timings of the economics job market are accounted	Ongoing	College response: “The University has returned to a five year planning cycle and this is able to accommodate and support a range of recruitment timelines once business cases for	

	for within the planning/recruitment policy, to ensure that the School can hire quality academics for long-term posts.		staffing appointments have been approved. The Head of School and Director of Professional Services have discussed their recruitment plans and timelines with the Head of College and this recommendation has been addressed in those discussions.” School Response: The School of Economics does understand the vagaries of the Economics Job Market. See the College Response. College has been very supportive of the School’s plans and timelines for hiring.	
3	Assessment & Feedback: The review team recommend that the School review methods of providing feedback to ensure consistency across courses and programmes	Ongoing	Programme Directors and Teaching Committees will review assessment and feedback methods during the summer (noting the panel’s suggestions) with a view to implementing changes over the subsequent academic year. As a concrete example, the School is currently piloting during the May 2023 exam diet the use of the Gradescope system for marking exam scripts. It is expected that this system will facilitate improved quantity and quality of feedback provided on student exam performance. If this pilot is successful, the School will explore using this system for further appropriate coursework and exam assessments in the 2023/2024 year.	
4	Tutor training: The review team recommend that the School develop their approach to tutor training in order to best support colleagues in their development	Ongoing	The School organised weekly tutor meetings led by the Tutor Mentor where tutors are able to discuss ongoing issues, express feedback and suggestions, and receive advice. The Tutor Mentor and the Undergraduate Teaching Committee will also review training and support provision for tutors taking account of the panel’s suggestions with the intention of implementing those changes for the next academic year.	
5	Undergraduate Programme Enhancement: The review team recommend that the School undertake a holistic programme review of learning outcomes and the mapping of assessment to outcomes; formative vs summative assessment; and synergy of assessment and learning outcomes across programmes and courses.	Ongoing	Programme Directors and Teaching Committees at all levels will undertake such a review in preparation for the programme structure changes required to meet the implementation of the Curriculum Transformation Programme.	
6	Graduate Attributes: Connected to a holistic programme enhancement review, the review team recommend that the School continue to embed graduate attributes/ employability skills in programme design and increase awareness of these attributes and skills amongst students.	Ongoing (2024-25? See next item.)	Programme Directors and Teaching Committees at all levels will explore ways to embed graduate attributes / employability skills and raise awareness of amongst students in preparation for the implementation of the Curriculum Transformation Programme reforms.	
7	Graduate Attributes: The review team recommend that the phrase ‘graduate attributes’ is reviewed by the University	Early 2024	Curriculum Transformation Project Response: “The future use, content and presentation of the University Graduate Attributes Framework is something that the Curriculum Transformation Future Skills Workstream	

	with a view to creating a term that is more meaningful to students.		<p>(https://uoesharepoint.com/sites/CurriculumTransformation/SitePages/Workstreams-Overview.aspx) will be looking at as part of its next phase of work. This is in the context of looking at how best to support the development of these skills and attributes at a programme level, across multiple courses alongside co-curricular learning and support.</p> <p>This recommendation and the Economics IPR report provide useful context and focus for this work. We expect to have a report and initial set of proposals from the Future Skills Workstream in early 2024. This fits well with the timing of the IPR 1 year report.”</p>	
8	Student Voice: The review team recommend that the School continue to develop its relationship with the Student Voice and enhances the mechanisms for communication between staff and students.	2023-24	The School will explore ways that new developments such as aspects of the new Student Support model, Student Newsletter and the Student Hub as well as academic activities to engage a broader and more diverse group of students at a deeper level.	
9	Resource: The review team recommend that the University invest in an online course enrolment system to alleviate pressure on staff resource and to improve the student experience	No time frame provided.	<p>University (Student Systems) Response:</p> <p>“Work towards the introduction of online course enrolment is underway through the Student Lifecycle Management Group. ... We are working towards this on an incremental basis starting with understanding how we structure our data and business rules (rules for how outside courses are managed). Steps taking place in semester 2 of this academic year are to update DPT’s (Degree Programme Tables). Analysis has shown many courses which are already full with students where the course is mandatory, continue to be part of many DPT’s where students have no possibility of a place. This is raising the expectations for students leading to disappointment and increased administrative load for staff as they need to manage the student and find them an alternative which can be very time consuming as the credits need to fit in a particular space within the timetable and we provide no easy way of checking this.”</p> <p>School comment on Student Systems Response: This particular recommendation has not been successfully resolved, and we have no timeline for when it will.</p>	
10	Resource: The review team recommend that the University extend the scale of the student study Hub space, given the number of students, level of demand and intensive use of the current Hub provision		<p>College response:</p> <p>“The management of estate and space allocation within the College is overseen by the Head of College and College Registrar and we understand that the Head of School has been able to achieve a successful resolution to this particular recommendation.”</p> <p>School comment on College Response: We negotiated with another School for our Student Support team to use the space adjacent to our UG student Hub (40 George Square Floor 5) and the College is allowing us to use the old EUSA shop (in 40 George Square) to house our growing numbers of PGT students (which is great, thank you) but we have around 1,000 undergraduate students and the space allocated could barely house one 10th of that number. We would need a larger UG student Hub than the one we have for successful resolution.</p>	

	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	Once the Review Panel's report is approved and published on the University (Academic Service) website, a link to the report will be placed on the Student SharePoint Hub. The Report will be discussed formally at the next available Student Staff Liaison Committee (at each level of provision).		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review			