

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

14 week response report

Internal Periodic Review of: Undergraduate Teaching in the School of Philosophy, Psychology, and Language Sciences

Date of review: 3rd and 4th of April, 2023

Date of 14 week response: 26-10-2023

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	The review team recommended introducing reflective practice as a form of assessment, to focus on skills development and to highlight the skills content of courses to students. This should be accompanied by stating the skills students would acquire through the course in the Learning Outcomes.	August, 2024	We have held discussions at School level through both School Strategy Group and the School Undergraduate Studies Committee (SUGSC) to form initial ideas. We decided that Subject Areas would be best suited to localise appropriate and impactful reflective practice. Subject Areas will seek to implement reflective practice and return to SUGSC to update course Learning Outcomes and the DRPS for the coming academic year (AY24-25). .	
2	The review team recommended that the School should undertake a review of their communications strategy, as it related to inter-staff communications, and staff to student communications'	September, 2024	The School is currently engaged in a review of existing communications. We acknowledge that some areas are performing very well (as commended by the review) and others need work. We will develop a School communications plan to implement before AY24-25. Work has already commenced on this project through a dedicated PPLS working group which will report to the School Management Committee in December, 2023.	
3	The review team recommends that the School should establish a School-wide (PPLS) Practice Sharing Forum.	May, 2024	We have discussed the form that this Practice Sharing Forum should take. (We think that a PPLS Teaching Day, which showcases excellent teaching from across the school and closely mirrors our very successful PPLS Research Day would be an appropriate forum. We plan to also use the day to foster networking and teaching connections across the School).	
4	The review team recommended the School explore alternative types of assessment and include more student choice.	April-May, 2024	As part of the Curriculum Transformation Project we are undertaking a review of the teaching portfolio at undergraduate level. We are planning to rework existing courses and introduce new courses. The School has convened a dedicated working group to guide this project. Diversification of assessment and the introduction of authentic assessments are two topics of special consideration. Within one subject area (Psychology), we have	

			recently reworked our Psychology in Action course to allow more diverse assessment and student choice.	
5	The review team recommended that the School should seek to support staff in developing alternative forms of assessment.	May, 2024	We have identified several key blockers to alternative assessment development, which we will address over the coming year. The first is a perceived lack of flexibility in the systems supporting staff to change their existing courses. We have sought to address this by simplifying the procedure for course changes and moving the system online using an electronic form. Second, we identified that staff will benefit from examples and templates for new forms of assessment, which we will generate through the PPLS teaching forum.	
6	The review team recommended that a reconsideration of the paid time allocated for marking was undertaken, taking a more realistic account of the time required to complete the task properly and to provide effective feedback.	November 2023	<p>The CAHSS Registrar has been leading on a Workload Allocation Model Audit process for the College, focussing on tariffs which are shared across the College. Schools were consulted and relevant information was gathered, with the detailed responses from across all Schools collated and shared with the WAM Forum and all CAHSS DoPS in July 2023. A further paper will be taken to CAHSS People Committee in October 2023 which further summarise process, outputs and learnings from the audit. The paper will also make particular recommendations to the People Committee around the development of guidance outlining appropriate use of assessment tariffs and how they map to academic duties of a defined minimum grade.</p> <p>The College has prioritised assessment and feedback processes across its learning and teaching workstreams in 2023-24. Over-assessment has been identified as an issue for students and staff, contributing to over-work and reduction in the quality of feedback in favour of managing the volume. Taking this into account, College views the issue of over-assessment as playing a key factor in staff concerns around the availability of time to mark student work and to provide effective, meaningful feedback. College notes that PPLS has already indicated a willingness to engage with the issue of over-assessment.</p> <p>Through the College QA forum, focused discussions with all Schools in relation to assessment and feedback will take place throughout 2023/24. Consideration of quality of feedback and the time resource involved, as well as how over-assessment can be identified and addressed, will be a recurrent feature throughout all meetings of the QA Forum during the 2023/24 academic year. Discussion and outputs from the QA Forum feeds into</p>	wider discussion around this area continuing across CAHSS throughout 2023/24

			<p>recommendations for the College Education Committee and the College Strategy and Management Committee.</p> <p>In addition, the CAHSS Head of College has set a priority for clarity and standardisation of feedback turnaround times across CAHSS. A College expectations document has been circulated and will be raised at the College's Education and Strategy & Management Committees for discussion with Schools and for approval. This includes a recognition and consideration of impact on workload and workforce planning.</p>	
7	The review team recommended that the School consider the impact of extensions on the release of marks to all students, and consider whether there was a mechanism that allowed release of marks for non-extended deadline work prior to release of marks for work that had been subject to an extension request.	May, 2024	We have commenced a trail of multiple submission boxes to separate on-time and extended submissions, which would allow us to release the marks at different times. Currently we have 3 courses trialling the system. If successful, we will implement this as standard practice across the School.	
8	The review team recommended that the School create, or name, an EDI Teaching Lead as a first contact point for student issues such as concerns about some aspects of teaching materials, or if adjustments were not being met.	September, 2023	The School has an EDI director who is available to contact with EDI concerns and a Coordinator of Adjustments, who is available to contact if adjustments are not being met. Both are now clearly labelled on the Undergraduate Student Hub.	September, 2023
9	The review team recommended that where the School recruits new teaching focused staff it should consider appointing them on open ended contracts.	December, 2023	We have decided to discuss this topic at a School Management Committee meeting during semester 1 (September-December, 2023).	
10	The review panel noted that there was variance in practice as it related to induction of Postgraduate Tutors and Demonstrators, with some being appointed after the induction period, and therefore not receiving appropriate training before starting in post. The review team recommended that all tutors undergo mandatory training prior to commencing duties.	September, 2023	We have introduced a system that ensures that training is available at the start of each semester. This new system means that incoming tutors are trained regardless of which semester they commence working.	September, 2023
11	The review team recommended that the School develop mechanisms for tutors and teaching focused staff to be regularly informed of opportunities for career development.	September, 2023	We have adopted both an immediate and a strategic approach to implementing this recommendation. In the immediate term, we have started providing information about opportunities in the all-School newsletter sent out every Friday. We have also opted to include this into the strategic planning around the School Communication Strategy, which will be implemented this academic year (see recommendation 2 above).	
12	The review team recommended that School staff prioritise training and engagement with LEARN Ultra, and ensure sufficient time is afforded for setting up courses and resources within the new system.	August-September, 2023	Through the PPLS Learning Technologists and with University support we were able to implement an integrated training package for teaching staff, including 1-to-1 consultations for difficult courses. Learn Ultra is now performing well in PPLS. The training will continue to be available for staff teaching in Semester 2.	September, 2023

	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	The IPR report and its commendations, recommendations, and suggestions is being fed directly back to students via the Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs).
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review	