

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (PPLS)

Undergraduate Provision

3-4 April 2023

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Executive summary

This report comprises the outcomes from the internal review of UG provision in the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (PPLS).

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

The report provides commendations on the School’s provision, recommendations for enhancement that the School will be asked to report progress on to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee and suggestions on how to support developments.

Key Commendations

The review team commended the School for its effective approach to innovative practice within individual courses, dedication of its academic and professional services staff, and its approach to

establishing working groups to manage strategic plans. Further commendations are included in the report.

Key recommendations

The top three recommendations identified by the review team for the School to prioritise were:

- **Reflective practice as a form of assessment:** 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.
- **Communication strategy:** The School should carry out a review of their communication strategy, both between staff and between staff and students.
- **Establishment of a School-wide Good Practice Sharing forum:** The School should seek to establish a forum in which good teaching and learning practice across the three constituent subject areas could be shared.

Commendations, recommendations and suggestions

Commendations

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

No	Commendation	Section in report
1	The review team noted that there were examples of excellent teaching practice within the subject areas, and commended these examples of innovative practice within individual courses.	1.1
2	The review team commended the community between academic staff.	1.1
3	The review team commended the establishment of themed working groups to manage the Schools strategic plans.	2.1
4	The review team commended the School for the support it provided Postgraduate Tutors in terms of marking.	2.2
5	The review team commended the School for its mechanisms which provided staff with feedback on feedback being provided to students as part of the moderation procedures.	2.2
6	The review team commended facilitation of paired peer Course Organisers discussions on marking and moderation in relation to Quality Assurance mechanisms.	2.2
7	The review team commended the Student Support Office and the Professional Services staff within the School.	2.3
8	The review team commended the creation of the PPLS Hub.	2.3
9	The review team commended the level of preparation and the running of the Psychology SSLC.	2.4
10	The review team commended the Skills Centre.	2.6
11	The review team commended the practice in Philosophy of paying Tutors to attend lectures that they were expected to tutor on.	2.7

Recommendations

Areas for development and enhancement – progress to be reported.

Priority	Recommendation	Section in report	Responsibility of
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.	2.1	School Management, Boards of Studies, Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS), Course Organisers
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'	1.1	School Management
3	The review team recommends that the School should establish a School-wide (PPLS) Practice Sharing Forum.	1.1	School Management

4	The review team recommended the School explore alternative types of assessment and include more student choice.	2.2	Boards of Studies, Course Organisers
5	The review team recommended that the School should seek to support staff in developing alternative forms of assessment.	2.2	Director of Undergraduate Studies, Boards of Studies
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.	2.2	College Dean of Education (CAHSS)
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.	2.2	Course Organisers, Teaching Office, School Management
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.	2.5	School Management
9	The review team recommended that where the School recruits new teaching focused staff it should consider appointing them on open ended contracts.	2.7	School Management
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.	2.7	School Management
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.	2.7	School Management
12	The review team recommended that School staff prioritise training and engagement with	2.8	School Management,

	LEARN Ultra, and ensure sufficient time is afforded for setting up courses and resources within the new system.		Course Organisers
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Suggestions

For noting – progress reporting is not required.

No	Suggestion	Section in report
1	The review team suggests that this could be achieved through regular meetings, an annual event and/or a website, and encourages the School to harness the enthusiasm of some of the staff the team met to facilitate this.	1.1
2	The review team suggests the School consider introducing a variety of assessments early in the programmes before students get a fixed idea of what assessment is.	2.2
3	In relation to experience, the review team suggested that voluntary research experience, which is already in place in Psychology, was a good way of allowing students to gain relevant experience. The School could explore whether, for equity purposes, there could be an optional credit bearing course, perhaps using the SLICC model.	2.2
4	The review team suggested that the PPLS EdTA (Edinburgh Teaching Award) cohort should be restarted and that workload be allocated to staff engaged in teaching recognition schemes.	2.7

Section A – Introduction

Scope of review

Range of provision considered by the review (see Appendix 1).

The Internal Periodic Review of the School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences (hereinafter referred to as PPLS) in 2022/23 consisted of:

- The University's remit for internal review (see Appendix 2)
- The subject specific remit items for the review:
 - Academic Community
 - Experiential Learning
- The Reflective Report and additional material provided in advance of the review
- The meeting of the review team including consideration of further material (see Appendix 3)
- The final report produced by the review team
- Action by the School and others to whom recommendations were remitted following the review

Review Team Members

Convener	Professor Heather McQueen
External Member	Professor Elizabeth Wonnacott (Oxford)
External Member	Professor Andrew Fisher (Nottingham)
Internal Member	Dr Michael Daw Dr Pauline Ferguson (Shadowing)
Student Member	Ms Claire Wu
Review Team Administrator	Mr Stuart Fitzpatrick Ms Lesley Kelly (Shadowing)

The School

The School of PPLS is one of eleven Schools within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS). PPLS is comprised of three subject areas (Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences).

Physical location and summary of facilities

PPLS is located within the University's Central Area (South Bridge – Bristo Square - George Square) and has presence within the Dugald Stewart Building, 7 George Square and 40 George Square.

Date of previous review

Linguistics and English Language (LEL) had previously undergone review in Academic Year 2016-17, Philosophy had previously undergone review in Academic Year 2018-19, Philosophy and Language Sciences had undergone a Postgraduate Programme Review in

Academic Year 2020-21. This review marked the first occasion that PPLS had been reviewed as a School, as opposed to constituent subject areas.

Reflective Report

The reflective report was prepared by Dr Steve Loughnan (Director of Undergraduate Studies), with input from senior members of School staff, Heads of Subject, the Teaching Office, Student Support Office, Communications and Marketing, and Student Representatives. The Head of School endorsed the report.

Section B – Main report

1 Strategic overview

The School of Philosophy, Psychology, and Language Sciences (PPLS) is one of the 11 Schools in the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Edinburgh. Comprised of 319 teaching staff and 74 Professional Services staff, the School typically have around 1800 undergraduate students on programmes. The School comprises three subject areas split across three buildings within the University's central area: 7 George Square (Psychology), the Dugald Stewart Building (Language Sciences (LEL), Professional Services) and 40 George Square (Philosophy). Each subject area has a Head of Subject Area, Teaching Director, and QA Director overseeing learning and teaching.

The learning and teaching budget is controlled at a School level, with smaller operational budgets being devolved to subject areas. Undergraduate teaching was the primary source of income for PPLS. Undergraduate learning and teaching was overseen by the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS) with assistance from the School Quality Assurance director and School Senior Tutor. Undergraduate Learning and Teaching was supported by the School Teaching Office and Student Support Office. Academic and professional services staff worked closely to deliver undergraduate learning and teaching.

The School asked the review team to consider two subject specific remit items:

- *Academic Community*
- *Experiential Learning*

1.1 In regards to subject specific remit item 1, academic community: the School asked the Review Team to consider the academic community in PPLS, and to provide feedback on how the School might foster and maintain a vibrant community of staff and students interested in philosophy, psychology, and language and cognitive sciences. The School felt that community included strong links between academic and professional services staff, within and between different academic areas, and between staff and students. Given the importance the School places on academic community, they had initiated and maintained several programmes to seek to build community, such as active engagement with the Students' Association, PPLS related societies, the provision of a Staff-Student Initiative Fund which financially supported events aimed at bringing students and staff together, and hosting staff social events. The School felt that whilst these initiatives had been well received, other forms of feedback such as the National Student Survey (NSS) indicated that this feeling was not consistent across the entirety of the student body. Conversations that the School had undertaken with student representatives had revealed that students felt disconnected from both staff and their peers. The School felt they faced several pressures on being able to foster and maintain a strong academic community. Staff the review team met with commented on the large number of University change projects over the last few years, which they had to deal with alongside the necessary process of building back after Covid. The review team noted that, while staff were clearly committed to ensuring quality teaching and learning, the broader situation was having a considerable impact on morale.

The review team met with both staff and students during the review visit. It was apparent to the review team that, in relation to academic community, whilst the School was broadly successful in its delivery of learning and teaching, the three constituent subject areas did not necessarily interact in a way which encouraged

students to think of themselves as belonging to the School itself, but rather, as a student of a specific subject. The review team had heard from both staff and students that the Covid-19 pandemic had had a detrimental effect on the sense of community within the School, and how it had become more difficult to foster a sense of belonging when there was necessarily reliance on tools used to deliver learning and teaching at a distance. The School had also been coping with an unexpected rise in student numbers as a result of the pandemic, and planned to ultimately rebalance the size of the student population whilst taking a strategic approach to staffing to manage this increased cohort size in forthcoming academic years.

The review team also heard that the School respected the individual natures of the three disciplines making up PPLS. The review team noted that there were examples of excellent teaching practice within the subject areas, and **commended** these examples of innovative practice within individual courses. Whilst respecting the individual natures of subject areas was appropriate, especially considering the scale and depth of the fields involved, the Review Team noted that this had the unintended consequence of good practice perhaps not being shared as widely as it could be, where knowledge of practice in other subject areas could only be beneficial to colleagues. The review team **recommended** that the School should establish a School wide (PPLS) Practice Sharing Forum. The review team **suggests** that this could be achieved through regular meetings, an annual event and/or a website, and encourages the School to harness the enthusiasm of some of the staff the team met to facilitate this.

Further, students had reported that it was not always immediately clear or apparent who an appropriate point of contact may be in relation to a matter which was not managed by either the Teaching Office or the Student Support Office. For example, in relation to the Staff-Student Initiative Fund, there was uncertainty and a lack of clarity around how to apply to this despite the notion by senior staff that this was widely understood. The School was a large multifunctional entity with distinct Student Representation mechanisms in each of the three subject areas, which also interacted on an ad-hoc basis with the Students' Association societies, and the 'in-house' student societies. In order to bring coherency, or ensure that good and beneficial initiatives, practice or activities were not being missed, 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.

The review team noted that the academic staff across the three subject areas were committed in delivery of high quality learning and teaching, and were clearly collegiate and supportive of each other in doing so. The review team **commended** the community between academic staff.

- 1.2** When considering the subject specific remit item 2, experiential learning; the review team had been asked to consider how PPLS could further incorporate experiential learning into their curriculum.

The review team noted that there was a degree of uncertainty within PPLS insofar as the accepted definition of experiential learning from a wider University position. The School wished to be in a position of best practice, but did not have sufficient clarity on expectations of forthcoming projects which would to an extent dictate elements of curriculum, namely the Curriculum Transformation project. It was not in dispute that experiential learning was beneficial and a tool that the School wished to utilise in improving or enhancing delivery of learning and teaching.

Over the course of the review, the Review Team met with a number of both staff and students who spoke on varying assessment methods utilised within the three subject areas, including using alternative forms of assessment in place of, or in addition to, more traditional forms of assessment such as essays.

The review team found that there were a number of instances of experiential learning within the School, and were encouraged by this. The review team recommendations in relation to this item will be covered within section 2 of this report.

2 Enhancing the student experience

2.1 The approach to enhancing Learning and Teaching

The review team noted that the School's forward plan for Learning and Teaching involved a review of their learning and teaching offerings, considering a potential restructuring of their degree programmes, an expansion of their course offerings, a review of their assessment processes, and a stabilisation of their undergraduate student numbers to pre-pandemic levels. The School was engaging with the Curriculum Transformation project to reduce the number of mandatory courses in their non-accredited undergraduate degree programs, and was considering making some of these courses elective. The School also sought to provide more capacity for students to take courses outside of their program in both pre-honours and honours years. The School was also considering the development of broad, accessible 'challenge' courses and advanced honours level courses that could be taken by students from other disciplines.

Any curriculum transformation based changes were to be piloted in Academic Year 2023/24, with more substantial changes to degree structures following in subsequent years. As previously noted, the School had decided to reduce their overall student population back to pre-Covid levels as opposed to continuing with high enrolment numbers, as continuing on the current trajectory would have necessitated an increase in permanent academic and professional services staff numbers. The School were currently meeting the teaching needs of the enlarged cohort through a series of fixed-term contract teaching-focused staff.

The School's strategy around learning and teaching was developed via PPLS away days, existing School-level committee structure (School Undergraduate Studies Committee, School Management Committee) and via subject level Committees and events. The review team noted that the working group structures in place within PPLS which dealt with strategic and practical Learning and Teaching and Assessment and Feedback issues allowed the School to be responsive to issues as they arose and to implement potential solutions to these in a timely manner. The review team **commended** the establishment of these working groups to manage the School's strategic plans.

2.2 Assessment and Feedback

The School employed a variety of methods of assessments, including essays, in-person exams, research reports, in-class multiple choice questions, posters, presentations, video reports, and debate. Whilst noting that, it was also apparent to the review team from conversations with both staff and students that traditional essays remained the most common assessment type, particularly in Philosophy.

Whilst the academic structure and content afforded by assessing through essay had their place, the review team noted that the School wished to increase its offering of experiential assessment, having included experiential learning as a Subject Specific Remit item. The review team also noted that had been highlighted during the BPS reaccreditation of Psychology. Experiential learning, the definition of which was understood and taken to mean learning by doing - although caveated within PPLS that there was an uncertainty of whether this should be explicitly 'taught', or whether it should be incorporated at a higher level, was recognised by the School as desirable.

The review team heard from both staff and students regarding the variety of assessments that existed within PPLS. The review team noted that there were a number of examples of assessment types currently operating within PPLS that already qualified as experiential learning. The review team considered whether there might be benefit in specifically identifying these as 'experiential learning' in order to help identify this, not only amongst the wider staff body, but also in promoting these types of assessment to students. Anecdotally the review team heard that there was an element of caution from students around undertaking non-traditional types of assessment, especially in Honours years where the risk/reward ratio was perceived as too low to be beneficial when simply opting to complete an essay, a task that students were more familiar with, was seen as a safer option.

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 by stating the skills one would acquire through taking the course in the Learning Outcomes. For example, honours programmes should add assessed reflection to the dissertation. With this addition the dissertation itself becomes an example of experiential learning. The same may be true of other courses on the programmes; that is wherever there is an element of learning by doing, incorporating reflective assessment on this process makes the experiential learning process more explicit and may allow the course to be included as an example of experiential learning within the programme. The review team also **recommended** the School should seek to support staff in developing alternative forms of assessment by allowing time and professional development opportunities within the workload, and recognising and rewarding achievements in this area. The review team **suggests** the School consider introducing a variety of assessments early in the programmes before students get a fixed idea of what assessment is. The review team noted that PPLS had previously managed its own cohort for the Edinburgh Teaching Award and suggested that this be reinstated. The review team further **recommended** that the School explore alternative types of assessment and include more student choice, and that they also consider structuring courses such that not all assessed work necessarily contributes to the final mark (for example, students could be allowed to drop their lowest marked assessment – which may or may not be a newer type of assessment from the average). This may remove anxiety about unfamiliar assessment types and allow students to learn that they are not necessarily more difficult than more familiar types of assessment. In relation to experience, the review team **suggested** that voluntary research experience, which is already in place in Psychology, was a good way of allowing students to gain relevant experience. Noting that voluntary experiences were not accessible to all, especially those individuals who were not in a position to use their time to carry out unpaid work, the review team encouraged the School to explore whether, for equity purposes, there could be an optional credit bearing course, perhaps using the SLICCs model, which could also qualify as experiential learning, especially if reflective assessment is included.

The review team, in speaking with students, heard differing views on the quality and timeliness of feedback on assessments. There was a general understanding amongst students that members of staff did have competing priorities and heavy workloads, but that timely and useful feedback was a key part of helping them to improve in terms of academic performance. The School, in discussing this, had noted that an increase in numbers of both extension requests and special circumstances applications impacted on the timescales for moderation and feedback. The review team did note that the School had taken steps to address the issues on timeliness of feedback, namely the development and piloting of the Assessment for Skills rubric. The review team had also heard from Postgraduate Tutors, who also undertook marking and provision of feedback on pieces of work.

The review team acknowledged that in a School the size of PPLS, the timely marking and moderation of work, and provision of feedback, would be challenging for those involved. The review team noted that provision of feedback and the time in which students were told to expect feedback was to an extent dictated by the central University. Where there were problems in meeting these stated deadlines, it created understandable frustration for both students and staff alike. The review team heard a number of accounts where staff expressed frustration at the predetermined times in which they were expected to be able to complete marking and feedback, where in their experience, provision of effective and meaningful feedback took far longer than currently afforded. The review team **recommended** that a reconsideration of the paid time allocated for marking was undertaken, taking account of the time which is a realistic reflection of the effort involved. The review team also commended the practice of facilitation of paired course organiser peer discussions in relation to Quality Assurance mechanisms.

2.3 Supporting students in their learning

The review team met with both academic and professional services staff from the School during their review visit. The University was in a process of change in the way it provided support to students during their degrees, an initiative known as the 'Student Support Model'. PPLS was a 'Phase 2' School, which meant that at the beginning of Academic Year 2023/24, all students would transition out of the current system of Personal Tutors and into the new system. Students would be primarily supported by two teams: Student Advisors and Cohort Leads. The former offering pastoral support and guidance, whilst the latter develops students' academic skills and attempt to foster a sense of academic community.

The Student Advisors are professional services staff who provide advice on academic or pastoral matters to an allocated group of students. They also work proactively to identify struggling students and provide them with support. PPLS planned to have 6 to 8 Student Advisors in place by Academic Year 2023/24.

Cohort Leads are academics, aiming to ensure that students can access specific support when necessary and have a sense of belonging to the institution, School, and subject area. Cohort Leads support a limited number of students, approximately 80, through activities such as induction, transition support, and responding to individual inquiries. They also collaborate with colleagues in professional services and teaching roles to plan other activities that meet student support needs.

The intention of the new model was Student Advisors and Cohort Leads working together to provide academic and pastoral support to students, and PPLS expected

to have the necessary personnel in place by AY23/24 to facilitate this new model effectively.

The review team had heard from students that the Student Support Office (now Student Advisors) and the School Teaching Office were both hugely valuable and reliable assets. Students spoke highly of the professionalism and dedication of the professional services staff within these teams, and were assured that they knew where help could be sought should they require. Students' experiences of seeking advice in applying for extensions to work, or special circumstances, as well as seeking further help or support in relation to both academic and pastoral issues, were universally positive in relation to the Student Support and Teaching Offices. The review team **commended** the Student Support Office and the Professional Services staff within the School.

The review team noted that PPLS had developed a custom undergraduate Hub, known as the PPLS Hub, which was maintained by the School's Communications and Marketing Team and hosted through SharePoint. This hub was designed to hold all relevant information in relation to support, services and programme information. The review team **commended** the creation of the PPLS Hub.

2.4. Listening and responding to the Student Voice

The review team heard that PPLS had implemented various mechanisms to listen and respond to students' feedback, including student membership of School Committees, twice semester Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings, and Staff-Student Initiatives. The School had made an effort to incorporate students within the existing learning and teaching structure, and the SSLC meetings gathered the views of other students. These initiatives were designed to ensure that PPLS was responsive to students' feedback.

The PPLS Student Representative was a permanent member of the School Undergraduate Studies Committee (SUGSC), and also met regularly with the Director of Undergraduate Studies to share information and concerns. SSLC meetings were attended by subject area student representatives and academic staff, where the views of other students are gathered and fed back. In Psychology the information was gathered via a form which required some evidence of how widespread the issue was amongst students to avoid reacting to a vocal minority. The minutes of these meetings were available to all staff and students. PPLS also had a Staff-Student Initiative Fund that supported ad hoc events that build community and offer opportunities for dialogue. These events were determined by student and staff interest, and the fund had supported dinners, academic seminars, podcasts, coffee mornings, guided visits to collections, conferences, and trips. These events were student-led, and the fund was responsive to student proposals, having received and approved 30 applications in the past academic year.

There was a diversity of approaches across the Subject Areas in the degree of formality and preparation for SSLCs. Mid-course feedback is sought on all courses, and PPLS is exploring how to run a centralised School CEQ issued on courses at the end of each semester.

The review team **commended** particularly the level of preparation and the running of the Psychology SSLC.

2.5 Accessibility, Inclusivity and Widening Participation

The review team noted that PPLS had recently begun an EDI plan in an effort to champion equality, diversity and inclusivity, and were working towards goals of increasing diversity within staff and student groups, decolonising the curriculum, reviewing and developing EDI training, and promoting a culture which integrated and prioritised EDI within the School.

The review team noted that as a result of student feedback, PPLS had recently reconfigured a mandatory pre-honours Philosophy course. The course, formerly called 'Greats: From Plato to the Enlightenment' was now known as 'Introduction to the History of Philosophy', and contained a broader, less western-centric account of the history of philosophy. PPLS had also developed an Honours level options course which was due to begin in the coming academic year called 'Towards a decolonised approach to psychology and language', which aimed to identify constraints of current understanding and encourage a move toward more inclusive and representative understanding.

Student feeling was particularly strong in relation to matters of inclusivity, and diversification and decolonisation of the curriculum. The review team heard points of view from both sides of the academic discussion, with some students feeling there was more to achieve in relation to decolonisation and inclusivity, whilst others felt that seeking to be overly responsive in these matters was counterintuitive. The review team had heard select examples of student issues which students felt could have been responded to in a different manner, from both sides of the debate.

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. The goal is that this EDI lead, liaising with lecturers and tutors as necessary, could provide a fast response as matters arise to prevent concerns from escalating.

2.6 Development of Employability and Graduate Attributes

The review team met with two groups of students from all years and across all three subject areas. PPLS works with the Careers Service in an effort to communicate the support available to students in increasing their employability, and was also taking steps to embed graduate attributes and skills within the courses and programme descriptors listed within the Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study (DRPS). PPLS had also developed the Academic Skills Centre, supporting research methodology and utilisation of software tools. The review team **commended** the Skills Centre. Students did note that it was not always a priority to read the information provided to them via email in relation to the Careers Service, or events organised by PPLS to bring alumni of the School back to speak with current students in relation to careers within the subject area. Some students were aware of these events, and some were not. The review team noted that engagement with these, specifically attending in person events, could not be mandated and as such, uptake would necessarily vary. Whilst it could not be said that the School did not take steps to make students aware of the provisions available to them, and to arrange for events centred around employability and graduate attributes, the review team had already recommended a review of the communication strategies utilised by the School (see Section 1.1), which could also consider these issues.

2.7 Supporting and developing staff

The review team had specifically asked to meet with a number of early career teaching focused staff during the review visit to discuss various aspects of their roles. The review team heard that fixed-term teaching positions held by teaching fellows were subject to varying contracts depending on the subject area. There were also positions of Senior Teaching Coordinators (STCs) which were open-ended contracts that offered a clearer progression path, although staff on these felt their time was split between teaching and administration, as opposed to teaching and research.

Regarding promotion criteria, some staff members expressed confusion over the criteria for promotion, while others noted that they had received information on the subject from the head of their subject area or at an annual information session. The promotion criteria were described as clear for staff members with open-ended contracts, but was not an option for those in fixed-term positions.

The review team **recommended** that the School, when recruiting new staff, should consider appointing teaching focused staff on open ended contracts.

The review team also heard from staff regarding their experiences with the Edinburgh Teaching Award (EdTA) or HEA Fellowship. The School noted that new staff were encouraged to engage with these. Some staff were aware of these some were not, particularly teaching-focused staff. In addition, many noted that their workloads were such that finding time to engage with these schemes was difficult. The review team **suggested** that the PPLS EdTA cohort should be restarted and that workload be allocated to staff engaged in teaching recognition schemes. The waiting list for the IAD scheme was highlighted as an obstacle to staff using the scheme. A local cohort would allow the School to use its own staff as internal mentors to remove this obstacle.

The review panel met with the Postgraduate Tutors and Demonstrators (T&Ds) and also with the professional staff that support them. 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. The review team was impressed by the practice in Philosophy of paying Tutors to attend lectures that they were expected to tutor on, and **commended** the School for this.

In relation to both staff with a teaching focus, and postgraduate tutors and demonstrators, the review team **recommended** that the School develop mechanisms for tutors and teaching focused staff to be regularly informed of opportunities for career development.

2.8 Learning environment (physical and virtual)

The School occupied space within the Dugald Stewart Building, 7 George Square and 40 George Square.

The Dugald Stewart Building houses PPLS Professional Services and Linguistics and English Language (LEL). It is fully accessible and includes laboratory space, academic offices, meeting rooms, and common areas. Psychology is located in 7 George Square, a 19th-century building that is not fully accessible, but is undergoing

improvement and renovation work. Philosophy is located in 40 George Square, which has teaching facilities and social spaces. The School has two specialist computing labs, one at Appleton Tower and one at 7 George Square, which has been converted to remote-access.

Learn is the primary virtual learning environment, and the School is transitioning to Learn Ultra. Turnitin is used for assessment and feedback, and the School Undergraduate Student Hub provides information, support, and events. One of the main challenges of Learn for PPLS was it being utilised differently across the three subject areas, which led to inconsistency in expectations from students regarding appearance and structure of courses. The review team noted that the coming rollover to Learn Ultra, given the number of other change projects currently taking place within the University, appeared to be lower priority than projects such as Curriculum Transformation and the new Student Support Model. 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.

3 Assurance and enhancement of provision

The School operates within the University's Quality Framework and the review team is confident that academic standards are high. The School's approach to setting, maintaining and reviewing academic standards is appropriate. Standards are continually reviewed through External Examiner reports, student feedback and annual monitoring.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Range of provision considered by the review

Cognitive Science (Humanities) (MA Hons)
English Language (MA Hons)
English Language and History (MA Hons)
English Language and Literature (MA Hons)
Linguistics (MA Hons)
Linguistics and English Language (MA Hons)
Linguistics and Social Anthropology (MA Hons)
Philosophy (MA Hons)
Philosophy and Economics (MA Hons)
Philosophy and English Language (MA Hons)
Philosophy and English Literature (MA Hons)
Philosophy and Greek (MA Hons)
Philosophy and Linguistics (MA Hons)
Philosophy and Mathematics (MA Hons)
Philosophy and Politics (MA Hons)
Philosophy and Psychology (MA Hons)
Philosophy and Scottish Literature (MA Hons)
Psychology (BMedSci Hons)
Psychology (BSc Hons)
Psychology (BSc Hons) - 4 Years (Full-time)
Psychology (MA Hons)
Psychology and Business MA (Hons)
Psychology and Economics (MA Hons)
Psychology and Linguistics (MA Hons)

Appendix 2: 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
- 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 3: Additional information considered by review team

- Reflective Report
- Academic Standards Scrutiny Comments
- Careers Report
- Current Subject Area Information and Staffing
- Previous Review Report
- Programme Course List
- BPS Reaccreditation Report and Response
- Marking rubrics
- Tutor Staff Handbook
- Links to Supporting documents:

[Degree programme specifications](#) (PPLS)
 Programme Handbooks: PPLS
 School Annual Quality Reports:
 2021/22: <https://spqs.euclid.ed.ac.uk/s/10239/>
 2020/21: <https://spqs.euclid.ed.ac.uk/s/8676/>
 2019/20: <https://spqs.euclid.ed.ac.uk/s/6532/>
 2018/19: <https://spqs.euclid.ed.ac.uk/s/4911/>
 2017/18: <https://spqs.euclid.ed.ac.uk/s/3050/>
 School Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) minutes -
 November 2022 (Psychology, Philosophy)
 October 2022 (Cognitive Science)
 September 2022 (LEL)
 Subject benchmark statement, QAA
[Early Childhood Studies](#)
[Linguistics](#)
[Philosophy](#)
[Psychology](#)

[Equality and Diversity Student Report 2020](#) (pdf)
[Learning and Teaching Strategy](#) (UoE) (pdf)
[Quality assurance](#) (UoE)
[University Student Representation website](#)
[University Student Voice website](#)

Appendix 4: Number of students

Entry Programme Name	2016/7	2017/8	2018/9	2019/20	2020/1	2021/2
Cognitive Science (Humanities) (MA Hons)	25	14	16	13	21	21
English Language (MA Hons)	20	11	10	15	8	7
English Language and History (MA Hons)		2	6			
English Language and Literature (MA Hons)	24	24	27	27	36	30
Linguistics (MA Hons)	24	33	32	36	19	27
Linguistics and English Language (MA Hons)	13	9	10	13	22	16
Linguistics and Social Anthropology (MA Hons)	12	4	8	12	16	16
Philosophy (MA Hons)	60	57	52	57	54	71
Philosophy and Economics (MA Hons)	9	13	15	9	16	21
Philosophy and English Language (MA Hons)	1	1	1	1	1	3
Philosophy and English Literature (MA Hons)	20	25	25	26	25	24
Philosophy and Greek (MA Hons)	1	1	0	2	0	0
Philosophy and Linguistics (MA Hons)	2	8	8	3	5	8
Philosophy and Mathematics (MA Hons)	21	12	11	9	14	6
Philosophy and Politics (MA Hons)	20	26	29	37	31	44
Philosophy and Psychology (MA Hons)	20	10	8	22	13	33
Philosophy and Scottish Literature (MA Hons)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Psychology (BSc Hons)		32	51	56	0	
Psychology (BSc Hons) - 4 Years (Full-time)	108			146	198	212
Psychology (MA Hons)		90	92	98	0	
Psychology and Business MA (Hons)	16	12	9	11	15	17
Psychology and Economics (MA Hons)	6	1	6	4	8	9
Psychology and Linguistics (MA Hons)	6	5	8	10	9	10