

Internal Periodic Review of: School of GeoSciences PGT

Date of review: 28 & 29 March 2023

Date of 14 week response: 28 November 2023

Date of year on response: 14 August 2024

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>School leadership and strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team recommend that the School provides strong leadership regarding the importance of the masters programmes to the success of the School, including clear communication of strategy and financial transparency to ensure that staff are fully aware of the value of the PGT programmes. The review team recommend that the senior management team within the School engender a school-wide culture in which the expectation is that all academics should value and engage in PGT learning and teaching activities. 	<p>November 2023</p> <p>Ongoing with development of School implementation of the new University Learning and Teaching Strategy</p>	<p>School Teaching and Student Support Newsletter and presentations at October 2023 School meeting provided transparent communication about contributions of PGT and UGT teaching to the School.</p> <p>School DoPS presented at PGT Education Committee on value of PGT programmes to the School in relation to other activities in November 2023 based on 2023-24 recruitment.</p> <p>In 2024-25, the School will develop and consult on a new implementation plan that outlines how the School will align with, and implement, the University Learning and Teaching Strategy. The implementation plan will articulate the importance of taught programmes and clarify the expectation that most staff contribute to both PGT and UGT teaching and dissertation supervision and marking.</p> <p>Teaching Allocation committee has adopted the principle that academic staff are expected to contribute to both PGT and UGT teaching (more detail below on dissertation allocation).</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>January 2025</p> <p>Complete</p>

- The review team **note** the large number of programmes offered by the School under the MSc and **recommend** that the School undertake a strategic review and ongoing analysis, to ensure the portfolio of programmes within the MSc fits market demand and avoids unnecessary duplication. This should include mandating external market research (including with industry bodies) for proposed new programmes and withdrawal of existing programmes where overlaps/duplication are identified.

Ongoing

A market research portfolio review has been undertaken and a draft report was shared in June 2024. The portfolio review focuses on i) current PGT and UGT offering; ii) programme differentiation; iii) strengths and weaknesses of clustering PGT programmes thematically; and iv) modes of delivery.

Complete

The report provides an evidence base to inform portfolio review and curriculum development. A short-term School working group will use the report to make recommendations to the School Executive about our taught programmes offering, and how the School responds to, and aligns with, the University-wide portfolio review initiated in June 2024.

2024-25

- The review team **note** anecdotal evidence provided by a student that the part-time MSc offering is not delivered in a way that is achievable in part-time hours. The review team **recommend** that the School examine the existing part-time model to ensure it is tailored to the needs of part time students, and also consider offering other accessible study options, such as CPD or micro-credentials.

Ongoing

The School recognises the challenges of studying part-time on Msc programmes that are primarily designed for delivery full-time on campus. The School is participating in institution-wide discussions and design processes developing PGT degree design principles and archetypes. As part of these conversations we are feeding in the challenges of part-time study and reviewing opportunities for developing 2-Year MSc programmes. The monthly PGT forum meetings will highlight the need for activities and inclusivity to better accommodate part time students.

Complete

Each PGT programme receives a pro-rata funds (£500/student) for i) cohort lead activities and ii) support for dissertation research and dissemination. Programme directors decide how funds are distributed across these activities.

- The review team **note** there appeared to be some instances of underfunding amongst the PGT programmes. The review team **recommend** that the resourcing for PGT programmes is reviewed to ensure all individual elements are adequately funded. The review team emphasise the importance of PGT programme directors having oversight, understanding and influence regarding the budget for PGT programmes.

Complete

Discretionary funding for programmes is also available and we will clarify the process through which programme directors and cohort leads can apply for funds.

People and Money: ongoing challenges mean that it is not currently possible to disaggregate spends by programme that hinders i) review of individual elements by programme or ii) being able to provide programme directors with oversight,

3	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team recommend that the school undertake a strategic analysis to identify the general skills that should be delivered through the MSc and ascertain how the skills acquisition and development will occur across the courses. This strategic analysis should be informed by external industry advice on skills requirements and also ensure consistency of general skills development across the programmes. The review team note some programmes have a desire to be professionally accredited but had not been funded to do so. The review team recommend that the School provide funding for professional accreditation where appropriate. 	Ongoing	<p>The School is developing an assessment mapping exercise to ensure that existing assessment methods align with programme level learning outcomes. This assessment mapping exercise is designed to support engagement with the University's assessment and feedback priorities and principles, the School's taught assessment guidelines, and recommendations from QESR. This mapping exercise will be the first phase of a process of continuous improvement that will help map and identify skills acquisition and development. The second phase will focus on a strategic review of the skills and competencies developed by the School's programmes. This will include external advisors and representation from alumni and current students. The Staff Student Liaison Committee will enable gathering of the student voice as to what skills they envisage gaining from their degree, and how this maps onto assessments.</p> <p>Support and funding for accreditation for programmes is available. We will readvertise the process through which accreditation funding can be sought and is approved by the School Education Committee.</p>	2024-25
4	<p>Programme management and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team note the potential risks to the continuity of some MSc programmes posed by over-reliance on individual academics for the running of programmes. The review team recommend that the School take action to remove single points of failure via greater programme leader succession planning, increased programme team diversity and a wider range of academic contribution. 	2024-25	<p>The School has 3 workload tariffed roles to support delivery of MSc programmes: programme director, cohort lead and dissertation course organiser. The aim is that at least 2 academic members of staff fulfil these roles.</p> <p>The School organises dissertation allocation and examination boards at the level of clusters of PGT programmes. We are exploring whether student recruitment can also be organised in clusters of programmes.</p> <p>The PGT Education Forum provides a regular space for sharing experiences and practice. In May 2024 the PGT Away Day focused on identifying opportunities for modular course design that allows for greater sharing of courses across programmes.</p>	Complete

	recommend that procedures are put in place to manage this potential single point of failure.		picked up by other roles. We are also examining how we can build in cover for this role into any new roles/replacements in the future although this will be impacted by the current financial context.	Complete
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	The outcomes of the report have been fed back to students via programme SSLCs and via Townhall meetings with the programme student representatives.		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review	<p>Dissertation Allocation A key positive change is an improvement in the allocation and distribution of dissertation and supervision. In particular: The School has established and communicated the principle that all academic staff should expect to supervise and mark PGT dissertations. The Teaching Allocation Committee mandates individual staff availability for supervision and marking. Staff availability is organised by clusters of programmes and shared with programme directors/dissertation course organisers who work in clusters of programmes to match supervisors with student projects. This has resulted in a more equitable distribution of dissertation supervision and marking. For 2024-2 we are seeking to embed and enhances these processes by aligning the timelines for dissertation allocation across programmes and introducing standardised processes of allocation at cluster-level. These changes are also contributing to a culture shift where there is a greater recognise of the value and importance of taught postgraduate programmes to the School's portfolio of activities.</p> <p>PGT programme clusters We are seeing improved collaboration among clusters of PGT programmes (examination boards; dissertation allocation) as well as in discussions about pathways across degrees, shared option course, and how students are prepared for their dissertations.</p> <p>Portfolio review The School has recently received the draft report from an external Market Research portfolio review. This provides an evidence-based for a working group that will guide strategic decisions-making about curriculum development and portfolio review of the School's taught programmes. This also provides a useful evidence base to support the School's reponse to the University's portfolio review.</p>		