

Internal Periodic Review of: School of History, Classics and Archaeology, PGT and PGR provision

Date of review: 6-7 March 2023 (final report received 30 May 2023)

Date of 14 week response: 5 September 2023

Date of year on response: 30 May 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>Student support Relates to remit 1/Postgraduate Taught:</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School ensures that academic support is sufficiently robust and supported within the new model. There may be more scope for Academic Cohort Leads to disseminate information, for example about course choice and dissertation development discussions. The School may also wish to consider the appropriate place for professional services support for cohort leads. The current model appears to focus more on student experience: connecting programme support teams into the model may enhance academic support for students.</p>	Completed	<p>Having reviewed the implementation of the new model of student support for PGT students in the autumn of 2022, the School has made a number of improvements. Two Student Advisers now specialise entirely in PGT support. The HCA Writing Centre now offers support to PGT students (including international students) to help them develop writing skills. The support provided by Academic Cohort Leads has been enhanced: in the larger PGT programmes, the School now allocates two Cohort Leads to each cohort. A new Student Experience Officer supports the cohort leads in the development of events, and the Student Advisers and Student Support & Experience Administrators support the regular meetings. PGT online students are offered one-to-one meetings with their Cohort Leads at the start of the programme and transition to dissertation.</p>	1/9/23
2	<p>Equality Diversity and Inclusion Relates to remit item 2:</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School should approach diversity in a rigorously self-critical fashion. Further analysis on why students are not progressing from undergraduate to postgraduate study and where there may be barriers based on widening participation, sex or ethnicity may indicate where resources for targeted interventions would be beneficial. Increasing the work already begun on diversity in the staff profile, and supporting those staff already recruited, has the potential to influence the</p>	Initial work completed but with future project anticipated	<p>The School EDI Director has carried out a review of the available data relating to progression and results at UG, PGT and PGR, and what this reveals about achievement gaps achievement, e.g. between Home (esp. Scottish) and Overseas students, genders, ethnic groups, as well as different age groups. The results of this review were submitted to SMC in May 2024 and will form the basis for an application for a PTAS grant to explore achievement gaps and set up a programme to monitor student experiences across UG and into PGT and PGR programmes.</p>	1/5/24

	<p>student profile. Highlighting staff research, particularly in relation to diversity, on the School website may also support attracting more diversity into the School population.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School explores opportunities for widening participation development locally in Edinburgh. The School could consider what opportunities already exist for community engagement, for example through working with the College Civic Engagement Office.</p>	<p>Completed – with on-going monitoring</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p> <p>In progress</p>	<p>In order to ensure that PG students are considered in wider School discussion of WP, the existing remit of the WP Working Group has been extended to cover PGT and PGR, as well as just UG. The PGR Director has now been added to this working group to reflect this change. Our PGR students are also being encouraged to engage in WP work through the CAHSS WP Network and Sutton Trust summer school.</p> <p>At PGT level, the School will be developing a peer mentoring scheme, based on the UG system, which will help with inclusion and building community for marginalised students. This initiative is being led by the Peer Support Student Leaders.</p> <p>In the History subject area a working group has been set up to consider the feasibility and structure of current on-campus PGT programmes. As part of this review, the specific question of whether there may be barriers to applicants based on WP, sex or ethnicity and how to ensure our programmes appeal to a diverse range of potential applicants are being actively discussed.</p> <p>In terms of how new appointments and research areas are highlighted on our website, the PGR Committee will specifically address how we advertise opportunities for PGR research and indicate areas of expertise and potential for supervision. This is being factored in to an overhaul of the information visible on our website.</p>	<p>1/5/24</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Communication:</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School consider communication from a student perspective, creating a single point for information and developing a programme of phased and timely dissemination of information to ensure that students know where to access relevant information, and which staff roles they can approach for information in specific topics. This appeared to be particularly acute for the online postgraduate taught students who were considering setting up their own information portal to address the issue. The review team considered that there was a</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>The School has developed a new Sharepoint site that is geared specifically towards providing information to UG, PGT and PGR students. The website is being re-designed to provide information for potential applicants and individuals outwith the University, while all information for current students will be curated via Sharepoint. The design of this Sharepoint site will be specifically undertaken with our various student cohorts in mind, with links to resources on 'community' and 'well-being' particularly visible.</p>	<p>4/9/23</p>

	<p>risk associated with this that information could quickly become out of date and that it would be preferable for the School to ensure that students are aware of clear signposting to existing sources of information. One suggestion that came from the students was that an infographic showing 'who to contact for what' would be helpful.</p> <p>Relates to remit item 1/Postgraduate Research</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School ensures information is delivered at appropriate and regular points for postgraduate research students. For example, when preparing for conferences and thesis writing, or when thinking about applying for academic and non-academic jobs.</p>	Completed	<p>Training for PGR students at School-level is now being delivered by year group. Each semester there will be an afternoon of training for 1st, 2nd and 3rd/4th years respectively, with subjects covered appropriate to the point at which these students are in their degree programme. Additional sessions include one explaining tutoring opportunities, one on computational skills, one on data management, and two writing retreats.</p>	4/9/23
4	<p>Tutoring and Demonstrating:</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School ensures that consistent course material covering key tutorial elements is made available by course organisers for postgraduate research (PGR) tutors in a timely manner so that tutors are able to prepare their sessions in the allotted time. Where possible, preparatory material should be equivalent in depth and detail across courses. The PGR tutor induction should cover how to deal with student adjustments and there should be a clear statement to students and staff that postgraduate research tutors are not responsible for pastoral support and that there is support available for PGR tutors if they are faced with complex student cases.</p>	Completed – with on-going monitoring	<p>The School has carried out a review of the induction sessions provided to tutors and demonstrators, in order to ensure that the information provided is up-to-date and relevant. The tutor and demonstrator reps will be asked for feedback on courses where the information provided to tutors is insufficient, and the relevant course organizers will be spoken to and offered further training.</p> <p>With the extension of the new model of student support to all UG students, it should be clear to tutors that they are not responsible for student support. They can discuss complex cases with the SSET and direct students to them and the Well-Being Advisor. All of this will be communicated to tutors during induction.</p> <p>The on-going Guaranteed-Hours and Part-Time Tutor and Staff Liaison Committee, on which tutor reps from all subject areas sit, provides a venue for discussion of any issues that arise.</p>	4/9/23
5	<p>PGR Seminars:</p> <p>The review team also recommends the School consider how postgraduate research students can be involved in running and presenting at in-person research seminars. The postgraduate research students the review team met with reported that there were currently few opportunities for involvement in</p>	Completed – with on-going monitoring	<p>The School Research Committee considered ways to encourage student attendance at seminars in their Semester 1 meeting of AY 2023-24. Seminar organizers have been encouraged by the Director of Research to involve PGR students in the management of seminar series. Low PGR student numbers at seminars were also addressed in Welcome Week, at a session run by the</p>	1/12/23

	<p>seminar organisation and were keen to be able to participate more often. They also indicated that hybrid delivery was affecting in-person attendance and was therefore not optimal for on-campus students or community building. (The review team notes the need for hybrid seminars to support distance PhD provision.)</p>	<p>Completed – with on-going monitoring</p>	<p>School’s Director of Research, where seminar organizers were invited to introduce their centres/seminars/events to PGR students. The PGR Director is also working with PGR student reps to encourage the organization of work-in-progress seminars: these are currently run in Classics and some other areas within Archaeology and History (e.g. Irish History) but students will be encouraged to extend these to other areas.</p> <p>In order to increase the prominence of PGR students’ research in the School, the PGR Digest now has a ‘Research in the Spotlight’ section, and students who have received School funds to support fieldwork or conference attendance will also be asked to contribute to this section of the Digest. PGR students were also invited to present their work at the School’s Research Showcase event, to be held in June 2024.</p> <p>Most research seminars in the School are already run in a hybrid manner, in part to support EDI objectives in the School, such as allowing student parents to attend. With the start of the PhD by Distance in 2024, we will need most seminars to be hybrid. In practice, however, 90% of attendees at most seminars are present in person.</p>	<p>1/5/24</p> <p>1/5/24</p>
	<p>Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review</p>	<p>Commendations and recommendations of the IPR panel were circulated to all PGT and PGR students, as well as members of staff, and further discussed at the School PGR Committee meeting following their release.</p>		
<p>For Year on response only</p>	<p>Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review</p>	<p>Much of what has been described above under ‘progress’ has been very positive indeed. A number of the review panel’s recommendations tied in well with priorities that the School has already recognised for its PGT and PGR offerings. This is true of the monitoring of the Student Support model, which was relatively new at the point the IPR took place, and the delivery of PGR training. The new model for PGR training, which is tailored towards specific cohorts has worked well this year and comes straight out of the IPR. The School was already working on widening participation and attainment gaps, but PGR programmes are now better embedded in these discussions as a result of the IPR. Likewise, the IPR recommendation relating to PGR students and the wider research community has re-focused our attention on ensuring students feel engaged in this aspect of the School’s work, especially in the wake of Covid.</p>		