

The University of Edinburgh  
Internal Periodic Review  
Year on Response response report

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

**Date of review:** 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of April, 2023

**Date of 14 week response:** 26-10-2023

**Date of year on response:** 11-7-2024

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	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	<p>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).</p> <p><b>YEAR ON:</b>            We are happy to report that, following subject area discussion, Philosophy has developed a reflective practice tool around their dissertation. We decided to stagger the implementation of reflective practice in LEL and Psychology to the following academic year to allow us to learn from the implementation in Philosophy.</p>	Ongoing
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	<p>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.</p> <p><b>YEAR ON:</b>            We have completed the review of School communications and developed a new PPLS Communications Plan. We are happy to provide a copy of this plan to the review team on request.</p>	August, 2024
3	The review team recommends that the School should establish a School-wide (PPLS) Practice Sharing Forum.		<p>We have discussed the form that this Practice Sharing Forum should take. (We think that a PPLS Teaching Day, which showcases</p>	May, 2024

			<p>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).</p> <p><b>YEAR ON:</b> In May, 2024 we conducted our first PPLS Teaching Event, which drew together both good practice from across the School and engaged with College- and University-wide change projects. The event was well-attended by a range of school leadership, senior and junior teaching &amp; research academics, senior and junior teaching-focused academics, guaranteed hours teaching staff, and professional services staff. We found it to be a successful forum for sharing this practice. We have also developed an online resource to specifically support technology-enhanced learning across the school which specifically draws in sharing best practice.</p>	
4	The review team recommended the School explore alternative types of assessment and include more student choice.		<p>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.</p> <p><b>YEAR ON:</b> We have implemented more diverse assessments in the last year, specifically in the Psychology in Action course which has proven highly successful. Further implementation is ongoing and being conducted against the backdrop of emerging clarity around Curriculum Transformation and the recent decision of the central university to undertake a teaching portfolio review. Given these largescale projects will impact the foundations of our teaching provision, they will provide an opportunity to further embed diversification of assessment.</p>	April-May, 2024
5	The review team recommended that the School should seek to support staff in developing alternative forms of assessment.		<p>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</p>	May, 2024

			<p>staff will benefit from examples and templates for new forms of assessment, which we will generate through the PPLS teaching forum.</p> <p><b>YEAR ON:</b> We have implemented our online course change tool, which has supported staff in being more creative with their assessments. We have also held our PPLS Teaching Event and developed online technology-enhanced learning tools (see point 3 above). As part of both curriculum transformation and portfolio review we are likely to create new courses in the near future, and the university is working through the workload needed to ensure strong, diverse assessment is developed in this context.</p>	
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</p>	wider discussion around this area continuing across CAHSS throughout 2023/24

meetings of the QA Forum during the 2023/24 academic year. Discussion and outputs from the QA Forum feeds into recommendations for the College Education Committee and the College Strategy and Management Committee.

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.

**YEAR ON:**

The internal WAM audit has been completed and specific recommendations were presented and a way forward agreed at the College People Committee. The College is now assessing how best to explore, resource and deploy the recommendations. This work is ongoing.

Over-assessment has been flagged as something that needs to be addressed in the Principles and Priorities for Assessment and Feedback, which has been heavily promoted across the College and accompanied by Minimum Standards for Assessment and Feedback, which was approved at the College Education Committee in May 2024. We have completed an investigation into assessment tariffs across the HE sector and will be taking this the CEC in the next academic year to discuss whether we need to set college-wide tariffs.

The Minimum Standards also cover quality quantity and types of feedback with the aim of supporting staff at all levels to provide proportionate and useful feedback to students.

IAD are developing an introductory training package for all tutors that includes guidance on feedback strategies. This will be available to all tutors from September 2024.

Feedback turnaround times are being monitored via central system, and the Deputy Head of College is working with individual Heads of School to uncover reasons for delays in returning feedback, which might include assessment load in a course, staff

			workload, and time management. This is with the express aim of improving turnaround times in 2024-25 whilst ensuring that staff workload remains manageable.	
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.		<p>We have commenced a trial 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.</p> <p><b>YEAR ON:</b> We have completed our trial of multiple submission boxes and found it to be helpful and will be implementing that as standard practice starting in AY24-25. We have also implemented a 'roll-forward' system for submission dates and marking returns, which will facilitate timely return of grades in the context of extensions. The university has reviewed and revised its Extensions and Special Circumstances Policy and from AY24-25 we are expecting to see a considerable decrease in the use of extensions by students.</p>	May, 2024
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.		<p>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.</p> <p><b>YEAR ON:</b> We continue to provide this information to students via the Student Hub.</p>	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.		<p>We have decided to discuss this topic at a School Management Committee meeting during semester 1 (September-December, 2023).</p> <p><b>YEAR ON:</b> We have discussed this topic at length, and it is part of a broader QSER led discussion on teaching roles within the university. When open-ended replacement posts become available, we are actively considering whether they are best replaced with Teaching &amp; Research or Teaching faculty.</p>	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		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

	training before starting in post. The review team recommended that all tutors undergo mandatory training prior to commencing duties.		<b>YEAR ON:</b> We continue to use this training system.	
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.		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).  <b>YEAR ON:</b> We continue to implement this system. This was also discussed in the June meeting of the PPLS Teaching Development WG, where Hannah Cornish, another WG member, has been taking a leading role, with Emma Waterston, in HE certification (Advance HE Associate Fellowship: Introduction to Academic Practice) for the tutors in Psych, and this is on the radar of the WG to be rolled out across the School.	September, 2023
12	The review team <b>recommended</b> 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.		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.  <b>YEAR ON:</b> The rollout of LEARN Ultra is now complete and is working well. We continue to implement improvements to the LEARN Ultra system and now provided extensive resources on this via our Learning Technology SharePoint site.	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).		
<b>For Year on response only</b>	<b>Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review</b>	We have seen numerous positive changes as outlined above. To recap: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We now reflective practice in key assessment (e.g., the dissertation).</li> <li>2. We have developed a communications plan.</li> <li>3. We have inaugurated a PPLS Teaching Event and launched a supporting Sharepoint site.</li> <li>4. We have diversified our assessment</li> <li>5. We have simplified course changes, smoothing the path from innovation to implementation.</li> <li>6. We have successfully piloted double submission boxes and are expecting less impact from extensions in the future.</li> </ol>		

		7. We have improved both our Student and Staff Hubs to provide better support to students and staff.
--	--	--

- Re recommendation 1 & 4 (assessment) – The Committee look forward to further updates on:
  - i) actions taken to introduce reflective practice as a form of assessment
    - a. **UPDATE**: We have introduced reflective practice, as per point 1.
  - ii) the activities of the CTP working group relating to assessment
    - a. **UPDATE**: The focus of the CTP working group has been on largescale structural elements of PGT and UG degree archetypes, consistent with the priorities of the University.
  - iii) actions taken to diversify assessment
    - a. **UPDATE**: We have introduced new assessment types in Psychology, LEL, and Philosophy. We have improved our processes around assessment change (e.g., the Board of Studies) to facilitate change. We have introduced a PPLS Teaching Day to showcase diverse assessment practice across the school to provide stimulus for further diversification.
- Re recommendation 10 – Can the School provide assurance that all PG tutors not only have the opportunity to take part in training but have been trained prior to teaching and the school maintains a record of this?
  - **UPDATE**: Yes. We have tutor training sessions in Week 0 of Semesters 1 and 2. Attendance is recorded.
- Re recommendation 11 – Do the School have any reflections on the effectiveness of the newsletter re career opportunities by the time of the year-on update?
  - **UPDATE**: We have implemented the procedure of including career opportunities into the newsletter, which is reaching relevant staff (e.g., those on fixed-term contracts). We do not know whether people are finding jobs through this mechanism.