

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review 14 week response report

Internal Periodic Review of: Earth Science and Geography (UG)

Date of review: 12-13 March 2025

Date of 14 week response: 18th August 2025

Date of year on response: 19th May 2026

The review area (School/Deanery/College) 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.

Rec. No.	Recommendation (copy text from report)	Responsibility of	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	The review team recommends that the School develops a shared vision and strategy for research-led undergraduate provision to ensure fairly and transparently allocated resource to ensure resilience. The complex School structure does not appear to support teaching resilience. Academic staff recruitment seems to be dominated by the needs of the research institutes and so either new staff have to deliver teaching that is not in their immediate research area, or programmes have to be retrofitted for available expertise. (The review team noted that this may be more of an issue in Earth Sciences than Geography because of more prescriptive accreditation requirements.) This makes it difficult to rotate staff away from some intense teaching demands and leaves the system vulnerable to staff absence, making longer term strategic planning difficult. Embedding teaching strategy more centrally within the overall School strategy is important for consistency and setting expectations within the School's structure. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that all key voices are included in committee discussions (for example, the	School	Ongoing	- Decisions made in response to the University portfolio review framework will consolidate existing programmes and ensure alignment with research strengths in the School. - The School is currently undertaking a review of its Research institute and line management structures. Support for Learning and Teaching is one key strand of this review. - Academic Lead for Tutors and Demonstrators is now a member of School Education Committee.	Ongoing 2027-28 implementation 2026-27 Complete

	Tutor and Demonstrator team appear to be missing from Education Committee when tutoring is essential for teaching delivery).				
2	The review team recommends that the School continue with development of standard marking rubrics and ensure these are consistently implemented and shared with students to ensure that they know what is expected of them, and so that they are better able to understand the development of their learning and skills as they move through their degree programmes. The moderation process should be checked to ensure it is working as expected. The review team recommends that the School consider setting baseline expectations on feedback and ensure these are communicated and implemented across the School.	School School	Ongoing	- As per CSE guidance templated pre-assessment rubrics have been shared with all COs. Expectations have been communicated that each component of summative assessment should have a pre-assessment rubric. - Moderation forms have been revised for 2025-26. - Assessment and feedback mapping exercise	Implemented for 2025-26 Implemented for 2025-26 Ongoing throughout 2025-26
3	The review team recommends that the School consider opportunities for embedding preparation for fieldwork activity in the curriculum. The School should consider the implications of fieldwork locations in relation to sustainability (for example financial and carbon footprint impacts) and in engaging with the implications of calls to decolonise the curriculum for all fieldwork undertaken in the School. There is potentially a missed pedagogical opportunity, where sustainability and the intellectual power relations around (de)colonisation could inform field learning and teaching. It is important to involve students in discussions around the fieldwork review. Consideration should also include how student adjustments, inclusivity and accessibility are embedded in fieldwork.	School	Ongoing	- In July 2025 SPARC (School Executive) approved Fieldwork Review Framework with principles covering pedagogy; sustainability; inclusivity and accessibility; and resourcing. These principles embed consideration of the implication of fieldwork locations; decolonising fieldwork pedagogies and curricula; and set expectations that field courses embed learning opportunities focused on sustainability and EDI. - An implementation plan for the Fieldwork Review Framework is currently under consideration by the School executive. The plan is to undertake reviews in 2025-26 and then embed the fieldwork principles in annual review and BoS processes. - A student toolkit for fieldwork is a key focus of the implementation activities. Students will be consulted in the creation of the toolkit. Feedback will be	July 2025 July 2026

	Where alternative forms of assessment to fieldwork are needed, equitable opportunities should be available, for example a virtual experience rather than an essay.			solicited via Student Staff Liaison Committees before it is shared more widely.	
4	The review team recommends that the School consider developing open, standard and transparent processes around recruitment of tutors and demonstrators and co-ordination of training support for consistency of experience. In addition to providing the subject content for each class ahead of time, there should also be an agreed minimum provision of guidance on each class format (for example, tutorial handbook and/or formal meetings ahead of classes to explain how the class should be run). There should be clear articulation of expectations for the different roles and responsibilities of tutor, demonstrator and course assistant, and these distinctions should be consistent throughout the School. Clarity on expectations around marking activity should also be set out to encompass tariffs and anticipated time allocated to marking.	School	Ongoing	- The School has implemented processes and systems to the recruitment and allocation and tutors and demonstrators. These processes include greater consistency in job descriptions and a matching of T&D support to learning and teaching priorities. - The new allocation has reviewed job descriptions to clarify distinctions between tutor, demonstrator and course assistance. Distinctions have been communicated. - Briefings for Tutors and Demonstrators and course organisers will take place at the start of semester 1. - In 2025-26 new processes will be reviewed and move to continuous improvement.	Complete Complete September 2025 2026-27
5	The review team recommends that the School should ensure consistency in the provision of academic elements within the student support model. The review team found evidence of unevenness of provision between programmes and some duplication of effort. There are areas of good practice that could be more consistently shared. The review team also found that an unintended consequence of the new student support model may have increased expectations of academic staff that, the review team heard, some	School SSCIG	Ongoing	- Director of Students has assumed responsibility for academic oversight of cohort lead activities. Meetings have been held with all cohort leads to set expectations and agree frameworks for cohort lead activities. Instances of low engagement have been escalated via line management structures - Over the past two years, Student Support Model evaluation activity has consistently highlighted uncertainty surrounding the roles and responsibility of Cohort Leads. In response, we have focused this year on exploring these issues in more depth to identify good practice, gaps and inform future	2025-26 2025-27

	academic staff were able to respond to (perhaps because of stage of career) and others were not. This introduced new forms of inequalities in student experience. A wider discussion of what should be expected of Cohort Leads is necessary. The review team recommends that the University considers this as part of the evaluation of the student support model, particularly in relation to the Cohort Lead model.			development - the Student Support Continuous Improvement Group has identified this activity as one of three priority areas for enhancing the student support model over the next couple of years. As part of this, the group is actively reviewing the role to understand variations in practice across Schools. Evaluation of the Cohort Lead role and it's role in academic support will continue as part of on-going quality assurance of the model.	
6	The review team recommends that the School embed careers and skills development more explicitly within the core taught curriculum, making more visible to students the skills they are already gaining. There are a lot of support and resources available from the Careers Service and the School should actively engage with the Service to help support their employability ambitions.	School	Ongoing	- As part of the implementation of Portfolio Review in the School we have established a workstream on 'Experiential Learning'. This workstream will interact with all other curriculum workstreams in the School to make recommendations and provide resources to support embedding 'Skills for Success' framework and employability in curricula. - Director of Students is liaising with careers services to embed skills for success and employability in cohort lead events. - Plans for a mentoring approach to student peer support will be developing for 2026-27. This will include alumni mentoring opportunities for current students.	2025-27
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to student on the review outcomes	Updates will be provided via SSLCs and where relevant in Welcome Back meetings at the start of the new academic year.			
Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review				