

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 29 May 2009

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Responses to the Recommendations Arising from the Review of Economic and Social History held on 10 March 2008

Mr Jim Craig, Clerk to the Review Panel

This paper consists of the conclusions and recommendations originally presented in the report of the review of Economic and Social History. Set now in the context of these excerpts are the Department's responses.

Conclusions

The Review Panel was very impressed by the performance of the Department across the range of its teaching provision, its imaginative and committed support for the quality and further enhancement of the student learning experience, and its support for, and clear articulation to students of, University policy on assessment. The Department is an active academic community but also a generously inclusive social one. It has developed a workload model which is widely regarded as fair but staff are not bound by it and have frequently demonstrated a readiness to do more than their prescribed share. There is an effective committee structure which has sought to include students at all levels of discussion of teaching and learning provision.

Recommendations

The recommendations interspersed in the preceding report and summarised below are made in the spirit of encouragement to the Department of Economic and Social History. It is important to note that the majority of these recommendations refer to tasks or issues identified by the Department for action either prior to the Review or in the SER. Some of these actions are already in hand.

The recommendations have been cross-referenced to the paragraphs in the text of the report to which they refer. They are ranked in order of priority.

Departmental Comment:

The Department of Economic and Social History took the DPTLA process very seriously and engaged with it as an opportunity to review and improve our processes as well as an opportunity to highlight the many strengths in the Department.

The Department was delighted that the Review Panel recognised the exceptionally high quality across its teaching provision and the existence of an active academic and inclusive social community covering staff and all levels of students.

The Department noted the Review Panel's acknowledgement that the majority of the recommendations had already been identified by the Department as areas for action and that the recommendations were made 'in the spirit of encouragement'. The Department's response reflects this.

Recommendation 1:

The Review Panel recommends that the Department continue to develop a strategy for increasing the numbers of suitable students recruited to its PGT programmes. *[paragraph 4.5.3]*

For the attention of: **the Head of Department**

Response:

The Department has devoted considerable time and effort in this area. In particular, the post of Postgraduate Convenor has been split into two posts, one dealing with pastoral care etc. of postgraduates once here and the other concentrating on marketing and conversion of applicants into actual students. This has had some success with a clear rise in the number of applicants to the Department's programmes. As of 30 March 2009 21 applications had been received as against 9 at the same time last session. Further applications have been received since then. Since many of these have indicated a desire to continue to a Ph.D, this remains an important route to acquiring students for a number of years.

In addition to the creation of this new position, the Department's webpages relating to postgraduate study have been updated and the Department has adopted the Faculty policy of offering a 10% reduction to the PGT fees of Glasgow graduates. In addition, the Department has decided to use an endowment this year to offer fee reductions for one year to some PGT students who are intending to study for a Ph.D.

A final measure has been to review each masters programme with the intention of improving its appeal and of considering the possibility of new attractive offerings. Consequent to this the Department intends bringing one, and possibly more, new programmes to the Board of Studies later this year for introduction in 2010-11.

Recommendation 2:

The Review Panel recommends that the Department continue to develop a strategy for increasing undergraduate recruitment. *[paragraph 4.5.5]*

For the attention of: **the Head of Department**

Response:

The Department has appointed a member of staff to be responsible for Schools Liaison to develop closer links with schools to ensure that as many schools as possible are aware of the existence of the Department and its offerings prior to students' arrival at Glasgow. This fits in with the changes to the Scottish schools history curriculum which now includes significant elements of economic and social history. Related to this the Department is making even more efforts to advertise itself at Applicants' Day and Open Days. This year there was a successful experiment in using undergraduates from Levels 1 and 2 at these events as well as honours students and postgraduates as in the past. In addition, the Department has continued to develop its links with graduates of the Department who have become history teachers. An event is held each year which allows these teachers to talk to existing students about opportunities in teaching but also provides an opportunity for academic staff to talk to the teachers about ways of spreading knowledge of the Department.

A second element of the Department's strategy has been to continue to build closer links with students in Levels 1 and 2 to encourage them to convert into

Honours students in the Department. The prime mechanism for this has been a very active student society, which the Department supports significantly, and which has focussed its efforts on not being exclusive to Honours students.

Recommendation 3:

The Review Panel recommends that the Department give further consideration to the contribution it might make to increasing overseas recruitment and helping home students overcome the obstacles that accounted for very limited take-up of opportunities for study abroad. *[paragraph 3.2]*

For the attention of: **the Head of Department**

Response:

The main contribution of the Department in this area remains its contribution to the PGT programmes offered in the Business School. This was expanded this year and may expand at the undergraduate level if the BA in Global Business runs in future. In addition, greater efforts are being made in trying to recruit international students to our PGT and PGR programmes and the number of such applicants has increased clearly this year.

With regard to encouraging more students to study abroad this remains challenging. However, we are advertising these opportunities more vigorously and a member of staff is also examining opportunities for new links.

Recommendation 4:

The Review Panel recommends that the Department should seek to ensure that students who undertake an Honours dissertation and who do not, therefore, take the course Researching Economic and Social History 2 are afforded other opportunities to develop skills in working co-operatively and maintaining records of personal and group progress. *[paragraph 4.4.3]*

For the attention of: **the Head of Department**

Response:

The Department has been very successful in encouraging students to undertake dissertations in the last couple of years and this looks likely to continue. With this increase in numbers there are less students taking Researching Economic and Social History 2 and so the issue raised by the Review Panel has been subsumed into a wider consideration of ensuring that students are able to gain from the opportunity to develop the skills previously gained by students through completion of RESH 2. This review is still ongoing at the moment. In the meantime the Department has arranged sessions for dissertations students to come together to consider their common experiences in completing a dissertation and to reflect on the skills acquired in small groups and to improve their presentation skills.