

Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

Review of Central and East European Studies

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in Central and East European Studies. *Periodic Subject Review* is an internal subject review focused on the quality of provision as experienced by students. The review looks at the range of programmes, course content, the teaching methods employed, assessment, facilities and much more.

The full report of the review is available publicly at:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_211378_en.pdf

Further information about the PSR process can be found at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/psr/>

Italicised words are explained in a glossary below.

Conclusions

The Review Panel was most impressed by the quality of both staff and students which reflected the high quality of its provision. The group of staff appeared to be a very dedicated, collegiate group, which has maintained a strong identity even with a substantial growth of staff numbers. Central and East European Studies had adopted an exemplary approach to internal review, which provided a platform for reflection and discussion between staff, students, external examiners and partner institutions. The Review Panel commended the Subject for the excellent *research-led* and *enquiry-based* teaching and learning, its pro-active development of external linkage with partner institutions and variety of innovative assessment.

The Subject should focus on actively seeking improvements to recruitment, taking full advantage of the new School structure as well as their own enthusiastic and highly motivated students. The Review Panel was very much aware of the significant relationship the Subject had with the School of Modern Languages and Cultures and the detrimental effect closure of this unit would have on their programmes, particularly the postgraduate programmes. In addition, the Review Panel was aware of the uncertainty created by short-term externally funded posts and therefore the Review Panel would encourage the School of Social and Political Sciences to support the Subject, especially taking into consideration, its interdisciplinary and international approach and reputation.

Key Strengths

- The quality and enthusiasm of the students (*Paragraphs 3.4.8 & 3.5.3*)
- The range of provision with *research-led* and *enquiry-based* teaching and learning (*Paragraphs 3.4.1 and 3.7.1*)
- The wide and innovative variety of assessment (*Paragraph 3.3.1*)
- The Subject's commitment to regular review of the undergraduate curriculum to reflect changes within the Subject area (*Paragraph 3.4.1*) *Reflective Self Evaluation Report (SER)* and strong leadership.
- The opportunities available for students to visit, take part in exchanges and engage in fieldwork in the region of study (*Paragraph 3.4.2*)
- The exemplary design of the postgraduate curriculum, in terms of its content, coherence, flexibility, intellectual rigour and international appeal, as well as extensive range and depth of provision of language training (*Paragraph 3.4.7*)
- The Review Panel was particularly impressed with the external partners and international network, linking teaching and learning with wider notions of *Personal Development Planning (PDP)* and *employability* (*Paragraph 3.7.3*)
- *Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Training* – Centre for Excellence and subsequent achievements of CRCEES (*Paragraph 3.9.4*)
- The excellent in-house *Graduate Teaching Assistant* training (*Paragraph 3.6.12*)
- The Review Panel was very impressed with the considered detail of the *SER* and the leadership provided by Professor David Smith. The staff expressed thanks to Professor Smith, for his considerable work in preparing the self assessment and for his consultation with colleagues during the process. His leadership during the review was greatly appreciated

Areas to be improved or enhanced¹

1. Feedback on Assessment

- Distributing the *assessment criteria* directly to students periodically throughout the year and not just at the beginning of the year (*Paragraph 3.3.3*)

2. Curriculum Design, Development and Content

- Review the content of CEES Level 2 Course 2B to ensure that it appropriately enhances students' learning opportunities, while maintaining its coverage of the key issues. (*Paragraph 3.4.4*)

¹ Numbers refer to the paragraphs in the full report that contain the relevant discussion.

3. Student Progression, Retention and Support

- Monitor the implication of the change to Honours entry to a 'B' pass in 40-credits at Level 1 and modify Level 1 courses to accommodate students wishing to enter Honours from Level 1, if deemed necessary. (*Paragraph 3.6.1*)
- Discuss information made available for international students with the International Student Support section of *Recruitment and International Office*. (*Paragraph 3.6.9*)

4. Student Recruitment

- Appropriately advertise and promote the Subject within the School and College. (*Paragraph 3.5.2*)
- Engage students with recruitment processes such as open days, school visits and with *induction* programmes. (*Paragraph 3.5.3*)
- Raise any concerns with the *Student Lifecycle (Project)* and *Student Advisory System* regarding clarity of advice given to the students on course selection with the Chief Adviser of Studies for the College of Social Sciences, in order for these to be addressed in the training delivered to *Advisers of Studies*. (*Paragraph 3.5.5*)

5. Resources for Learning and Teaching

- The mentors of the member of *probationary staff* should assist in setting achievable targets for PhD submission. (*Paragraph 3.8.2*)

Glossary of terms/acronyms used

Advisers of Studies

Advisers of Studies play an important role in the support of students in respect of academic matters and, where necessary, help with any social or personal issues.

Assessment Criteria

Assessment criteria are statements that explain how a student's achievement will be evaluated against a learning outcome.

Chief Adviser

The Chief Adviser co-ordinates and oversees the advising for a named degree programme and in particular has responsibility for assigning students to named Advisers of Studies.

Employability

Employability is about more than being able to get a job after University. It is about acknowledging and being able to demonstrate achievements, understanding and personal attributes that will contribute to success both during, and after, University.

Enquiry-led Learning or Enquiry-based Learning

The University of Manchester's Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning describes Enquiry-Based Learning as "an environment in which learning is driven by a process of enquiry owned by the student". It can include various forms of teaching, such as problem based learning, small scale investigations, projects and research that encourage students to take responsibility for their learning experience. It is also the subject of the University's strategic aim set out in the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy 2006-10, which is for the University to "be renowned internationally for enquiry-led learning in a knowledge culture shaped by the richness and diversity of our research environment."

Graduate Teaching Assistant or GTAs

Graduate Teaching Assistants, Tutors and Laboratory Demonstrators are students, usually research students, who assist with teaching in the form of tutorials, labs and other activities that are part of undergraduate programmes in the subject/school. They are paid an hourly rate by the University.

Induction

Induction is a series of events planned by the University, Colleges, Schools, Suubjects and the Student's Representative Council to welcome new students and provide them with information to prepare them for their studies and the forthcoming year at University. Events usually take place during the first week of the academic year.

Periodic Subject Review or PSR

The University has a six yearly cycle of review of the Subjects/Schools within it. The PSR is one of the main ways by which the University assures itself of the quality of the provision delivered by Subjects/Schools.

Personal Development Planning or PDP

Personal Development Planning or PDP is a way to promote reflection on learning, performance and achievements and to plan for personal, educational and career development. Each School/College at the University offers different types of PDP activities.

Postgraduate Taught or PGT

Postgraduate Taught refers to taught programmes at postgraduate level, usually Masters.

Probationary Staff

Lecturers/Teachers, on appointment are required to serve a period of probation to ensure that a new lecturer/teacher has an opportunity of familiarising him or herself with the academic environment; it also provides the University with an opportunity of ensuring that the lecturer/teacher is capable of undertaking the work for which he or she has been employed.

Recruitment and International Office

The Recruitment and International Office (RIO) provides applicants, parents and teachers with a single point of contact for information and advice on the range of programmes available at the University of Glasgow. The Service also develops, implements, co-ordinates and monitors widening participation initiatives within the University and with other partners. The Recruitment and International Office is situated in the Fraser Building.

Research-led Teaching

Research-led Teaching can mean different things in different disciplines. Broadly speaking, the term refers to the ways that the current research of staff can positively influence and support student learning and promote the development of research skills and attributes in students.

Self Evaluation Report

A Self Evaluation Report is a document prepared by the Subject(s)/School in advance of a PSR Review. Its purpose is to provide the Review Panel with an insight into the Subject(s)/School's view of itself, its strengths and areas it would wish to develop. It is normally prepared by the Head of School in conjunction with other staff but students should also be offered the opportunity to comment on whether or not it reflects the Subject(s)/School they know.

Student Advisory System

The Undergraduate Student Advisory System provides the key elements to deliver a flagship system of academic and pastoral guidance that will meet the present and future needs of the

University's changing student population, and enhance the opportunities for student success. The document includes a description of the Undergraduate Advisory Structure, Principles for the Provision of Advice and Information to Students, Chief Adviser Role and Remit, Assistant Chief Adviser Role and Remit, and Adviser of Studies Role and Remit.

Student Lifecycle (Project)

The phrase "student lifecycle" refers to the relationship and contact the University has with each student from enquiry through to graduation and beyond. It came into use with the beginning of the Student Lifecycle Project, an ambitious and far-reaching project to transform the student information system. The new system is called Campus Solutions and has recently been rolled out across the University (August 2011).