

## Periodic Subject Review (PSR)

### Review of School of Engineering held on 28 and 29 January 2013

#### Report Summary

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The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the School of Engineering. *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\\_295208\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_295208_en.pdf)

Further information about the PSR process can be found at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/gea/approvalmonitoringandreview/periodicsubjectreview>

*Italicised words* are explained in a glossary below.

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#### Conclusions

The Review Panel concluded that the School of Engineering's provision was of a high quality overall.

The students who met with the Panel were articulate and their satisfaction with the quality of their educational experience, the support of the staff and with the standard of programmes and courses offered by the School was evident. The School has an integrated team of staff, fully committed to the provision of high quality *research-informed* programmes and courses.

The Panel was particularly impressed by the standard of its facilities, student support of the feedback systems, particularly the *SSLCs*; the *Industrial Liaison Committee* and the use of the Teaching Office which it felt had not been demonstrated fully in the *SER*.

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## Key Strengths (Commendations)<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Quality of Students

- The positive *External Examiner* feedback, particularly in relation to the quality of the Glasgow graduates. [Paragraph 5.3]

### 2. Learning and Teaching Resources

- The level of its consultation with industry through the Industrial Liaison Committee. [Paragraph 5.6]
- The effective use of the Teaching Office in supporting the *advisory system*. [Paragraph 4.6.4]

### 3. Staff Support

- The success of its mentoring system for *probationary* staff. [Paragraph 4.8.6]

### 4. Quality Assurance and Enhancement

- The progress, to date, in achieving School-wide procedures. [Paragraph 4.7.2]
  - Streamlined *annual monitoring* process. [Paragraph 5.7]
  - The way the School is addressing the *NSS* feedback. [Paragraph 6.3]
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## Areas to be improved or enhanced

### 1. Student Support

- The School reviews its induction arrangements, in particular for UGS and PGT students, to ensure that they are fulfilling the requirements of the different student bodies. (Paragraph 4.6.3)
- Given the diversity of needs within the School of Engineering for the PgCAP, the mixed feedback about the quality of the teaching within the First Year Student Experience Survey and some misinformation about the PgCAP and PgCLTHE aims, content and requirements, the Review Panel **recommends** that the Head of School meets with a representative from the *Learning and Teaching Centre* to discuss any possible adaptations that can be made to the University's compulsory PgCert provision to better suit the needs of the School and its overseas provision. (Paragraph 4.8.5)

### 2. Graduate Attributes and *Employability*

- Adopt a more proactive approach in encouraging students to undertake a period of study abroad, particularly in light of the increasing number of Engineering programmes being taught in English at overseas institutions and the already established international collaborations within the School. (Paragraph 4.7.3)

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers refer to the paragraphs in the full report that contain the relevant discussion.

- The Review Panel welcomes the establishment of a Working Group to review the issue of placements and **recommends** that, taking cognisance of the University's new Work Based and Placement Learning Code of Practice due to be approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee in May 2013, the Working Group should consider the introduction of a similar structure across the School to that within Electronic and Electrical Engineering. The Panel also **recommends** that the Working Group liaises with Mr Jonathan Culley, the University's Work Related Learning Development Adviser based in the Careers Service. (Paragraph 4.4.7)

### 3. Feedback

- The School considers providing further guidance to students, in particular the students in Singapore, on what constitutes assessment feedback. The School should also consider adopting the procedure used in the School of Law whereby they outline clearly in writing when feedback is being provided. (Paragraph 4.3.7)

### 4. Staff Support

- Promote the School's *GTA* management structure and provides further support in the areas of marking and feedback and supporting GTAs to evaluate their teaching; as well as emphasising the *GTA* statutory training and *GTA* professional development sessions provided by the Learning and Teaching Centre to support their development. The School should also consider appointing a senior *GTA* to convene regular meetings of GTAs providing a forum for concerns or suggestions for enhancements to be raised. (Paragraph 4.8.8)
- Review process for the allocation of project teams with a view to ensuring, as far as possible, diversity and balance and that the School considers introducing a structure of greater monitoring of how the teams are operating (Paragraph 4.4.5)

### 5. Internationalisation and Collaboration

- Additional resources required to support the overseas developments in the short term; both to address concerns regarding the impact on staff workload in Glasgow and the other operational issues relating to University of Glasgow Singapore (UGS) highlighted throughout the report. In addition, the Panel recommends that the Head of College be invited to clearly identify the benefits of the collaboration to the School. (Paragraph 4.8.4) (See also Recommendations 2 – 4)
- The School considers ways to strengthen the sense of identify with the University by Singapore students, including additional teaching sessions by University staff in Singapore. One further suggestion from Singapore staff would be to consider providing a University of Glasgow T-shirt with student induction packs. Similarly, the School should consider introducing the opportunity for additional social interaction while the UGS students are in Glasgow for the *Overseas Immersion Programme* with local Glasgow students or students working in Glasgow during the summer. (Paragraph 4.7.5)

### 6. Learning and Teaching Resources

- The outstanding maintenance issues in the Rankine Building be undertaken as a priority and the system of providing information on computer accessibility currently available in the reception of the Rankine Building should also be established in the James Watt Building (South). (Paragraph 4.8.9)

## 7. Quality Assurance and Enhancement

- Liaise with *the Senate Office* on any proposed changes to the duration to ensure that they comply with the regulations set down by Senate. (Paragraph 4.3.4)
- The Panel **commends** the work the School is undertaking to achieve, as far as possible, consistent School-wide procedures and documentation and **recommends** that it continues to progress this work. (Paragraph 4.7.2)

## 8. Recruitment

- Increase schools liaison activity by utilising the services of female students to speak to school pupils about their experiences with a view to encouraging more females to take up the study of Engineering. (Paragraph 4.5.1)

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## Glossary of terms/acronyms used

### Advisory System

Members of the University community whose remit includes the provision of advice and information to students with a view to enhancing their learning experience and professional development.

### Annual Monitoring (of courses)

Annual Monitoring is a process undertaken at the end of each session by Course or Programme Leaders designed to encourage reflection on the operation of course and programmes – what went right, what could be improved, what students did and didn't like etc. – with a view to enhancing the student experience next year. The work done by the course or programme leaders is followed by a full reporting process through Schools and Colleges to Senate, with responses being made, as appropriate, at each level. The reporting procedure is designed to ensure that issues arising from monitoring are properly considered and responded to, and that enhancements and the sharing of good practice are promoted. Annual monitoring reports are reviewed by Periodic Subject Review Panels as part of the documentation provided by the Subject(s)/School.

### 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.

### External Examiner

External Examiners are appointed by the University Court on the recommendation of Senate based on advice from the relevant School. The role of External Examiner is a very important part of quality enhancement and assurance to maintain academic standards at the appropriate level and to ensure that student performance is properly judged.

### 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.

### **Industrial Liaison Committee**

Membership includes academics from across all Engineering degree programmes and includes industrial representation. It places students in industry and delivers industry led projects and delivers industry relevant MSc degrees.

### **Learning and Teaching Centre**

The Learning and Teaching Centre is a University Service whose role is to “help implement and develop the University’s Learning and Teaching strategy, identify, assess and disseminate new developments and good practice which serve to enhance the student learning experience, and will work with colleagues throughout the University to bring about change”.

### **National Student Survey (NSS)**

The NSS is a national initiative that has been conducted annually since 2005. The survey asks students in their final year of a programme to provide feedback on their student learning experience. There are 22 questions in all, this can be found at: <http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/>

### **Overseas Immersion Programme**

A four week intensive summer programme during the summer vacation (June-July) between Year 1 and Year 2. This 10-credit module counts towards the final award. Accommodation reserved in student flats close to the University of Glasgow main campus.

### **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.

### **Postgraduate Taught or PGT**

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

### **Recruitment and International Office (RIO)**

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 develop, implement, co-ordinate and monitors widening participation initiatives within the University and with other partners. The Recruitment and International Office (RIO) is situated in the Fraser Building.

### **Research-informed Teaching**

Research-informed 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.

### **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.

### **Self-Evaluation Report (SER)**

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.

### **The Senate Office**

The Senate Office provides a range of academic services to staff and students across the University and to a number of external stakeholders. Senate has overall responsibility for academic matters in the University and the role of the Office derives very much from that.

### **Staff:Student Liaison Committee or SSLCs**

Staff:Student Liaison Committees are Subject/School committees which provide a formal opportunity for Student Representatives to discuss matters with, and give feedback to their subject area.