

# The University of Edinburgh's Centre for Open Learning

## Internal Periodic Review - 14-week response report

### Guidance for completion of Internal Review 14 week and year on responses

1. Schools/Subject Areas should use the template for 14 week/year on responses.
2. The 14 week/Year on report should list all the recommendations from the final review report.
3. The School/Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action.
4. Any urgent recommendation should be highlighted along with a deadline for response.
5. Please report on the progress towards the completion of each recommendation. An explanation of how the recommendation will be taken forward and the expected date for follow-up or completion should be recorded.

**Internal Periodic Review of:** The Centre for Open Learning

**Date of review:** February 2020, Report Published September 2020 [https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/final\\_report\\_-\\_centre\\_for\\_open\\_learning.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/final_report_-_centre_for_open_learning.pdf)

**Date of 14-week response:** 14/10/2020

**Date of year on response:** -

Rec. no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
<b>Complete, have consulted with all parties</b>		<b>In progress</b>		<b>Not in progress/stalled</b>
<b>1</b> Remitted to the University Senate Education Committee (Philippa Ward)	The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the University's Senate Education Committee create opportunities for the Centre for Open Learning to fully embed its activities and broad range of expertise in language teaching, adult education and widening access into the fabric of the institution. The Committee should ensure that COL has a voice in institutional discussions about key projects and planning and help raise its profile within the University, ensuring that the excellent progress made by the Centre's own marketing team can be developed to help it grow sustainably.	April 2021	<p><i>1.2 University Senate Education Committee</i></p> <p>Progress has been made since the IPR process was completed and COL now has a Vision and Mission that has been consulted and agreed upon. The pivot to remote delivery played to COL's strengths in some way and we have enjoyed being an integral part of the ART Transitions courses and picking up opportunities for growth. To some extent this will be ongoing but there is much to be pleased about here in recent months but external support from the wider University remains crucial and we would like to discuss this further.</p> <p><i>Senate Education Committee. Recommendation 1 from the IPR of COL was remitted to the Committee and was considered at its meeting on 10 September 2020. The minute of the meeting is as follows:</i></p> <p>1.1 Internal Periodic Review of Centre for Open Learning – Recommendation Remitted to Senate Education Committee</p> <p>The Committee considered the recommendation from the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) of the Centre for Open Learning (COL) that COL should be given opportunities to fully embed its activities and broad range of expertise in language teaching, adult education and widening access in the fabric of the institution.</p>	

			<p>The Assistant Principal Digital Education noted that the Edinburgh Futures Institute was keen to work with COL to consider access routes to PGT programmes in particular.</p> <p>The Committee recognised that COL was represented on the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences' (CAHSS) Undergraduate Education Committee and therefore had access to Senate Education Committee through that route. It was also noted that the Dean of Learning and Teaching for the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) sat on the CAHSS UG Education Committee and that there was therefore a link between COL and CSE. As such, Education Committee agreed that the correct structures were in place to allow COL to contribute to University-level discussions around Education, but recognised the need to remain mindful of COL's contribution, particularly during forthcoming discussions around curriculum transformation.</p>	
<p><b>2</b> Jointly remitted to Student Systems and Administration (Lisa Dawson) and Information Services (Jennifer Milne)</p>	<p>The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that Student Systems and Administration, Information Services and other key University stakeholders continue to work with the Centre's Senior Management Team to find a viable solution for better integrating the Centre and its students into the University's systems. This should facilitate the collection of essential data on student admissions, retention and progression, helping to support the Centre's plans for growth. Where students cannot be integrated into the University's existing systems, it is <b>recommended</b> that the Centre receives the required support and funding to develop existing systems for handling admissions and on-programme tracking of students across all provision.</p>	<p>Sep 2021</p>	<p><i>2.1.1 Student Systems and Administration and Information Services</i> This project is underway, and we hope to have a more substantial sign of progress at our next update. That said our Systems Analysis Project is in collaboration with the College CIO, Registrar, and our in-house professional services colleagues. From an academic point of view, we are trying to move to more centralised points of data collection that had previously been the norm (another benefit to restructure) and have been emphasising the importance of the quality of that data and how it can better inform our decision making.</p>	
<p><b>3</b> Remitted to the COL Senior Management Team</p>	<p>The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the Centre engage staff at all levels in the development of its strategic vision for the future, particularly when developing the theme of community and identity. Staff should be consulted through staff forums and workshops, with additional events set up to engage students in these themes.</p>	<p>Oct 2020</p>	<p><i>2.7.1 COL Senior Management Team</i> In early Sep 2020, Phase 2 of our GASP project was launched which focuses on teaching colleagues, citizenship roles, governance and decision making and introducing our first COL-wide WAM. At every point, we have involved staff (and where appropriate, students) in the feedback and consultation process for this. Our Vision and Mission will be launched to all COL staff in November 2020 with our Action Plan 2021-2023; both are complete as a result of consultation with staff and students. The newly established COL SMT came into effect from August</p>	

			1 <sup>st</sup> 2020 and so we now have a much more representative group with which to write our Action Plans and set our strategic direction. Staff feedback tells us that there is an improved sense of community, particularly between academic and professional services teams. This has been marked green, but that said, we will continue to work with the wider institution to ensure that our vision and mission are understood both in terms of our identity and purpose, and how they might engage with us.	
<b>4</b> Remitted to the COL Senior Management Team	The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the Centre set up a short-life working group to outline the existing challenges with estates and buildings (including those relating to accessibility) and explore the various options for development through an evidenced report. This will help to identify specific areas that require escalation, while also helping to establish a structured dialogue between staff and students about community and identity in the Centre.	Apr 2021	<i>2.8.3 COL Senior Management Team</i> The impact of Covid has meant that we have been unable to prioritise this, but it remains an action which we hope to resolve.	
<b>5</b> Remitted to Estates (Gary Jebb)	The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the University Estates department support the Centre to establish greater ownership of its learning and teaching spaces. Estates should support the School to develop the space in	Apr 2021	Given the current Covid-19 pandemic, the Estates Development plan has been superseded by the requirement to ensure the estate provides safe learning environments in line with Scottish Government guidance. Estates will continue to support the department as appropriate in line with current University priorities.	
<b>6</b> Jointly remitted to the COL Senior Management Team and Timetabling Unit (Scott Rosie)	It is <b>recommended</b> that the Timetabling Unit continue work with the Centre for Open Learning to ensure that classrooms assigned are suitable for the teaching needs of each class. The room booking system should also be reviewed and enhanced to ensure that it does not disadvantage the Centre when assigning rooms shared with other Schools.	Apr 2021	<i>2.8.2 Timetabling Unit; COL Senior Management Team</i> Continual improvements are ongoing, we now have a COL Priority Room Allocation Model (PRAM) in place. We still need to address with the support of senior management, our Pre-sessional room allocation (mainly relating to the availability of lecture theatres and large teaching spaces). COL continually runs into issues during our summer teaching period where (normally) we would be unsuccessful in competing for rooms with the Festival and external bookings. COL had been hoping to bring the timetabling team into the review of Pre-sessional provision so this can be solved in partnership and we hope that this can still be the case but had been adjusted due to Covid pivots and increased pressures on staff time.	
<b>7</b> Remitted to Learning Technology Support (Neil Bruce)	The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that Learning Technology Support (LTS) develop an out-of-hours support model with clear routes for escalating immediate and longer term technology support issues, which is available to staff teaching evening classes in the Centre.	Feb 2021	<i>2.8.4 Learning Technology Support (LTS)</i> Again, there has been no rationale for pursuing this beyond the efforts made to ensure that our online provision is accessible for students and staff in light of Covid restrictions. We would like to suggest that longer term, this it remitted to our Digital Services Manager Magdalena Getler who would be expected to lead this for COL.	

<p><b>8</b> Remitted to the College Offices (Dr Sabine Rolle, Professor Neil Turner &amp; Professor Judy Hardy)</p>	<p>In recognition of the type of language support the Centre offers students from a wide range of backgrounds, it is <b>recommended</b> that the three College Offices find ways to facilitate deeper collaboration between the Centre and individual Schools, particularly in the areas of ELE and Languages for All.</p>		<p><i>1.3 College Offices</i> To my (J Hoy) knowledge we haven't had an update on this one given the significant shift to online delivery and Covid response. We keep discovering more and more advantages to there being a central governance process for all part-time or non-traditional provision and would like to see if COL could take a leadership role here in the future. <i>The CAHSS College Office plan to arrange a preliminary meeting with the Centre for Open Learning Senior Management Team to explore the detail of the recommendation and discuss how deeper collaboration may be achieved. The College will also invite the respective Deans of Learning and Teaching from Colleges of Science and Engineering and Medicine and Veterinary Medicine to that meeting and explore ways of progressing the recommendation at an institutional level.</i></p>	
<p><b>9</b> Jointly remitted to Head of Centre, Director of Professional Services and College Registrars (Dr Bruce Nelson, Liz Elliott and Catherine Elliott).</p>	<p>The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the Head of the Centre, the Director of Professional Services and College Registrars in each of the three Colleges explore the options for developing a revised funding model for English Language Education pre-sessional and in-sessional support to ensure future plans for growth can be carried out sustainably in the face of increasing demand.</p>	<p>Sep 2021</p>	<p><i>1.3 Head of Centre, Director of Professional Services; College Registrars</i> Our Director of English Language Education presented a paper to the UoE Exec but failed to secure an outcome. COL continues to resource and subsidise English Language in-sessional provision across the institution. Our Director of Professional Services is picking this up with the CAHSS Director of Finance.</p>	
<p><b>10</b> Jointly remitted to Director of Learning and Teaching (c/o Hannah Jones) and Institute for Academic Development (Dr Jon Turner</p>	<p>The Review Team <b>recommends</b> the Centre develop a more structured collaborative working relationship with the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to ensure language and skills support for students, can be developed and delivered with optimal efficiency drawing on the wide pool of expertise in both areas.</p>	<p>Feb 2021</p>	<p><i>2.3.2 Director of Learning and Teaching; Institute for Academic Development</i> <i>The below comment is from Hannah Jones, Director of English Language Education, COL.</i> There are numerous IAD/ELE collaborations, including the ALL Transitions course that was offered through ART. We would appreciate a more structured approach to our collaborative work, including as a first step, a kind of pulling together of everything that we do across IAD and COL to see where there may be overlap, duplication and gaps. This could lead to much clearer communications from both areas, avoiding confusion on the part of students, who might reasonably think that a lot of what we do is the same, or (maybe worse) that IAD's work is for home students and COL's work is for international students, the review recommendation gives a push to make it actually happen.  I'd suggest we go back to the start with the meeting suggested by Jon Turner, attended by the COL SMT. This might help us to establish an overall strategy for collaboration.</p>	

			Taking this forward though is probably best done by Heads of Subject Area, at least that would be my perspective from ELE.	
<b>11</b> Jointly remitted to COL Senior Management Team and Institute for Academic Development (Dr Jon Turner).	The Review Team <b>recommends</b> that the Centre develops an internal CPD framework for academic staff using the existing Edinburgh Teaching Award. This should incorporate a mentoring support model and should be facilitated with the help of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD).	Apr 2021	<i>2.7.3 Senior Management Team; Institute for Academic Development</i> CPD opportunities are much more prevalent that they had been in previous years, budget reductions as a result of Covid-19 have meant that our already lean budget planning can no longer include the commitment to CPD we had intended to provide to staff (across professional services and academic contracts). I (JHoy) worry that our comparatively tight budget management within COL leaves us little room for manoeuvre if we are asked to reduce once or even twice as has been the case, often hitting the types of activity that present an opportunity for staff collaboration and community building. A new CPD Policy will be approved in the coming months. Whilst we intend to introduce this, COL has no governance or systems in place as regards academic promotion and so we seek advice from other parts of the institution in terms of how we can embed this.	
<b>12</b> Jointly remitted to School Teaching Office and Director of Professional Services.	It is <b>recommended</b> that the Centre review the rationale and deadlines for the course registration process across Short Courses and Languages for All. The Centre should continue to streamline the process where possible, communicating deadlines and reasons for closure in advance of course registration closing, supported by a clear and consistent policy.	Oct 2020	<i>2.1.3 School Teaching Office; Director of Professional Services</i> Whilst the decision that was queried during the Review was the result of consultation with staff, there is good reason why our deadlines have to be adhered to, but these are not always visible to staff despite our efforts. The current approach to deadlines for booking was approved by the COL Executive Committee with the papers available to all staff. The rationale focuses on customer service, to avoid giving customers too short notice of cancellations - and also to provide sufficient notice to staff if their course is running or not. Beyond that, there is a workload (linked to integrated systems point above) between someone booking and course start date that shouldn't be underestimated, and more importantly there are accessibility issues which we don't find out about until the student enrolls (sometimes later) which means we need time to put in place adjustments/suitable rooms. The deadline used to be 2 weeks; we did reduce to 1. We can and should review, but we would need to resolve issues above relating to data and systems first. We agree we can publish the rationale more thoroughly and address the communications issue and so will continue to review our systems and processes, mindful of the people involved in them.	
Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	The nature of our provision means that the students who were involved in this process will have moved on to other modes of study. That said, we intend to communicate this through our Marketing and Comms team so we celebrate the commendations and highlight where we will make improvements. We continue to plan our SSLC meetings and we expect to proportionately increase student representation in our Governance and decision-making structures which is a key part of the Second phase of our Governance and Academic Structure Project, now underway.			
Commendations	It's not been asked for but I (Jenny Hoy) felt it was important to formally note what our response to the 11 commendations within this process were, particularly at the time of writing, when staff morale is low given the contexts within which we're all working.			

	<p>COL found the IPR process constructive and affirming, particularly given the enormous amount of change that the Centre has been undergoing in recent years and subsequently in response to Covid. We have fabulously committed staff who regularly go the extra mile to support colleagues and our students, and so we were particularly glad to see this reflected in the IPR. The commendations have been shared with the wider COL staff with our gratitude. The IPR and its results were discussed in team meetings and our COL Executive Committee, and a summary of the process and the final report were shared in an all staff newsletter. Having the IPR feedback has been enormously helpful in providing a reminder of the 'external' investment in our collective success, particularly given our wish to be understood and valued across the University but there is much work still to be done here. For completion, the 12 minor notes included in the final report are all either complete or being addressed in our substantial Governance and Academic Structure Project.</p>	
<p><b>For Year on response only</b></p>	<p>Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review</p>	<p>N/A</p>