

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review 2019/20

14 week response report

**Internal Periodic Review of:** Chemistry

**Date of review:** 11/12<sup>th</sup> March 2020

**Date of 14 week response:** 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 2020

**Date of year on response:**

The School/Subject Area 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.

Recommendation no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
1	<p><u>Curriculum:</u> It is strongly <b>recommended</b> that Chemistry gives careful consideration to the content of the Year Three curriculum. It is strongly <b>recommended</b> that the School works towards embedding its skills and careers' development within the core curriculum, and that a mandatory, assessed reflective portfolio for Year Five students and more reflective elements for earlier years are introduced.</p>	<p>Year 3 Review: End of 2020/21</p> <p>Skills portfolio: in line with University Curriculum Review</p>	<p>Some immediate measures were taken to reduce workload in Year 3 in response to COVID planning, and these will seed further discussions at Board of Studies in 2021.</p> <p>The University is now prompting Institution and College-level discussions regarding Curriculum Review (first College meeting: 17/11/20) and these will be used to prompt School conversation in the coming academic year after the COVID workload has passed.</p>	
2	<p><u>Supporting and Developing Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is <b>recommended</b> that pedagogical training is rolled out for all Postgraduate Tutors and Demonstrators as soon as is practicable.</li> <li>It is <b>recommended</b> that Chemistry takes steps to professionalise the Tutor and Demonstrator roles by introducing a selective recruitment process. Once in post, Tutors and Demonstrators should be regarded as University staff members.</li> <li>It is <b>recommended</b> that Demonstrators are required to work through all pre-lab exercises and experiments in advance of teaching classes and that they are paid fully for their time.</li> <li>It is strongly <b>recommended</b> that the School produces detailed assessment criteria and marking rubrics for each assignment, and clear information</li> </ul>	<p>Immediate and over the year 2020/21</p>	<p>Plans for pedagogic training are in place for the current year.</p> <p>Tutors and demonstrators are now embedded in the university's new "People and Money" system.</p> <p>Demonstrators are already paid fully for allocated training time, and when labs resume, lab organisers will ensure completion of all laboratory activities by demonstrators.</p> <p>Rubrics for assessments will be produced as part of the Extensions and Special Circumstances Project underway at University level.</p> <p>The pandemic has focussed minds on teaching and teaching approaches, and in the aftermath we will look to explore how best to support staff in completing the FHEA</p>	

	<p>about this should be published in course handbooks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School sets more ambitious targets for EdTA participation and completion; continues to build on the work started through the Teaching Forum to discuss innovative approaches to teaching and learning and share best practice; and ensures that teaching activity is a key focus in Academic Staff annual review processes.</li> </ul>		<p>status. We have already given a briefing session on using teaching considerations in the pandemic as a route to taking up FHEA.</p>	
3	<p><u>Assessment and Feedback:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is <b>recommended</b> that the School reviews the quantity and types of assessment used across all years.</li> <li>• It is <b>recommended</b> that the School develops a more systematic and explicit approach to providing formative feedback opportunities for all undergraduate courses.</li> <li>• It is <b>recommended</b> that Chemistry ensures that Course Organisers take full responsibility for all aspects of their course's assessment.</li> </ul>	<p>Current and In line with Curriculum Review</p>	<p>As mentioned we are already undertaking a review of Chemistry 3. With the pandemic, we have introduced a range of new assessments for Chemistry 1, as well introducing new assessments on coding in Chemistry 2 and 3. In all years, we have moved to open book examinations, and will likely maintain these into the future.</p> <p>The Curriculum Review is likely going to seed conversation about other aspects of assessment.</p> <p>Course Organisers are fully responsible for all aspects of their Course Assessment.</p>	
4	<p><u>Teaching Delivery:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is <b>recommended</b> that the School considers ways in which it might reduce its reliance on traditional lectures and diversify teaching approaches.</li> </ul>	<p>2021/22</p>	<p>The pandemic is likely to prompt a lot of rethinking about the role of lectures, and we will use that as a basis to move to more active/discussion based learning.</p>	
5	<p><u>Student Support</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is <b>recommended</b> that the School considers ways in which elements of the one to one relationship between Personal Tutor and student that exists under the current model of student support is retained, whilst taking full advantage of the opportunities afforded by the enhanced Professional Services Student Experience Team that will exist under the University's new model.</li> <li>• It is strongly <b>recommended</b> that the School works towards developing standard templates for all programme and course handbooks and ensures that handbooks are a comprehensive source of information for students.</li> </ul>	<p>Current</p>	<p>The School is committed to maintaining all positive aspects of the PT system in whatever form manifests after the review.</p> <p>A project involving standardisation of Programme and Course Handbooks is planned by the Teaching Office in 2021.</p>	

6	<u>Student Voice</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is <b>recommended</b> that the School takes steps to ensure that all students know when and how to raise concerns about Postgraduate Tutors and Demonstrators.</li> </ul>	Current and ongoing	We continue to illustrate to students how they can best raise queries, and will include it in PG training.	
7	<u>Quality and Standards</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is <b>recommended</b> that Boards of Examiners' discussions and decisions about action to be taken for students with special circumstances are based only on the judgements provided by the Special Circumstances Committee.</li> </ul>	2020	We will bring this topic up for discussion with the Senior Internal Examiners and Senior Personal Tutor for review.	
8	<u>Management</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is <b>recommended</b> that the School gives further consideration to succession planning for teaching-related roles and wherever possible, adheres to the principle that roles should be held for a fixed-term, five year period.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	This comment refers to roles such as Course Organiser, etc – we are refreshing Course Organisers and for example have new course organisers in our three Year 2 optional courses already in place, new CO for a Year 4 course. We are reviewing Course Organisation of our main course each year, and are extending the CO role to be a course team, so that three staff in each year are responsible for aspects of the course. This builds in sustainability and rotation possibilities.	
9	<u>University Shuttle Bus</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The review team <b>recommends</b> that the University Shuttle Bus service continues until the KB Nucleus development is complete.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<u>Response from Travel and Transport Manager, Estates Department</u>  In May 2019, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) announced the University's intention to change the transport options offered to students for their travel to and between campuses. This followed an external consultation review process.  The new approach will concentrate on creating more affordable options for students on city-wide transport services. This means all students would be able to take advantage of subsidised prices for Lothian Buses' tickets and significant discounts on Just Eat Cycles.  Due to the approach shifting to concentrate on a reduction in public transport prices for students, the money allocated for the current transport options will be diverted. This means the discontinuation of the King's Buildings shuttle bus.	

While it is recognised that this will affect students and staff who currently use the shuttle service, the aim of reallocating this funding is to provide affordable and sustainable solutions that are fair and equitable for a larger majority of our students.

These changes were due to come into effect from the start of the 2020/21 academic year. During 2019-20 students were invited to join a Student Bus User Forum, as the primary stakeholder group for informing and shaping the University's approach to ensuring students can access high quality and affordable public transport. The Forum met once on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019. Due to the impact of COVID-19 lockdown, the Forum has not met since. Work to develop more a more affordable and attractive Lothian Buses ticket product has been stalled by the significant operational and financial impact of the public health restrictions on public transport.

During summer 2020 transport plans were developed and implemented to support students on their return to blended teaching from September 2020. Due to challenging operational conditions Lothian Buses were not able to operate the shuttle service, and an alternative was not sought due to the fact that capacity would have to reduce to 25% and costs would increase. Instead the shuttle bus budget was diverted to:

- Provide all students with access to reduced price bus tickets (£1.30 reduced from £1.80). Sales were limited to 20 per student as Government guidance was and continues to be to walk or cycle wherever possible.
- Provide match funding with the Further and Higher Education institutions in Edinburgh, and Edinburgh Council to subsidise 4 month passes for the Edinburgh Cycle Hire Scheme. The 'Back to Study' pass was priced at just £10, reduced from £50, and available for all students to purchase.

These measures are expected to remain in place to the end of 2020-21. During the remainder of 2020-21 the Transport and Travel Office will prepare plans for September 2021, with the aim of implementing the May 2019 SLT decision. This would mean that the shuttle bus would be discontinued, a reduced price bus ticket product

			<p>introduced, bus services improved where required, and an attractive student offer on the Edinburgh Cycle Hire Scheme.</p> <p>Completion of the KB Nucleus project will not be before September 2022, and therefore there will be a period of at least 1 year from the discontinuation of the shuttle service, and the opening of the Nucleus. It is therefore not possible to implement this recommendation.</p>	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	Report and response will be presented to students at semester 2 SSLCs		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review			