

**Internal Periodic Review of:** Literatures Languages and Cultures (PGR & PGT)

**Date of review:** 24 & 25 October 2019

**Date of 14 week response:** 31 July 2020

**Date of year on response:** Rec'd 19 March 2021 (due 6 February 2021)

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><b>Student recruitment</b></p> <p>The School recognises the benefits of this change in professionalising admissions but acknowledges potential risks if student numbers continue to rise without an increase in resources. The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School ensures continued dialogue with the College on recruitment criteria and that all relevant colleagues engage with the process. The School should consider developing common principles for flexibility and fluctuation across programmes in future years. The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School establishes common pedagogic principles for postgraduate class and course size and strategies for scaling if numbers fluctuate. The School should aim to develop resource and contingency planning to manage risks associated with student recruitment to support growth within the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences' minimum and maximum targets. The School should also reconsider entrance criteria for programme recruitment to support resource sustainability.</p>	<p>(a) Ongoing</p> <p>b) September 2020</p> <p>c) September 2020 and ongoing</p>	<p>School Management Team</p> <p>a. Individual Programme Directors continue to be in close contact with the College admissions team especially in light of the current COVID-19 crisis and flexibility will be key in the coming months and years.</p> <p>b. The PGR Director and Learning &amp; Teaching Director work together to ensure consistency across programmes and to manage risk. We will revisit entrance criteria regularly.</p> <p>c. Especially in the current pandemic crisis, issues of class and course size are being discussed intensively and, due to the extreme unpredictability of cohort sizes (whether on-campus or online), developing a responsive model for scaling delivery is a priority.</p>	<p>(a) Ongoing</p> <p>(b) Ongoing</p> <p>(c) Ongoing</p>

2	<p><b>Teaching, learning and assessment</b> There is scope for harnessing cross-disciplinary potential in the School to identify emerging areas for collaboration. The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School consider whether it is maximising the opportunities created by its inherent diversity and range of subjects.</p> <p>The review team heard from staff who wanted to see clearer articulation of the assessment structure linked to learning outcomes. There was evidence that clear rubrics exist in some areas and the review team <b>recommends</b> the School consider the potential to extend these across its provision.</p>	<p>a. Summer 2021</p> <p>c. September 2021</p>	<p>a. The PGR Director will encourage cross-disciplinary dialogue among colleagues by holding regular meetings and discussions with all supervisors in LLC, facilitated by online technologies such as MS Teams. In terms of PGT, LLC is currently reviewing its portfolio of taught Masters programmes with the aim of reducing the number of low-recruiting programmes. Once we have freed up the resource associated with these programmes the School will begin exploring potential of larger interdisciplinary programmes that draw on our wealth of disciplinary and area expertise.</p> <p>b. As per the School plan, the L&amp;T Director is actively reviewing assessment and learning aims and outcomes for all courses. The first stage of this review is now complete, with the vast majority of courses now having clear and properly formatted intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>c. Furthermore, a new Learn template has been adopted as of 2020/21 that explicitly surfaces and presents learning outcomes to students on the landing page. With these outcomes in place we can move to the next stage of the plan, which involves 100% School adoption of rubrics to promote constructive alignment of assessment with outcomes, and action-oriented feedback. We hope that using rubrics which explicitly incorporate outcomes when marking work via GradeMark will play an important part in helping with consistency.</p>	<p>(a) Teams site for all LLC PhD supervisors is functioning well. The PGR Office and PGR Director use this as a forum to update PhD supervisors with any relevant information and updates.</p> <p>(b) Achieved.</p> <p>(c) The new Learn template has been instituted across the whole of LLC. Rubrics are slowly gaining more traction, but the rather awkward nature of Turnitin /Feedback software does not make this an intuitive process.</p>
3	<p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School ensures clearer student awareness of contacts for information, for example the Graduate School Office and Student Support Office, across School, programme and subjects to avoid reinforcement or entrenchment of differing practices in different areas.</p>	<p>December 2020</p>	<p>The School is currently reviewing its website and ensuring greater consistency across all subject areas.</p>	<p>The LLC website has been overhauled drastically, and information is presented more consistently and is updated more often.</p>
4	<p><b>Student development opportunities</b></p>		<p>a. All Guaranteed Hours teaching positions within LLC are advertised to all our PhD students.</p>	<p>(a) Achieved</p>

	<p>The review team <b>recommends</b> clarity and equity of access to teaching opportunities for postgraduate research students across the School. Postgraduate research students particularly value teaching experience and appreciate the value of work opportunities and career advice for professional development. The review team <b>recommends</b> the School consider opportunities for enhancement of internships and work-based learning opportunities.</p>	<p>B. Ongoing</p> <p>c. AY (2020-21)</p>	<p>Applicants are interviewed by at least two members of academic staff. However, there are many more PhD students in all subject areas than there are available teaching positions and so we cannot guarantee teaching experience to any PhD student.</p> <p>b. LLC is working closely with the Careers Service to ensure that PhD students are given appropriate career development advice.</p> <p>c. We are planning to invite a number of speakers who have completed humanities PhDs but who do not work in the university sector to encourage students to consider employment opportunities outside of academia.</p>	<p>(b) PhD students are actively directed to the Careers Service via our Teams site.</p> <p>(c) The PGR Office holds weekly remote drop-in coffee mornings for all PhD students with invited speakers from various parts of the University. We plan to invite outside speakers in the coming academic year.</p>
5	<p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School consider an independent review of the supervisory arrangements at an early stage of Year 1, before the annual review as a required engagement point.</p>	<p>a. Ongoing</p> <p>b. December 2020</p>	<p>a. It will be important to make sure that any such review does not add unnecessary burden to supervision teams.</p> <p>b. The PGR Director will send out a progress questionnaire directly to Year 1 students in early December in order to assess any need for any changes in supervision teams. If any issues are raised by students then the PGR Director will discuss further options with the relevant DPGRD (Departmental PGR Director) and supervision team.</p>	<p>Because the PGR Office holds weekly drop-in meetings for PhD and MScR students and because the PGR Director holds monthly PhD Forum Meetings, we felt it unnecessary to send out a formal survey of PhD students.</p> <p>In 2021-22, we will institute a more formal student representative system for PhD students with representatives from all the major departments and sections in LLC. The PhD Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) will probably meet once per semester to discuss any issues.</p>

				We feel that these initiatives will allow students to highlight any general or specific issues since they will have a number of clear channels through which to communicate.
6	<p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School ensures that postgraduate annual progression points are consistently robust and include personal development, academic matters and a forward plan.</p>	May 2021	<p>a. We are reviewing the annual review process and plan to introduce a more consistent approach across all subject areas in LLC. Information on the School website has already been revised to take into account our response to Covid-19 and, when possible, this will be updated with further School guidance.</p> <p>b. We will be considering the role of external readers in the annual review process in the coming year, particularly whether these are necessary after Year 1.</p> <p>c. There will be a greater emphasis on quantity of work produced in each year, rather than concentrating solely on the detail of sample work submitted for the annual review since the quality of such work should remain the remit of the supervision team.</p>	<p>(a) Achieved. Please see: <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/graduate-school/current-students/phd-students/annual-reviews">https://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/graduate-school/current-students/phd-students/annual-reviews</a></p> <p>(b) Achieved. See link above.</p> <p>(c) Achieved via PGR Director's induction talks and annual review guidance.</p>
7	<p><b>Community and environment</b> The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School encourages initiatives for postgraduate research to postgraduate taught mentoring as a means of supporting community building. This could also provide development opportunities for postgraduate research students in areas where teaching opportunities are not available for all.</p> <p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that the School encourages and supports student-led activity to support community building.</p> <p>The review team was supportive of the School making the case for provision of</p>	<p>a. Coming academic year (2020-21)</p> <p>b. Throughout 2020-21</p>	<p>a. The recommendation that PGR students act as mentors to PGT students is an interesting one. I will be discussing possibilities with individual Departmental PGR Directors as such mentoring would have a different inflection or utility in individual subject areas.</p> <p>b. Student-led Activity: I will be engaging closely with the PhD student body on the organisation of work-in-progress seminars and encouraging suggestions for community building.</p> <p>c. Physical space, under the shadow of Covid-19, is an unpredictable area. We are actively developing more online community spaces, including:</p>	<p>(a) This does not seem to be feasible in current circumstances and so we are not pursuing this further.</p> <p>(b) PhD students have had the opportunity to attend many departmental visiting speaker seminars and departments will be encouraged to organise work-in-progress seminars in advance of annual reviews in June.</p>

	<p>spaces that cultivate academic interaction and support community building and <b>recommends</b> that the School Management Team pursue this with College. For example, following the move to 50 George Square, the School identified a priority for development by the University Gaelic Plan to reinstate a Gaelic common room, to support Gaelic language students in their language skills and community building.</p>	<p>ii. Achieved and ongoing</p> <p>iii. September 2020 and ongoing</p>	<p>i. A dedicated Microsoft Teams site for all LLC PhD Students (already in operation)</p> <p>ii. Regular online meetings with all PhD students to share information and give the opportunity to raise any issues (these have been taking place monthly since April 2020).</p> <p>iii. Rethinking the use of the dedicated PhD study space on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of 50 George Square. The current system of allocating desks to a small minority of students is not working well and I am discussing with all stakeholders the best way of using this space for the benefit of all PhD students. Obviously, Covid-19 is affecting any planning here and so we wait for further guidance from the University.</p> <p><u>Response from College Estates Officer:</u> In the first Gaelic Plan this was seen as a wider University initiative (given the overarching plan and inclusivity of all Gaelic speakers/learners) and many discussions were held. College space remains very much occupied and very short of overall space.</p>	<p>(i) Achieved and on-going.</p> <p>(ii) Achieved and on-going.</p> <p>(iii) The PhD study space on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of 50 George Square now no longer has any assigned desks and students have removed all material from previously assigned desks. We have instituted an online booking system that allows students to book in whole days. There is ample locker space for students to store material once they have finished working for the day. The room is only open when this is safe.</p>
8	<p>The School values its diverse student population but acknowledged there were some challenges in ensuring all students had the necessary skills, including but not limited to academic English, for postgraduate study. The review team <b>recommends</b> that the College consider how the School can be supported in addressing skills gaps in its postgraduate student population.</p>	<p>a. 2020-21</p> <p>b. Ongoing</p>	<p>a. The School offers a number of training and career development sessions throughout the academic year and we will continue to develop these in response to student need.</p> <p>b. The Institute for Academic Development offers training in many relevant areas for our PhD students. We will make sure that these opportunities are clearly advertised to students.</p> <p>c. The new Doctoral College SharePoint site looks very promising in this regard.</p>	<p>(a) Students are actively encouraged to engage with services and events offered by the library, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), English Language Education (ELE) and the careers service.</p> <p>(b) Achieved.</p> <p>(c) Achieved. The Doctoral College SharePoint site is an important resource for PhD students and is often</p>

			<p><u>Response from Head of English Language in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (Centre for Open Learning):</u></p> <p>Both generic and tailored support to develop PGT/PGR students' academic language and literacy skills are available from ELE. In addition to generic academic writing support courses there is a suite of PhD writing development programmes (English Language Support for International Students – ELSIS) timed so that courses (which also provide opportunities for students to submit their work for feedback from our tutors) are available for each stage of the PhD journey: <a href="https://www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching/ele-courses/elsis">https://www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching/ele-courses/elsis</a></p> <p>Students can enrol on these courses themselves or they can be referred by their supervisors (guaranteeing the student a place).</p> <p>In addition, we work closely with Schools across the university to provide tailored academic language and literacy support where requested. This provision requires very close collaboration with Programme Directors and others responsible for course provision in the relevant Schools and can take many forms. For instance, it can include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A number of interventions at key transition points involving lectures/workshops developed and taught by ELE staff alone or jointly with School academic staff on existing courses supporting academic skills development. These include Research Skills courses and Dissertation support courses e.g. Informatics Research Review (IRR) and Informatics Project Proposals (IPR)</li> <li>2. Bespoke courses to develop specific skills. For example we are currently developing an 8 hour Seminar Participation skills for LLM students with the Law School (piloting for 100+ ss in Semester One 2020-21)</li> <li>3. Online academic writing skills development and feedback linked to specific written PGT</li> </ol>	<p>highlighted in the LLC PhD Teams site.</p> <p>ELE: The PGR Director is in contact with ELE and opportunities are highlighted to students and supervisors.</p>
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	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	I will seek guidance from the IPR process committee on such feedback, but will offer feedback to students via our regular monthly Teams meeting and via a summary of the issues and response that will be emailed to PhD students.		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review	<p>The most significant change has been the appointment of a dedicated PGR Support Officer in August 2020 and the establishment of a concrete PGR administrative team. This team has been able to identify where students have fallen through cracks, e.g. those who should have submitted their corrections for example and failed to do so.</p> <p>We have received very positive comments from students about the weekly drop-in meetings and the PGR Director's monthly general meetings.</p> <p>It is much clearer to PGR students who they can go to for help and advice.</p>		