

Internal Periodic Review of: GeoScience (PGT provision)

Date of review: 28 & 29 March 2023

Date of 14 week response: 28 November 2023

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>School leadership and strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team recommend that the School provides strong leadership regarding the importance of the masters programmes to the success of the School, including clear communication of strategy and financial transparency to ensure that staff are fully aware of the value of the PGT programmes. The review team recommend that the senior management team within the School engender a school-wide culture in which the expectation is that all academics should value and engage in PGT learning and teaching activities. The review team note the large number of programmes offered by the School under the MSc and recommend that the School undertake a strategic review and ongoing analysis, to ensure the portfolio of programmes within the MSc fits market demand and 	<p>November 2023</p> <p>Ongoing with Strategy approved in Spring 2024</p> <p>June 2023-January 2024</p>	<p>Communications in School Teaching and Student Support Newsletter will provide transparent communication about contributions of PGT and UGT teaching to the School. School DoPS will present at PGT Education Committee on value of PGT programmes to the School in relation to other activities in November 2023 based on 2023-24 recruitment. Consultation on, and development of, new School Education Strategy will improve understand of, and engagement with, strategy around taught programmes.</p> <p>The School Education Committee is undertaking a consultative process to renew the School Education Strategy. The ambition is that part of the strategy will articular the importance of taught programmes and clarify the expectation that most staff contribute to both PGT and UGT teaching and dissertation supervision and marking. Teaching Allocation Process has adopted a principle that academic staff are expected to contribute to both PGT and UGT teaching.</p> <p>A market research portfolio review is currently underway. The portfolio review is focusing on i) current PGT and UGT offering; ii) programme differentiation; iii) strengths and weaknesses of clustering PGT programmes thematically; and iv) modes of</p>	

	<p>avoids unnecessary duplication. This should include mandating external market research (including with industry bodies) for proposed new programmes and withdrawal of existing programmes where overlaps/duplication are identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team note anecdotal evidence provided by a student that the part-time MSc offering is not delivered in a way that is achievable in part-time hours. The review team recommend that the School examine the existing part-time model to ensure it is tailored to the needs of part time students, and also consider offering other accessible study options, such as CPD or micro-credentials. The review team note there appeared to be some instances of underfunding amongst the PGT programmes. The review team recommend that the resourcing for PGT programmes is reviewed to ensure all individual elements are adequately funded. The review team emphasise the importance of PGT programme directors having oversight, understanding and influence regarding the budget for PGT programmes. 	Ongoing	<p>delivery. The final report from the portfolio review is anticipated January 2024 and will provide an evidence base to support the implementation of actions that align with a new School Education Strategy</p> <p>The School recognises the challenges of studying part-time on Mc programmes that are primarily designed for delivery full-time on campus. The School is participating in institution-wide discussions and design processes developing PGT degree design principles and archetypes. As part of these conversations we are feeding in the challenges of part-time study and reviewing opportunities for developing 2-Year MSc programmes. The monthly PGT forum meetings will highlight the need for activities and inclusivity to better accommodate part time students.</p> <p>Each PGT programme receives a pro-rata funds (£500/student) for i) cohort lead activities and ii) support for dissertation research and dissemination. Programme directors decide how funds are distributed across these activities. Discretionary funding for programmes is also available and we will clarify a processes through which programme directors and cohort leads can apply for funds. People and Money: ongoing challenges mean that it is not currently possible to disaggregate spends by programme that hinders i) review of individual elements by programme or ii) being able to provide programme directors with oversight, understanding or influence. Student Services (SET and programme adminisitrators) are keeping local records about spend to update programme directors when requested.</p>	Complete
2	<p>Dissertation Allocation</p> <p>The review team recommend that senior management within the school take action to ensure equitable and</p>		<p>Dissertation and marking of UGT and PGT dissertations are already part of the School's Work Allocation Model.</p>	Complete

	<p>transparent allocation of dissertations across the school via a clear and enforced policy. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ undergraduate and PGT dissertation supervision being part of the workload allocations model ○ the use of a cluster model for dissertations based on broad disciplines (suggested four clusters), with all school academics required to be aligned to and supervise dissertations associated with one of the clusters ○ Consistent dissertation requirements within each cluster (including length and format). ○ Mandated contributions to the database of PGT dissertation topics. <p>The review team recommend that the school take action to minimise its dependence on external dissertation supervisors and external markers.</p>	<p>November 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Teaching Allocation Committee will introduce new processes to ensure a more transparent and equitable allocation of dissertation supervision and marking in 2023-24. In particular, i) dissertation supervision is standing item for all teaching allocation committee meetings; ii) each year a normal range for dissertation supervision and marking will be defined based on student numbers and available FTE staff; iii) staff and their capacity for supervision and marking will be allocated to PGT clusters and UGT programmes to inform dissertation allocation.</p> <p>PGT Education Committee will review dissertation formats and requirements. The School is mindful of wider discussions about assessment principles and priorities and curriculum transformation, and the emphasis on meaningful and authentic assessments. This may lead to a diversification of capstone projects for MSc programmes (e.g. 40+20 credit capstone for programmes that have greater emphasis on technical and professional skills). The PGT Education Forum and Committee will continue to review capstone projects, balancing flexibility for the need for consistency and ensuring there's an equivalence in the expected student effort appropriate to credit-weighting of capstone projects.</p> <p>PGT Education Committee approved decision that there should be a clarification that dissertation supervisors should have expertise in supporting dissertation research in a field, rather than specific research topics. This should enable a more equitable allocation of supervision and marking and reduce dependence on external dissertation supervisors and markings.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review team recommend that the school undertake a strategic analysis to identify the general skills that should be delivered through the MSc and ascertain how the skills acquisition and development will occur across the courses. This strategic analysis should be informed by external industry advice on skills requirements and also ensure consistency of general skills development across the programmes. 	<p>2024-25</p>	<p>The School is developing an assessment mapping exercise to ensure that existing assessment methods align with programme level learning outcomes. This assessment mapping exercise is designed to support engagement with the University's assessment and feedback priorities and principles and the School's taught assessment guidelines. This mapping exercise will be the first phase of a process of continuous improvement that will help map and identify skills acquisition and development. The second phase will focus on a strategic review of the skills and competencies developed by the School's programmes. This will include external advisors and representation from alumni and current students.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team note some programmes have a desire to be professionally accredited but had not been funded to do so. The review team recommend that the School provide funding for professional accreditation where appropriate. 		<p>The Staff Student Liaison Committee will enable gathering of the student voice as to what skills they envisage gaining from their degree, and how this maps onto assessments.</p> <p>Support and funding for accreditation for programmes is available. We will readvertise the process through which accreditation funding can be sought and is approved by the School Education Committee.</p>	
4	<p>Programme management and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team note the potential risks to the continuity of some MSc programmes posed by over-reliance on individual academics for the running of programmes. The review team recommend that the School take action to remove single points of failure via greater programme leader succession planning, increased programme team diversity and a wider range of academic contribution. The review team recommend that professional services staff be offered specialised training in digital skills and that their ongoing skills-development needs be monitored, with additional learning opportunities provided where requested. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The School has 3 tariffed roles to support delivery of MSc programmes, programme director, cohort lead and dissertation course organiser. The aim is that at least 2 academic members of staff fulfil these roles.</p> <p>The School is exploring how organising certain activities. (student recruitment, dissertation allocation) can be organised at the level of clusters of PGT programmes.</p> <p>The PGT Education Forum provides a regular space for sharing experiences and practice. An upcoming sharing practice item will be on modular course design that allows for greater flexibility in the staffing of courses.</p> <p>The teaching allocation committee are implementing a principle that staff are expected to contribute to UGT and PGT teaching, encouraging a greater engagement with, and shared ownership of, PGT programmes.</p> <p>All staff in the School have protected time (10%) for continuing professional development activities. Head of Student Services and TO manager will support professional services staff to engage with existing opportunities and identify bespoke training needs. The Student Service team has an annual away days with training aspects and regular mini-away days dedicated to thematic training.</p>	Complete

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The review team note that tutors and demonstrators within the school are only offered training in their first year. The review team recommend that tutors and demonstrators be provided with additional and ongoing annual training. The review team recommend that the School reassess the marking-time allocation for demonstrators and tutors to allow them to be sufficiently compensated for the time spent in providing meaningful feedback. The review team note the potential for conflict of interest in situations where a single academic occupies the roles of both programme leader and cohort lead. The review team recommend that an alternative point of contact is provided in such instances. The review team note the substantial workload of the Tutor and Demonstrator Administrator and recommend that procedures are put in place to manage this potential single point of failure. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Tutors and Demonstrators are given 12 hours for training each year. The Academic Lead for Tutoring and Demonstrating is reviewing annual training and curating information on recommended further training available via the Institute of Academic Development.</p> <p>The School Education Committee has established a working group to provide a set of principles for the use of tutoring and demonstration support. This working group will be tasked with establishing consistent principles on the use of tutors and demonstrators for summative assessment and feedback. The working group will produce recommendations for tariffs on formative assessment and feedback that align with the School's course delivery framework</p> <p>Student advisors provide a student's first point of contact. Where there is a specific issue with members of academic staff in leadership roles on a programme the issue should be escalated to the Student Experience Team manager and Deputy Director of Teaching (PGT). We will communicate these routes to raising concerns and escalation to students and staff.</p> <p>We have flagged the Tutor and Demonstrator Administrator as a single point of failure. The Business Support Manager is working with the T&D Administrator to get a holistic understanding of the role and how it operates. We are creating SoPS for the main operational tasks so that these can be picked up by other roles. We are also examining how we can build cover for this role onto new roles/replacements in the future.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review</p>	<p>A summary of the outcomes will be shared on the student facing sharepoint (the sharepoint was until recently under construction and we are currently focussing on a 'Student Voice' section. This will also be on the SSLC agenda to discuss with students</p>		
<p>For Year on response only</p>	<p>Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review</p>			