

Internal Periodic Review of:**Date of review:** 13 & 14 March 2023**Date of 14 week response:** September 7, 2023**Date of year on response:** May 27, 2024 (further updates provided October 2024)

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>Student Support (remit item 3)</p> <p>The review team recommends that the College works with the School to revisit proposals particularly in relation to alternative academic contacts within the new [student support] model.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School consider if it has appropriate mechanisms for supporting students who may require more help in transitioning into University study, the Year Abroad and final year of the degree, and that students are aware of what is available to them at the earliest opportunity.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Because LLC was not an early adopter of the new student support model, we had concerns last year about whether there would be adequate levels of academic contact given the loss of the personal tutor system. But one year on, we are satisfied with the implementation, noting also that we convened an implementation team immediately after the IPR that checked in regularly on the progress of implementation during Summer 2023. Our student support team won a CAHSS Excellence in Teamwork Award in 2024 for their fantastic collaboration in making the new model of student support a success in LLC. Our system of cohort leads also worked well, and our Senior Tutor is currently gathering reflections from cohort leads on how we can make it even better in AY 24/25; the implementation group will meet again soon to consider paths forward for cohort leads. We recognize some weaknesses in the system when it comes to supporting visiting students and students on joint degrees, and we will work with College on addressing those moving forward. But those issues are not unique to LLC. Based on survey data gathered by our lead for Student Development, we see value in further emphasizing the availability of cohort lead office hours and in making sure that cohort leads feel informed about referring students with acute problems to student support in the same manner that person tutors used to do. We are keen to create more opportunities for interaction between student adviser and members of teaching staff.</p> <p>At the time of our IPR, we hadn't yet adopted the new model of student support. Now in our second year, we have improved</p>	

			<p>communications with year abroad students by assigning each of them a named student advisor and by convening cohorts tied to particular transition activities. We also retained year abroad coordinators, and so the students have multiple points of contact for soliciting advice. We received no formal complaints about the year abroad experience last year, and so we are convinced that communications have indeed improved and that students are feeling more supported in their study and work away. We will continue to work with SWAY to optimize the student experience, but it must be emphasized that SWAY does not fall under the jurisdiction of LLC, and so further queries about the year abroad experience might need to be directed to them. As we have brought in a new Director of Students this year with a particular charge to make continuous improvements in the cohort model, we will continue to work with students—particularly through existing SSLC channels—to identify additional forms of support that can be brought in for students returning from the year abroad. One idea that we intend to pilot next year is meta-cohort events where Y2 students, for example, can be placed in contact with Y4 students to get a firmer sense of the opportunities and challenges posed by the year abroad.</p> <p>College’s response is as follows: <i>“The College Office team continues to work in close partnership with LLC, as indeed with all Schools across the College. Through the work of the Student Support Implementation Group, we seek to ensure consistency in the delivery of the new model of student support across all Schools, as well as facilitating and enabling Schools to provide feedback and evaluation on the impact and success of the roll-out. It is fair to say that as an institution we can do more to improve clarity and understanding around the role of Cohort Leads, especially where there are specific disciplinary and School-level requirements, such as those for supporting students going on or returning from a year abroad. As the project comes to a close, this work will be taken forward through the establishment of a new College committee which will have oversight of Student Experience and Support for all taught students in CAHSS.”</i></p>	
2	<p>Year Abroad</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School revisit the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS)</p>		<p>The LLC Year Abroad site has been enhanced to provide better information for students, including comprehensive details on funding sources, a detailed timeline of student activity for Year 2, and clearer delineation of responsibilities for SWAY and</p>	27/05/2024

	<p>workload allocation model to ensure that there is clarity of expectation for Year Abroad Co-ordinators in dealing with year abroad arrangements.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the Vice- Principal International and Head Study and Work Away consider, in consultation with the School, the business critical need for an appropriately qualified central resource to support students and staff with visa requirements for compulsory undergraduate year abroad study.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School further ensures that students are signposted to financial support information (in relation to visa costs and health screening for example). This should happen at the earliest possible opportunity so as to aid accessibility.</p>		<p>LLC year abroad roles. Additionally, a new 'Top Tips' page has been introduced, offering advice from current year abroad students to support those in Year 2.</p> <p>Many of the post-Brexit difficulties reported at the time of the review were arising for the first time, and we are seeing an increased level of support for students as we become used to the new regime. Liaison between SWAY, LLC and European diplomatic bodies in Edinburgh has continued so that yearly briefings on visa requirements are offered for the most popular European destinations.</p> <p>SWAY has reported as follows to LLC: “We have also been working on our student webpages and have added quite a lot of useful information to our Before You Go webpages, including guidance on insurance and risk assessment, signposting to visa support and guidance, and a new Emergency Situations page which hopefully addresses the questions raised. We are also working on some new emergency situations guidance for staff and will also share this when it’s ready.”</p> <p>The progress noted above should help to alleviate some of the pressures placed upon Year Abroad Coordinators, particularly the pressures described during the review in the immediate aftermath of Brexit. But we will keep a close eye on YA workload to ensure that tariffs remain appropriate.</p> <p>SWAY has written to confirm that their response has not changed since our 14 week response, which is to say they are following sector norms of not being able to offer bespoke visa advice.</p>	
3	<p>Assessment and Feedback (remit item 2)</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School expand upon this in consultation with students to develop consistency and clarity in marking criteria and their application. The School should consider harnessing existing expertise within the School and providing opportunities for sharing practice across the School. In developing marking criteria it may be helpful to consider</p>	Ongoing	<p>LLC has made considerable progress on this item in AY 23/24. In consultation with academic staff, heads of subject and department and student reps, learning and teaching representatives in English and Scottish Literature, Asian Studies, Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, and Celtic and Scottish Studies developed marking criteria for all literature, culture and language courses. The Department of European Languages and Cultures decided to take a more devolved approach, with individual language areas developing their own criteria. Many criteria already existed, but we have formalised the expectation that these exist across all courses and that they are displayed</p>	

	<p>employability and the kinds of skills the School wants its students to develop.</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School consider assessment types, the assessment load and deadlines, with reference to differentiation in respect of student needs and consistency of their experience.</p>		<p>prominently on Ultra before the commencement of AY 24/25. Learning and Teaching reps will be working with our learning technologists to ensure that these criteria are in place as we approach Semester One. This matter has been foregrounded in every school-level L+T meeting, and we devoted an entire session to reviewing drafts of marking criteria. It has also been foregrounded at school plenary and in official email communications. Marking criteria are now a required component of all new course proposals submitted to LLC's Board of Studies.</p> <p>LLC recognises that portfolio review, which has just begun, will mean the review of assessment types and loads. We have flagged concerns about overassessment in official communications, and our Board of Studies this year brought considerable scrutiny to assessment loads as it reviewed new courses and changes to existing courses. In concert with portfolio review, LLC will be working with Heads of Subject and learning and teaching reps in AY 24/25 to identify courses where overassessment is a problem measured in terms of delays to marking and feedback as well as workload strains on academic and professional services staff. AI tools like Chat GPT have many subject areas reviewing their assessment types, and we have formed a working group within LLC to offer guidance to students and staff about AI. LLC is also represented on the College working group looking into this urgent matter.</p> <p>We are combining the reduction of assessment with our approach to CAHSS's portfolio review. As our largest pockets of over-assessment reside in language areas, we have convened a short-life working group with representation from most language areas chaired by a senior academic from the Department of European Languages and Cultures. With a strong charge from our Head of School to reduce the components of assessment to no more than 5 in a semester-long course, the group will be meeting in October and November 2024 to identify an assessment pattern that properly assesses, without over-assessing, language, literature, and culture. Once that group has agreed a common language assessment structure by the end of November and submitted it to the School Executive for approval, each language area will be contacted by the convener of LLC's board of studies (the Learning and Teaching Director) and instructed to submit change forms for all courses where assessment is being reduced.</p>	
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4	<p>Postgraduate Tutors</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School consider whether it is content that there is parity of esteem and expectation in recognising the value that postgraduate tutors bring to learning and teaching.</p> <p>The School should review the postgraduate tutor job description and job segments with College HR colleagues and/or the College WAM Lead and ensure that the workload allocation model tariffs are appropriately applied with reference to the marking of assessments. The School should also consider the apparent disparity between staff tutors who can and do run office hours, and postgraduate tutors who cannot; this risks impacting the student and staff experience.</p>	Ongoing	<p>College has responded as follows: <i>“Support, training and guidance for tutors and demonstrators was the focus for the CAHSS Quality Assurance Forum in February 2024. An initial draft of a paper outlining College expectations for support and supervision of tutors and demonstrators was shared at College Education Committee on 28th March 2024, and a period of consultation followed. A refined draft was presented to the College Strategy and Management Committee in April 2024 and will be returned to the College Education Committee for approval in May 2024. As part of this, parity of WAM allocations for marking have been flagged and two issues noted for further consideration: 1. Application of updated WAM tariffs that have recently been reviewed by the College WAM team, and 2. Ensuring consistency between the total assessment load for a course (2 hours for 20 credits) and the cumulative total through individual assessments. Work is ongoing to reach a resolution on this. Separately, over-assessment has been consistently flagged with schools, including LLC, as needing addressing, and guideline tariffs are being considered by the College Education Committee on May 30th. This is an institutional priority following the recent Quality Enhancement and Standard Review (QESR), which introduced a mandate for comprehensive induction and training of tutors.”</i></p> <p>In addition to College’s advice above, LLC adds that we ran inductions twice in AY 23/24, and these inductions were open to</p>	

			<p>both new and existing guaranteed hours tutors. We will await official guidance from College, but we have flagged resource challenges pertaining to things like office hours, lecture attendance, the reading of primary texts, etc. We recognise disparities between tutors on longer-term/open-ended contracts and guaranteed hours tutors, and we have fed back to College that guidance needs to be specific to each given their unique needs.</p>	
5	<p>Management Structures</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School consults with staff to establish whether clear decision-making structures are in place to support a sense of accountability from teaching staff. There may be opportunities to assess the efficacy of management structures in order to achieve transparency of communication, closing the feedback loop on actions taken and passing on clarity to students.</p>	Ongoing	<p>The LLC Teaching Office (TO) has been restructured with the aim of enhancing the wellbeing, resilience, and retention of TO staff while ensuring a uniform student experience and consistent academic support across all LLC disciplines. Key features include rebalancing staff grades to increase senior administrator opportunities, introducing distinct roles for immediate operations and various planning stages, and removing direct subject area affiliations to foster a cohesive approach. A task-based workload management model and a centralised support system via a single, general access mailbox has been implemented. Current challenges highlight the need for a consistent approach to support and workload sharing. The restructuring focuses on standardisation and streamlining to ensure sustainable and resilient operations, aiming to future-proof against instability and enable the Teaching Office to effectively support the diverse and complex needs of LLC disciplines.</p> <p>As noted in our 14 week response, LLC held a management away day in Summer 2023 in part to strategize our collective response to this recommendation. We expanded membership of our School Management Committee to include more key role holders, and we also set up a smaller Executive Committee that meets more frequently, addresses urgent matters, and sets agendas for the larger Management Committee in a timely fashion. Our Director of Professional Services is currently working to set up events where staff working in various parts of the school can become acquainted with folks working in another part of the school. The Head of School sees this as part a community-building initiative to be enhanced in AY 24/25.</p> <p>We were without a Deputy Director of Learning and Teaching/QA Director in the 2023 calendar year, but after finally filling that</p>	

			<p>role, we charged the QA Director with a creating a thorough and robust Course Organizer descriptor that lays out very clearly all the responsibilities of the course organizer as well as the various entities within the school, including the Teaching Office, that they need to liaise with. The document not only lays out a full remit, but it also provides key dates and timelines so that course organizers understand when key tasks need to be completed and reported upon, including things like mid-semester feedback. The document also explains duties to guaranteed hours tutors and contains important reminders about feedback and marking turnaround times. LLC is happy to make this document, which we circulated to all teaching staff at the beginning of AY 24/25, available upon request. The Head of School endorsed this document in a school-wide email, and it was also widely fed into by the Learning and Teaching Committee as well as the Heads of the TO and Student Support. We view it a vital step forward in improving accountability, communication, and collaboration between different parts of LLC.</p> <p>It needs to be said—and this matter is relevant to all the items and recommendations contained in the IPR—that the industrial action (which postponed the IPR) and marking and assessment boycott that came after the IPR placed considerable strain on LLC. We had some of the highest MAB participation rates in the university, and as a result many of our management meetings in the summer and in Semester One were devoted to emergency planning. The complexity of board of examiner processes, including the evolving mitigations, strained working relationships between academic staff and the Teaching Office, and stressful conditions of overwork exacerbated already high turnover within the Teaching Office. LLC is building back from those events, but given the fact that marking burdens were amplified in Semester one and exam boards were running almost continuously for the better part of ten months (with some deferred progression boards happening later this summer), management structures and other key priorities have not been able to receive the depth of attention we had hoped.</p>	
6	<p>Curriculum</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School reflects afresh on the broader opportunities available in the Curriculum Transformation Programme and how it</p>	Ongoing	<p>Reflection continues on how LLC might benefit from the Curriculum Transformation Programme, but one year on it needs noting that CTP has not continued in its original shape or on its original trajectory. Timelines remain unclear, as do the provision of resources to achieve stated aims. Challenge courses have now</p>	

	engages with this. There may be scope for the School to have more control of its portfolio of programmes and it was clear to the review team that staff have a lot of good ideas to share in relation to curriculum transformation.		<p>been rendered optional, and some of the original premises, such as interdisciplinarity and student wellbeing, have either been backgrounded or disappeared altogether. As noted elsewhere in this report, portfolio review has now been introduced separately from CTP, and LLC will of course engage seriously with that review. LLC has also engaged in the past year with two tendrils of CTP: programme level assessment and future skills. LLC's Learning and Teaching Director has attended several meetings on both topics and brought some initial thoughts to the Learning and Teaching Committee for further discussion. This year LLC also had a member of the CTP team seconded to our school to examine a variety of systems issues and challenges. This secondment helped to illuminate areas of overassessment as well as systems limitations particularly as they pertain to the calculation of awards involving Year Abroad students.</p> <p>Although UG CTP remains uncertain, there appears to be more momentum on the PGT front, at least in terms of agreeing some broad archetypes that can mostly fix with existing programmes. LLC recently convened a meeting between programme directors and the CTP team, and two of our programmes are now going to be used as case studies for testing the archetypes and models. Meetings to discuss those results are scheduled for Summer 2024.</p>	
7	<p>Student Voice</p> <p>The review team recommends that the School consider the range of opportunities for engaging with, compensating, and recognising the contribution of its Student Reps. Student Rep recruitment and training is supported by Edinburgh University Students' Association and there may be avenues for the School to further its links with the community and increase uptake in these roles.</p>		<p>As noted in our 14 week report, EUSA informed us that they do not support financial compensation of student reps. We worked hard to bring our reps on board as early as possible this year, and our lead reps for LLC received bespoke support and onboarding meetings with LLC's Learning and Teaching Director and Director of Student and Academic Services. LLC engaged regularly with its reps in student-staff liaison committees, and we recognised their contributions in department and subject area meetings as well as in school-level meetings. We saw good uptake of roles this year, and we will continue to work to integrate student reps into developing cohort structures and systems of support.</p>	27/05/2024
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	Feedback into the review, as well as feedback about the review, is solicited and disseminated through our student-staff liaison committees at subject area level, as well as through our school-level reps who attend Board of Studies, Learning and Teaching, and School Management Committees.		

For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review	Three positive changes are highlighted above. These include the institutionalisation of marking criteria across LLC's curriculum, the restructuring of the Teaching Office to improve efficient contact among professional services staff and between academic and professional services staff, and the enhancement of the Year Abroad website to better flag various sources of information and support.
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