

The University of Edinburgh

Postgraduate Programme Review 2013-4

Moray House School of Education
13th & 14th May 2014

A. Introduction

1. Postgraduate Programme Review in wider Quality context

The Postgraduate Programme Review (PPR) of Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh is part of the University's Quality Assurance procedures, and is complemented by the Senatus and College Quality Assurance Committees' monitoring and reporting, and by the External Examiner system.

2. Scope of this review

The review included the following programmes:

Academic Practice (PgCert)
 Additional Support for Learning (MEd/PgDip/PgCert)
 Community Education (MSc/PgDip)
 Dance Science & Education (MSc/PgDip)
 Developing Educational Leadership & Learning (PgCert)
 Digital Education (MSc/PgDip/PgCert)
 Education (MSc)
 Education: Language - Theory, Practice & Literacy (MSc/PgDip/PgCert)
 Educational Leadership (MSc)
 Educational Leadership & Management - including the Scottish Qualification for Headship Diploma (MEd/PgDip/PgCert)
 Educational Research (MSc)
 Higher Education (MSc)*
 Inclusive & Special Education (MSc)
 International Child Protection Research (MSc/PgDip/PgCert) *
 Language Teaching (MSc/PgDip)
 Learning for Sustainability (MSc/PgDip/PgCert) *
 Management of Training & Development (MSc/PgDip/PgCert)
 Outdoor Education (MSc/PgDip/PgCert)
 Outdoor Environmental & Sustainability Education (MSc/PgDip/PgCert)
 3-14 Physical Education (PgCert)
 Performance Psychology (MSc/PgDip)
 Physical Activity for Health (MSc/PgDip/PgCert) *
 Social Justice and Community Action (MSc/PgDip/PgCert)
 Sport Policy, Management & International Development (MSc/PgDip) (formerly MSc Sport & Recreation Business Management)
 Strength & Conditioning (MSc/PgDip)
 Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages - TESOL (MSc/PgDip/PgCert)

Education, Doctor of (EdD)
 PhD in Education

The PPR consisted of:

- The University's standard remit for internal subject reviews;
- College and School specific remit items (listed below);
- The Analytical Report prepared by the Moray House School of Education and additional information provided in advance of the review visit (listed in Appendix 1);
- The visit of the review team to the Moray House School of Education, including consideration of further material (listed in Appendix 1);
- The PPR report produced by the review team;
- Following the review, action by the Moray House School of Education and others to whom recommendations were remitted.
- Membership of the review team

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| Convener | Professor Alan Murray, College of Science and Engineering, University of Edinburgh |
| External member | Professor Steve Walsh, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University |
| Internal member | Dr Stephen Bowd, School of History, Classics and Archeology, University of Edinburgh |
| Internal member | Dr Judy Hardy, School of Physics, University of Edinburgh |
| Student member | Ms Reyhaneh Mozaffar, Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh |
| Administrators | Dr Linda Bruce, Academic Services, University of Edinburgh Ms Natalie Carthy, College of Humanities and Social Science, University of Edinburgh |

3. Brief background to the School

The Moray House School of Education is part of the College of Humanities and Social Science, one of three Colleges that make up the University of Edinburgh. The School is a large, inter-disciplinary institution with research interests and teaching commitments across all aspects of education and learning, from pre-school, PE and sport to community and higher education and lifelong learning. The Graduate School community is characterised by diversity in educational focus, and is strongly international in its composition.

Moray House School of Education (MHSE) has a history of teacher education spanning two centuries. In 1987, Dunfermline College of Physical Education merged with the then Moray House Institute of Education. As the Institute of Education, it joined the University of Edinburgh in August 1998, becoming the Faculty of Education. The Dunfermline College campus was subsequently relocated from Cramond to purpose-built accommodation at Holyrood in 2001 to create one campus.

4. Physical location and summary of facilities

The School occupies a cluster of seven buildings at the University's Holyrood site. The MHSE site incorporates six main buildings and a specialist library. The

accommodation spans Holyrood Road and borders the Royal Mile. MHSE overall has a range of teaching spaces, with a large number of teaching or seminar rooms that cater for between 25 and 60 people. The School has only three rooms that are able to cater for bigger numbers, taking 80, 120 and 350 students respectively. St. Leonard's Land houses teaching, laboratory and gym facilities for UG, PGT and PGR students in ISPEHS. Specialist provision includes a dance studio, a free-weights gym with testing facilities, and biomechanics and physiology lab-spaces including an environmental chamber. PGR students have shared office spaces and PGT students have access to a drop-in computer room. The library is located in Dalhousie Land and comprises five floors with study spaces and bookable small-group meeting rooms though only two floors and a mezzanine are currently in use by the library.

The main catering facilities for UG and PGT students are based in Paterson's Land, where a large cafeteria-style restaurant, Chapters, serves hot food from 8am till 4pm and two common rooms serve as designated social spaces. In Charteris Land there is a recently-refurbished foyer area with mixed seating and in St Leonard's Land a mixture of seating is located on the 2nd floor at reception with a vending machine. MHSE has invested significantly in these social spaces over the last four years.

The Graduate School has employed a strategy for arranging study space for doctoral students so that first year students begin their study in PhD 'suites' with a capacity for twelve students in each (36 in total), based in Thomson's Land near the administration offices. Elsewhere, there are two five-person rooms in Paterson's Land, two rooms in St John's Land for five and six students, several rooms in St Leonard's Land of various sizes and several smaller offices in Simon Laurie House for students in later years. Most of these rooms have access to a kitchen / social area, often shared with other members of Moray House staff.

5. Date of previous review

The review covered the period since the previous review of the Moray House School of Education postgraduate provision, held on the 10th & 11th March 2008.

6. Analytical report

The Analytical Report was prepared by the Director of the Graduate School, Dr Evelyn McGregor, with assistance from the Depute Director of PG Studies, Director of Quality Assurance, Accessibility Co-ordinator, Director of the PhD Programme, Head of School, and the Graduate School Administrators.

7. College and School specific remit items

The College raised the following remit items for consideration by the Review Panel:

1. The University strategy concerning postgraduate research recruitment figures. The figure to be achieved is 2.5 students per member of staff eligible to supervise. The initial target for CHSS colleagues was set at 1.25 students per staff member. The College would like the panel to discuss the interpretation, and subsequent implementation, of this target within the School;
2. The College would like the panel to discuss the School's response to, and action plan for, the PTES and PRES results;
3. The College Learning and Teaching strategy will put forward the need for annual programme level review. How does the school intend to implement this? How sustainable are PGT programmes within the School?

4. Does the School have a plan to develop future study abroad activity?

The following remit items were raised by the School:

1. Enhancing the experience of a changing student cohort (including managing large programmes; international make-up of the cohort; the increasing PGR population; support for students whose first language is not English; support for part-time students);
2. Further developing student/staff communities (including developing PGR representative roles; building the research community both academically and socially; compiling a strategy for online distance learning);
3. Optimising provision of research training;
4. Configuration of postgraduate structures in the School (incorporating additional support to the PG Director, with potential disaggregation of certain tasks).

Key elements (1)

- (i) Managing large intakes and fluctuating intakes to some PGT programmes;
- (ii) Addressing/Managing lack of national diversity on some PGT programmes;
- (iii) Managing staffing issues in relation to growing PGR numbers;
- (iv) Colleague confidence in international issues as part of L&T;
- (v) Centralised support for students who have English as a second language;
- (vi) Support for part-time students.

Key elements (2)

- (i) Developing and enhancing the role of PGR student representatives;
- (ii) Developing and enhancing shared academic and social experiences for PGR students/staff and PGT students/staff;
- (iii) Internationalising campus ethos;
- (iv) Internationalising course content;
- (v) Strategy for ODL.

Key elements (3)

- (i) Further developments to cross-programme PGT research courses;
- (ii) Enhanced guidance for research training and consistency of provision for PGR students

Key elements (4)

- (i) Configuration of postgraduate structures in the School (incorporating additional support to the PG Director, with potential disaggregation of certain tasks)

B. Main body of report

This follows the structure of the University standard remit for Internal Reviews.

1 Management of the student learning experience

1.1 Effectiveness of the review area's approach to the management and resourcing of learning and teaching/research experience

The review team **commended** the effort of the MHSE Graduate School in maintaining a positive and consistent experience of students with diverse needs and expectations across a wide range of disciplines. The panel was impressed by the management style of the new Head of School and **commended** her efforts to (a) create an interactive and collaborative working environment and (b) cause the School to reflect upon its long-term aims and purpose.

The review team noted the impact large numbers of PGT programmes and courses were having on postgraduate provision within Moray House. The panel **recommended** that the School consider consolidating their PGT provision with the aim of delivering fewer, more flexible programmes. It was felt that a smaller number of programmes with broader titles could create key brands for applicants and enhance relationships with partner institutions hosting similar degrees. The panel suggested that generic pathway programmes, with themed collections of courses, enabling students to specialise at a later stage, would appeal to a wider market and improve the sustainability of PGT provision.

The panel **recommended** that the School examine whether the current divide between undergraduate and postgraduate taught/postgraduate research was the optimal structure for MHSE Graduate School. The review team suggested that postgraduate viability could be improved by strengthening links between undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision. It was suggested that there was potential for undergraduate courses to be made available to postgraduate students as Level 11 options by modifying the assessment requirements. It was also suggested that financially "vulnerable" courses, such as those belonging to the Additional Support for Learning group, could be made available as option courses for other postgraduate and undergraduate programmes. This strategy would potentially enable the School to maintain courses like ASL, which may not be financially viable, but are academically, pedagogically or socially extremely valuable.

The School were **commended** for their increasingly robust programme approval procedure and strategic planning. The School were encouraged to maintain and develop this system to improve PGT sustainability.

The panel was asked to consider how the School might incorporate additional support to the role of Postgraduate Director. The review team felt that streamlining PGT provision would enable the Postgraduate Director to concentrate on policy and strategic aims. It was suggested that the appointment of additional Depute PG Directors in the School's three Institutes would both centralise the post-graduate research community and provide potential for responsibilities to be delegated.

It was acknowledged that the University strategy concerning postgraduate research recruitment aims to achieve 2.5 students per number of staff eligible to supervise, with the initial target for CHSS colleagues currently set at 1.25. The School confirmed they were working towards this target but admitted that, due to the nature of the School, 2.5 per member of staff would probably be an unachievable target. The review team **recommended** that the School discuss the target, initially with the Head of College. This discussion should take place in the context of its relevance and achievability given MHSE's diversity of provision and mission. The panel felt that the discussion should be part of a wider discussion regarding the way in which the University assimilates and nurtures "new" Schools such as MHSE and ECA (see section 3.1 below). It was suggested that efforts to attract a cohort of doctoral students with a wide range of interests through marketing, or targeted studentships, may help share the workload amongst staff and prevent overburdening staff with the most popular topics.

The School were **commended** for their efforts in building a PGR community within a large and varied cohort. It was explained that building a cohesive community was challenging as doctoral students at MHSE formed one of the most diverse groups in the College, ranging from PhD to EdD, Home/EU to International and full-time students to part-time professionals. The School confirmed that they were attempting to bring together the cohort, by treating all doctoral students as one unit in communications and organising events to enable them to share ideas and work together with staff.

1.2 Key features of the learning and teaching/research experience

The variety of niche and specialist postgraduate provision, including programmes in sports science, dance and specialist support in Education, is a key feature of the learning and teaching experience at MHSE. The review panel recognised that these programmes were part of the School's mission to support Educational study and research across a broad spectrum and **commended** their efforts to maintain these programmes.

The review team **commended** the School's work in developing Online Distance Learning (ODL) provision. The School is training a member of administrative staff to support the new MSc in Digital Education and intends to add to this as the ODL suite develops. It was confirmed that the accurate costing of the requirements of ODL provision, particularly in regard to time contribution by academic and support staff, poses particular challenges, and the review team noted that these were likely to be shared by other disciplines. The review team **recommended** that the University's Learning and Teaching committee consider how best to devise a costing model for digital programmes, including on-campus and distance learning, to enable Colleges and Schools to form a coherent strategy and produce meaningful projections of programme costs.

The panel **commended** the School for their adaptation of research training, which responded to recommendations of the previous Postgraduate Programme Review. The current research training provision of three 10 credit courses spread across the first and second semesters appeared to be working well. It was acknowledged that a recurring issue with research training for all Schools was how to provide a balance of generic and specialised training to suit student needs. The review team **recommended** that the School examine their research

training structure and consider introducing elements earlier in the academic year to better prepare students for assessment. This should include consideration of varied modes of delivery for research training, including podcasts and online lectures to enable to students to access the material when required; and investigation of the possibility of acquiring College or University funding to provide cross-school or cross-college research training and embedding specialised training into taught provision.

It was noted that there was no formal requirement for PhD students to take research training, although places were usually available on PGT and EdD courses if requested. The review team suggested that formalising research training and assessment for PGR students in the first year could help support students and improve completion rates.

1.3 Key features of (and trends in) the student population and implications for learning and teaching/research experience

It was acknowledged that student numbers on particular programmes, including the MSc TESOL and MSc Education, had increased dramatically over the last few years. The panel **commended** the School for their efforts in accommodating the increase and particularly, to the improved management of the MSc TESOL programme in this respect.

The review team **recommended** that the School examine the effect increasing numbers were having on staffing resources and staff support, particularly in respect to Associate Tutors and Doctoral student Tutors, to ensure that staff and students on larger programmes were having a comparable experience to those on smaller ones. Staff felt they were unable to spend as much time with students as they were in previous years and were concerned about possible impact on the student experience and implications for the School's reputation. It was noted that while workshop numbers on one of the largest programmes, MSc TESOL, had been reduced from 35 to 25 students per workshop group, this was still larger than postgraduate norms. It was suggested that the School consider how they can invest in staff resources on the larger PGT programmes to ensure a consistency of provision.

The panel had been asked to investigate the lack of diversity in MHSE's PGT community. Student feedback had shown that the predominance of students from a single national grouping had a negative effect on the sense of community for international and home students alike, who come to the University of Edinburgh for a diverse, multinational experience. From a financial point of view, there was also concern that reliance on a single market was not sustainable and had the potential to cause significant problems for the School if the recruitment market changed. The School was **commended** for introducing targeted bursaries to promote diversity and the panel **recommended** that the School continue to strengthen its market intelligence and investigate the possibility of government-funded scholarships for students in other parts of the world, including the Middle East and South America. It was also suggested that introducing accreditation for prior learning, or courses specifically designed for Continuing Professional Development (CPD), could result in an increase in home student applications. It may be worth targeting local and national language-training companies and bodies to offer partly-accredited entry and/or part-time study to working professionals in the field.

1.4 Effectiveness of the review area's approach to supporting students in their learning

The School was **commended** by the panel for their smooth introduction of the PGT Personal Tutor System. From speaking with staff and students, the review team were pleased that students were broadly satisfied with the support and that tutors and students were clear on their role within the Personal Tutor system. The panel noted that the School is working on a set of minimum expectations regarding student support, which has been discussed at School meetings to ensure maximum buy-in.

It was suggested that the Student Support Office may benefit from increasing their visibility to postgraduate students and that more sharing of the pastoral role between Personal Tutors and Student Support Officers may increase the number of potential and available contacts for students and spread the workload for staff.

The panel **commended** the School for the implementation of an extended Induction programme in response to student needs. The School discovered that many students felt overwhelmed by the volume of information in Induction Week and often required more support over a longer period. In response, the School had introduced an online, pre-sessional induction session before the start of term and an on-going seminar series 'How to do well in your Masters' throughout semester one.

It was noted that international students often felt uncomfortable in approaching their tutors with questions or problems. The panel felt the new Personal Tutor system would partly address this issue but it was also acknowledged that the first point of contact for many international students was the Graduate School office or Student support office. The Graduate School administrative support team and Student Support Officers were **commended** for their efforts in building relationships with students and facilitating communication between students and staff.

The review team were asked to consider centralised support for students with English as a second language. It was suggested that the School consider enhancing the promotion of pre-sessional language courses and academic preparation courses provided by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD). The School was **commended** for their pre-sessional induction website, which provides an overview of the provision, location and structure of Moray House. The panel suggested that appointing supervisors or personal tutors as a point of contact well in advance of students arriving in Edinburgh may help integrate the student community.

The School was **commended** for their excellent results of 72% satisfaction rate in the Assessment and Feedback category of the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). Tutors at MHSE are encouraged to keep students informed about when they can expect feedback and to make feedback a co-creative, interactive process. It was confirmed that a major part of a good Assessment and Feedback process was about managing student expectations, and keeping them informed. It was **recommended** that the University, through Learning and Teaching Committee, build an understanding of MHSE's good practice in this currently-problematic area.

While the School's overall results from PTES were positive, the point was raised that the score for Academic Support at 60% satisfaction rate was low by comparison. It was explained that because MHSE students study learning and teaching, their expectations were often higher and more specific than in other schools.

The Director for Quality Assurance confirmed that while she would welcome the opportunity to consider the varied fail rate across MHSE programmes, it was problematic to investigate in a way that develops practice, as each programme attracted very different cohorts. It was confirmed that External Examiner reports demonstrated that the programmes across the School were robust.

It was acknowledged that the University expectation for email responses was three working days and confirmed that Moray House normally meets this target, unless another method has been agreed between the tutor and students concerned. The panel acknowledged that waiting for email responses can sometimes be distressing for students and suggested that the School might wish to consider operating a hotline, staffed during office hours, for students to call when they need an urgent response.

The panel **recommended** that the School continue to work on their methods of communication with students. It was acknowledged that communication could pose challenges within larger Schools and that the School already made efforts to keep students up to date, but that further attention may improve the students' sense of inclusivity and thus their engagement.

The panel **commended** the SQH and MTeach team for their support of part-time students and efforts in building a research community. The panel suggested that this practice be shared across the School to enhance inclusivity for part-time students.

The review team **recommended** that the School consider creating closer links with other Schools and Colleges across the University to improve collegial relations and increase the diversity of support for PGR students. It was suggested that cross-school or cross-college supervision arrangements could be particularly useful for MHSE students whose research interests cover a wide range of subject-specific research in Education. While MHSE is about education, all Schools do education and are therefore full of potential collaborators for MHSE staff. It was acknowledged that the School receives more approaches about supervision in highly popular areas than it can currently accommodate. The review team suggested that looking for co-supervisory arrangements outside of the School may help accommodate this.

1.5 Effectiveness of the review area's approach to promoting the development of graduate attributes

The School were **commended** for their hosting of a biannual Student-Staff Conference for PGR students. From talking with students, the panel understood the conference to be extremely popular. Students felt the conference brought the research interests of MHSE together in one space and provided an opportunity to improve employability. The panel **recommended** that doctoral students should be enlisted to organise this event on an annual basis, as this would add to their transferable skills and enable to School to host the event more frequently.

The School were **commended** for their support of the student-led '*Mind the (Career) Gap: how to make a successful transition from grad school to academia*' seminar series. Supported by the Institute for Academic Development and the Counselling Service, the series provides students with the opportunity to speak to graduates who had recently entered the job market and been successful in obtaining a post. The panel suggested that the School consider how they might continue the series once the current student organisers had graduated and **recommended** that the School examine more opportunities for student-led events in liaison with the Careers Service.

The panel **commended** MHSE for their recent introduction of an online journal, to increase the publishing experience of their PGR students and share research within the School. It was acknowledged that this was the product of a well-attended seminar series entitled 'Writing for Publication'. The series prompted students to think about the requirements of writing for journals and encouraged them to consider discussing student-staff joint publications with members of the department. After obtaining a grant, the School took the students away on a writing retreat which resulted in the majority beginning work on an article individually, or in collaboration.

The review team **recommended** that the School consider how to improve links with alumni. It was suggested that this would be beneficial in creating a holistic MHSE community. It was noted that practice varied amongst PGT and PGR programmes, with Programme Directors being primarily responsible for contacting students on an individual basis. The concern of alumni communications being associated with requests for financial support meant there was reluctance to implement a School-wide mail out, but the panel suggested that more targeted, programme or research-area based communications could help strengthen the postgraduate community from applicant to graduate.

1.6 Effectiveness of the review area's approach to managing the learning environment

The review team **commended** the School's efforts to increase students' identification with Moray House Graduate School as a whole and to build a holistic community across subject areas. It was acknowledged that this objective had been identified by the previous Postgraduate Director and maintained by the current Postgraduate Director.

It was noted that there were no links to staff or doctoral student research interests on the Moray House central pages or on the Institute webpages and that these can only be located via the Graduate School and Research Degrees links. The panel **recommended** that research interests be made more visible on the School webpages. The panel felt this would attract potential applicants and research proposals. It was suggested that it would be more productive for applicants and students for research interests to be listed by subject area rather than A-Z.

Students reported that student residential accommodation allocations could work against building diverse social and academic communities. International students informed the panel that they were often housed with other students of the same nationality and confirmed that this made it more difficult to break the language barrier and mix with other students. The panel **recommended** that

Accommodation Services consider introducing greater diversity in the mix of nationalities when making allocation decisions.

The panel **commended** the Moray House site library for their provision of materials through e-reserve and extended opening hours. The panel suggests the School encourage all course organisers to liaise with library in advance for new courses and programmes, to avoid materials being unavailable or in short supply.

1.7 Effectiveness of the review area's approach to promoting an accessible and inclusive learning environment for all students

The School were **commended** for their use of virtual learning initiatives to promote inclusivity, including the streaming of lectures and the uploading of documents and lecture notes to online platforms. It was noted that this was particularly useful for courses in research training, to which students often return at various times of the year.

While the panel acknowledged that many programmes and courses within Moray House related to the Scottish education system, they **recommended** that the School expand the internationalisation of course content, with case studies and examples of teaching practice from around the world. It was suggested by some students that a glossary of academic terms would be useful for international students as points of reference are often culturally varied.

It was acknowledged that the School had added more facilities to student social spaces, including microwaves and kettles and the review team **commended** the Postgraduate Director for her proactive approach in responding to student needs. The panel suggested that this be implemented in all student social spaces and acknowledged that the availability of hot water was particularly important in Chinese culture.

It was noted that PGR students working from home in preference to using offices and social spaces was impacting on the sense of community amongst doctoral students. While it was acknowledged that MHSE has a more diverse cohort than most schools, and many students may have other commitments that prevent them from frequenting campus, it was suggested that the School endeavour to encourage the use of student offices and social spaces. It was acknowledged that if space is underused it may be reallocated to other purposes by University Estates and Buildings, and the panel suggested that the School discuss this possibility with students to determine how important shared space is for the community.

1.8 Effectiveness of the review area's approach to supporting and developing staff to promote effective learning for students

It was acknowledged that MHSE had recently reviewed and improved their workload model, but that this was still a work in progress. One of the primary issues for Moray House was how to allocate staff time dedicated to programmes of varying sizes. It was established that workload models were never going to be entirely accurate in terms of hours and agreed that the method adopted by the School, to use the workload model as a way of striking a balance between staff

members, in particular to highlight unusually high or low teaching commitments, was the most sensible approach. The panel **recommended** that the School also consider including the College-wide or University-wide responsibilities of staff in the workload model.

Staff at Moray House were **commended** for their commitment to team teaching and sharing good practice. It was acknowledged that the University is currently considering how it measures teaching quality, and that peer-observation may have a significant role to play. Although not currently included in workload allocation, it was confirmed that many staff at Moray House choose to team teach, viewing this as an integral part of practice and professional growth. Staff felt feedback and suggestions from their peers was of great benefit, enabling them to ? and form a collaborative and co-creative approach to learning and teaching. The panel **recommended** that the School ensure peer-review practices are recognised as an integral part of practice and professional growth, and that this is reflected in the workload model.

The School were **commended** for the creation of the shared practice Doctoral Committee on the staff intranet and the panel **recommended** that the School consider more ways to facilitate on-going support for supervisors, to enable them to accommodate the changing needs, context and expectations of the student body. It was explained that newly qualified staff were not eligible to be a principal supervisor, until they had seen a student through to completion as a second supervisor. Further support could lead to improved completion rates and in turn increase the number of staff eligible to supervise.

The School were **commended** for their intention to set up training sessions for Programme Directors on how to attract funding and how to advise students on applying for funding.

2 Management of quality and standards

2.1 The effectiveness of the review area's approach to setting and maintaining academic standards

The School was **commended** for the positive comments its provision received in reports from External Examiners and for its effective action in response.

It was acknowledged that raising the language requirements from IELTS 6.5 to IELTS 7 for some programmes in MHSE had had a correlative effect on the standard of student work once on programme. It was established that a close working relationship with the Education team in the College Office created a thorough and effective admissions process.

Based on scrutiny of supporting documentation provided by the School, and on meetings with School staff and students, the panel was confident that the School has effective mechanisms in place for setting and maintaining academic standards.

2.2 Effectiveness of the review area's approach to monitoring and quality assurance

On taking up her role the School Director of Quality had carried out a review of quality assurance mechanisms and had introduced an online portal for course and programme monitoring. This now supports effective oversight by the School Director of Quality and by programme directors. Current enhancement work is focused on student engagement in quality systems, and specifically on closing the feedback loop to students: College Office is working with the School to identify current good practices and opportunities for enhancement in these areas. The aim is to move beyond updating students on actions to working with students in decision-making. The School Director of Quality was **commended** for her effective management and development of School quality assurance and enhancement.

The panel heard that the School's online system for course and programme monitoring was working well and producing useful results. The School was currently taking part in a University pilot of the EvaSys system for student course questionnaires, which aimed to introduce greater consistency in questions asked of students while also including questions customised by Schools. However, the School's experience of the pilot was that engagement by staff and students was considerably reduced: staff felt distanced from the centrally-administered process, and student participation rates were very significantly lower than in previous years.

It was confirmed that assessment and feedback were a current QA priority for the School and that a range of CPD opportunities have been provided, including opportunities for tutors to discuss the strengths and limitations of different practices.

2.3 Effectiveness of the review area's approach to listening and responding to the student voice

It was confirmed that the Student-Staff Liaison committee was the most common method of receiving student feedback, but acknowledged that practice was varied with regard to the scope and frequency of the meetings. Some SSLCs were programme or course specific while others covered a broader subject range. Not sure what this last refers to – agree, I'm not sure what is meant here. The School confirmed that they would like to retain Programme Directors' flexibility in hosting SSLC meetings, as programme monitoring indicates that the practice is effectively tailored to suit the needs of the student cohort.

The panel suggested that as part of planned work by the School Director of Quality on closing the feedback loop the School examine their practices for demonstrating to students how their opinions and requests have been taken on board and implemented, as some felt they were not kept informed about how changes were implemented as a result of comments made at the SSLC. It was also suggested that the School consider ways to monitor SSLC practice as a whole and keep students informed by the publishing of SSLC minutes.

The panel had been asked to consider how the school could develop and enhance the role of PGR student representatives, The panel suggests that the

School's work on building the postgraduate research student community includes a collaborative approach with students in exploring this issue.

As noted above, the School would be working with the College office in the near future to determine how best to close the quality loop, including how to inform students of suggestions that have been acted upon. The panel encouraged the School to continue this work and to disseminate findings for a wider University benefit.

2.4 The effectiveness of the review area's approach to the management of assessment, progression and achievement

It was established that progression monitoring of PGR students at Moray House consisted of a formal first-year review and submission and an informal second-year review process. Students approaching their first-year review are expected to produce a paper of between 5,000 and 10,000 words and a presentation. Relevant members of staff, who are not involved in supervision, form the panel for an hour long Q&A session. The student receives verbal feedback from the panel and a written report after the event. It was confirmed that if a student failed to meet the standard of the progress review, supervisors consider what further support would be necessary and decide when would be appropriate to hold another progression board, usually between 3 and 6 months' time.

The review team were informed that the second-year progression board was a much less formal process and, as the first-year review was currently the only official progression point, it could be difficult to address problems arising later in the period of study. The panel **recommended** formalising a series of progression points, or key milestones, to monitor student progression beyond the first year and improve completion rates.

In answer to Pete's point in comments, it may be because PGT processes follow CHSS guidelines

3 Management of enhancement and sharing of good practice

3.1 Effectiveness of the review area's approach to the strategic enhancement of the student experience

It was clear that Moray House was committed to the enhancement of the student experience and that steps were being taken to address student concerns and meet University targets. The review team **recommended** that, given its unusually wide range of provision and history as a component of the University, the School revisit its key aims and raison d'etre to inform a long-term vision. It was suggested that clarity on the question of "what the School is for" would facilitate more productive discussion with the rest of the University as to how MHSE should articulate with and be compared with the rest of the University. The vision is unlikely to be a single, focussed aim - rather an academic "business plan" in which every strand of activity is there for a good reason. It was acknowledged that the Head of School had recently set up a 'Blue Sky thinking' group to consider the size and shape of the School for the future. The panel was

extremely supportive of this approach and **recommended** that the Head of College take an active interest in it¹.

3.2 Identification of areas of good practice for sharing outside the review area

There were several areas of good practice the panel wished to share with the wider University.

Assessment and feedback

The School's assessment methods and practices were identified in the PTES survey as being particularly strong and the panel would like to **commend** Moray House's diverse and interactive approach to feedback as an area of good practice.

Training for Programme Directors

The School was **commended** for their intention to set up training sessions for Programme Directors on how to attract funding and how to advise students on applying for funding and for their efforts to share good practice through the Doctoral Committee on the staff intranet. The panel would like to recommend this as an area of good practice. We are not clear about what this refers to.

Extended Induction Programme

The panel was impressed by the extended Induction programme implemented by the School in response to student needs throughout the first semester. The panel would like to recommend this as an area of good practice.

Strategic Programme Approval System

The review team agreed that the new programme approval system was working well and embedding strategic aims into programme creation from the very early stages. The panel would like to **commend** this as an area of good practice.

Good practice event and case studies

The School shares learning on assessment and feedback via good practice events and is building an intranet of good practice case studies along the lines of the IAD Case Studies wiki.

4 Confidence statement:

The reviewers found that Moray House School of Education has effective management of the quality of the student learning experience, academic standards, and enhancement and good practice.

5 Summary

The Panel concluded that the Graduate School of Moray House had developed considerably since the last quinquennial review in 2008, with particular improvements in the programme approval process, research training provision and use of virtual learning initiatives.

¹ It is likely that the Edinburgh College of Art would also benefit from a similar, self-driven "what are we for?" analysis, as a new and very different entity within the University.

The School is commended for their efforts in improving the student experience, for responding to student support needs with extended induction sessions and for their employment of diverse assessment methods and reflective approach to feedback.

The primary recommendations for the School related to sustainability, particularly the achievability of the University target of 2.5 PGR students per supervisor, the over-reliance on a single national market in some PGT disciplines and the possibility of offering fewer, more flexible PGT programmes to improve sustainability and marketability. The panel also commented on the possibility of introducing generic research training for PhD students early in their degree and, for PGT programmes, embedding specialised research training into taught courses.

The panel noted several examples of excellent practice across the School, particularly the commitment of Moray House staff to team teaching and shared practice initiatives. It was suggested that these practices, alongside wider College or University commitments, were included in the workload allocation model.

The Panel would like to take the opportunity to thank the staff and students from Moray House for providing comprehensive documentation and engaging with the review process in a positive manner.

6 Prioritised list of commendations and recommendations:

Key Strengths

- The review team **commends** the School for embracing the review process in a positive and open manner, and for providing detailed and comprehensive documentation.
- The review team **commended** the effort of the MHSE Graduate School in maintaining a positive and consistent experience of students with diverse needs and expectations across a wide range of disciplines.
- The panel **commends** the inclusive and lively approach of the new Head of School.
- The review team **commends** the Postgraduate Director for her proactive approach in responding to student needs
- The panel **commends** the hard work of the Moray House support staff and their role in building relationship with students and staff.
- The review team **commended** the School's efforts to increase students' identification with Moray House Graduate School as a whole and to build a holistic community across subject areas.
- The panel **commends** the diversity of assessment methods used by the School.
- The panel **commends** the School's reflective approach to assessment
- The panel **commends** the quality of feedback given by staff on student's written work, as outlined in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).
- The School were **commended** for their increasingly robust programme approval procedure and strategic planning.
- The School were **commended** for their efforts in building a PGR community within a large and varied cohort.
- The panel **commends** the School's efforts to increase diversity with targeted bursaries.

- The review panel **commended** the School's efforts to maintain programmes that form part of the School's mission to support Educational study and research across a broad spectrum.
- The review team **commended** the School's work in developing Online Distance Learning (ODL) provision.
- The School was **commended** for their use of virtual learning initiatives to promote inclusivity, including the streaming of lectures and the uploading of documents and lecture notes to online platforms.
- Teaching staff at Moray House were **commended** for their commitment to team teaching and sharing good practice.
- The School was **commended** for the creation of the shared practice Doctoral Committee on the staff intranet
- The panel **commended** the School for their adaptation of research training following the previous review.
- The panel **commended** the School for their efforts in accommodating the increase in student numbers and particularly, the improved management of the MSc TESOL programme in this respect.
- The School was **commended** by the panel for their efficient introduction of the PGT Personal Tutor System.
- The panel **commended** the School for the implementation of an extended Induction programme in response to student needs.
- The School were **commended** for their pre-sessional induction website, which provides an overview of the provision, location and structure of Moray House.
- The panel **commended** the SQH and MTeach team for their support of part-time students and efforts in building a research community.
- The School was **commended** for its hosting of a biennial Student-Staff Conference for PGR students.
- The School was **commended** for its intention to set up training sessions for Programme Directors on how to attract funding and how to advise students on applying for funding. Do not know what this is
- The School was **commended** for its support of the student-led 'Mind the (Career) Gap: how to make a successful transition from grad school to academia' seminar series.
- The panel **commended** MHSE for their recent introduction of an online journal, to increase the publishing experience of their PGR students and share research within the School.
- The panel **commended** the Moray House site library for their provision of materials through e-reserve and extended opening hours.
- The School was **commended** for the positive comments and valuable responses in the External Examiner reports.

Areas for further development

Recommendations are prioritised

- The panel **recommends** the School consider whether the University target of 2.5 PGR students per staff member is achievable and consistent with the greater School mission.

- The panel **recommends** that the School examine the strategic aim of an increasing number of PGT programmes and courses and consider the possibility of having fewer, more flexible programmes with shared courses.
- The panel **recommends** the School explore the impact of large student numbers on staff resourcing, particularly in relation to Doctoral and Associate Tutors' contracts.
- The panel **recommends** the School consider ways to facilitate on-going support for supervisors, to enable them to accommodate the changing needs, context and expectations of the student body.
- The panel **recommends** that the School consider whether the current divide between undergraduate provision and taught postgraduate provision is optimal. One way of doing this may be for the School to consider offering more generic pathway programmes, with themed collections of courses, enabling students to specialise at a later stage, as these may appeal to a wider market and hence improve the sustainability.
- The panel **recommends** the School examine the risk of over-reliance of some of their larger PGT programmes on a single national market. A possible strategy is to conduct pro-active market research with the aim of increasing diversity and consider targeted scholarships and the accreditation of prior learning for target groups.
- The panel **recommends** the School examine the structure of their research training provision and consider introducing research skills and methods training earlier in the academic year. Is this PGR? To facilitate this, the School might consider alternative modes of delivery for research training, to ensure it is available when needed.
- The panel **recommends** the school look at the balance between generic and specialised research training and consider running some generic courses across the School or in partnership with other Schools across the College and embed specialised research training into taught courses. Unclear where PGR and PGT
- The panel **recommends** formalising a series of progression points, or key milestones, for PGR students, to monitor progression beyond the first year and improve completion rates.
- The review team **recommends** that the University Learning and Teaching committee consider how to devise a costing model for digital programmes, including on-campus and distance learning, to enable Colleges and Schools to form a coherent strategy and produce meaningful projections of programme costs.
- The panel **recommends** the School, with the help of the College, consider its fundamental aims and raison d'être within the wider context of the College of Humanities and Social Science and the University of Edinburgh¹.
- It was **recommended** that the University, through the Learning and Teaching Committee, build an understanding of MHSE's good practice in the area of Assessment and Feedback.

Suggestions

Suggestions are made by the review team for consideration by the School. Action on suggestions is not obligatory and they do not require to be reported on in subsequent quality assurance reporting.

- The panel **suggests** the School build greater research links within the College and the University and consider more PGR co-supervision from other disciplines.
- The panel **suggests** the School consider ways to improve communications with students in such a large and diverse cohort.
- It was **suggested** that there was potential for undergraduate courses to be made available to postgraduate students as Level 11 options by modifying the assessment requirements. It was also suggested that financially vulnerable courses, such as

those belonging to the Additional Support for Learning group, could be made available as option courses for other postgraduate and undergraduate programmes.

- It was **suggested** that the appointment of additional Depute PG Directors in the School's Institutes would both centralise the research community and provide potential for responsibilities to be delegated. Unclear how it would centralise
- The review team **suggested** that formalising research training and assessment for PGR students in the first year could help support students and improve completion rates.
- It was **suggested** that the School consider how they can invest in staff resources on the larger PGT programmes to ensure a consistency of provision.
- The panel **suggests** that the School consider including the College-wide or University-wide responsibilities of staff in the workload model.
- The panel **suggested** that appointing supervisors or personal tutors as a point of contact in advance of students arriving in Edinburgh may help integrate the student community.
- It was **suggested** that efforts to attract a cohort of doctoral students with a wide range of interests through marketing, or targeted studentships, may help share the workload amongst staff and prevent overburdening staff with the most popular topics.
- The panel **suggests** the School consider ways to improve the visibility of taught courses, Research Centres and student and staff research interests on the website and proposes that it would be more productive for research interests to be listed by subject area rather than A-Z on the website.
- It was **suggested** that introducing accreditation for prior learning, or courses specifically designed for Continuing Professional Development (CPD), could result in an increase in home student applications.
- The panel **suggested** that the School examine their practices for demonstrating to students how their opinions and requests have been taken on board and implemented.
- The panel **suggests** that the School encourage course organisers to reflect international education practices alongside the Scottish education system in their course content and case studies.
- The panel **suggests** that the University Accommodation Services department devise a more holistic approach in the housing of international students.
- The panel **suggests** the School encourage PGR students to work on campus to build a stronger sense of community.
- The panel **suggests** the School make the student-staff conference into an annual event organised by students with the aim of enhancing the PGR community.
- It was **suggested** that the School endeavour to encourage the use of student offices and social spaces.
- The panel **suggested** that the School consider how they might continue the 'Mind the (Career) Gap' series once the current student organisers had graduated.
- The panel **suggests** that the School consider introducing more student led activities and workshops.
- The panel **suggests** the School consider productive ways to build positive links with alumni.
- It was **suggested** that the Student Support Office may benefit from increasing their visibility to postgraduate students and that more sharing of the pastoral role between Personal Tutors and Student Support Officers may increase the number of potential contacts for students and spread the workload for staff.

- The panel **suggested** that the School might wish to consider operating a hotline, staffed during office hours, for students to call when they need an urgent response.
- It was **suggested** that the School consider enhancing the promotion of pre-sessional language courses and academic preparation courses provided by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD).
- The panel **suggests** the School encourage all course organisers to liaise with library in advance for new courses and programmes, to avoid materials being unavailable or in short supply.

C. Appendices

Appendix 1 additional information considered by review team

- Analytical Report
- School Quality Assurance and Enhancement Reports
- External Examiners reports and responses to their comments
- PTES /PRES Results and reflection
- School organisation chart
- Current Graduate School staff workload representation information
- Statistical information
- Annual monitoring outcomes
- SSLC Committee meeting minutes
- Programme Handbooks and sample of Course Handbooks
- Programme Specifications – PGT only
- University, and College Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy
- First Destination statistics
- Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Reporting of Postgraduate Research Provision Policy
- UK Quality code for Higher Education Chapter B11 – Research Degrees (PGR only)
- Previous PPR report & response to recommendations
- Overview of key features of relevant student support service provision
- Reflective overview of key findings from Internal Reviews

Appendix 2 Number of students

Include the number of students on each related course/programme, for each of the three to five years prior to the review. This can be obtained as part of the information that the subject area/school provides as part of their statistical documentation.

[Note: this information is useful to Heads of College/School especially if a report highlights concerns over resources]

Appendix 3 – Quality of feedback on sample of assessed work

Include a summary from the externals' and student member proforma document on the quality of feedback on assessed work examples. The externals' and student member will be asked to complete a proforma checklist asking for comments on the timing, usefulness and helpfulness of the feedback given.