

Postgraduate Programme Review of the School of Education

13-14 May 2014

Draft 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 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 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.
- Teaching staff at Moray House were **commended** for their commitment to team teaching and sharing good practice.
- The School were **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 MEd and MTeach team for their support of part-time students and efforts in building a research community.
- The School were **commended** for their hosting of a biannual Student-Staff Conference for PGR students.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 were **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. 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.
- The panel **recommended** 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 **recommended** 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 Edinburgh Error! Bookmark not defined..
- 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 Research Institutes would both centralise the research community and provide potential for responsibilities to be delegated.
- 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, manned 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.