

TPR of: Philosophy

Date of review: 14-15 March 2019

Date of 14 week response: 20 September 2019

Date of year on response: 14 June 2020

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	The review team recommends that the Subject Area builds on the success of its recent curricular changes by reviewing the Year 1 curriculum.	Initial Review: Academic Year 2019-20	For the academic year 2019-20, each pre-honours course will be taught by at most two lecturers. This will enable course organisers to make course-level improvements. The organisers for each Year 1 course will hold a meeting with faculty likely to teach on the course and relevant role-holders in order to review the direction and purpose of each course. A summary of the findings and any action points will be presented at a department meeting during 2019-20. This review will be the basis of any structural changes to the pre-honours curriculum. The subject area will also gradually incorporate the Philosophy Skills workshops into the course content of pre-honours courses.	
2	The review team recommends that the Subject Area continues looking carefully at the variety, appropriateness and timing of the assessments it uses. The review team recommends that Philosophy reviews its approach to formative feedback and	i. Academic Year 2020-21 ii. Immediate.	i. Philosophy is looking to expand the variety and appropriateness of its forms of assessment on a course-level basis. As a department, we will create a repository of forms of assessment. This recommendation specifically addressed periodic assessment for Logic 1. The CO for Logic 1 and other relevant faculty are convening to work towards implementing periodic assessment in the 2020-21 academic year. This may involve use of Edinburgh's Logic platform for marking. ii. Philosophy believes it is in compliance with Regulation 15, but that because the forms of formative	

	ensures that all courses adhere to Regulation 15 of the Taught Assessment Regulations.		feedback are diverse, this may not be visible to the students. Philosophy will update its teaching guidance for new faculty to emphasize ways to make formative feedback more visible to students. This guidance will be circulated to existing faculty. Philosophy will also discuss this issue in its welcome meetings for returning second, third, and fourth year students.	
3.	<p>i. It is recommended that the Subject Area discusses ways in which it might move towards increasing the numbers of students it recruits from Scotland and from widening participation backgrounds</p> <p>ii. It is recommended that the review of induction arrangements pays particular attention to students entering the University through non-traditional routes, from widening participation backgrounds, and with additional support needs.</p>	On-going	<p>i. The target number of Scottish and widening participation students is set by the Scottish Government. The subject area has limited power to increase their numbers. The subject area will continue participation in recruitment activities such as the Sutton Trust. Philosophy is also exploring engagement in schools, which may also help with recruitment.</p> <p>ii. PPLS has reviewed its induction arrangements in order to create a more welcoming, less information-focussed induction. The additional support to students provided by the writing centre and the course-specific support provided by the Philosophy Skills workshops should provide additional benefits for students from non-traditional backgrounds. PhilPALS and PhilBuddies will also provide peer academic and pastoral support under the direction of the School.</p>	
4.	<p>i. The review team recommends that Teaching Fellows who serve as Head Tutors are allocated time to provide in-person feedback for the Tutors they observe.</p> <p>ii. It is recommended that Philosophy develops a more high-profile, consistent and strategic approach to encouraging staff members to work towards HEA Fellowship.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>On-going 2019-20</p>	<p>i. After reviewing the allocations, Philosophy has assigned Head Tutors additional hours per pre-honours course for tutor training and tutor support. The hours allocations for Head Tutors on pre-honours courses will be subject to continual review.</p> <p>ii. In September 2019, PPLS will develop a plan to encourage and support staff members to work toward HEA Fellowship.</p>	
5.	The review team recommends that Philosophy considers ways in which it can strengthen and develop its student partnerships.	2019-20	Philosophy will review activities to discern activities suitable for student partnerships in coordination with the Head of Student Support and Enhancement.	
6.	The review team recommends that the Subject	2019-2020	As it creates a repository of assessment styles,	

	Area continues to seek out meaningful opportunities to embed group work and other transferable skills within the curriculum, and ensures that these are visible to and recognised by students.		Philosophy will highlight which of these teach transferrable skills. The careers consultant will also be involved in the final session of the Philosophy Skills workshops to highlight how academic skills can be transferred to employment.	
7.	<p>i. It is recommended that the Subject Area considers whether the dissertation course should be embedded within the credit-bearing curriculum going forwards,</p> <p>ii. It is recommended that Philosophy reminds students of the resources that are available to support them in their learning at relevant points during their programmes.</p>	2019-20	<p>i. The Subject Area is sensitive to the fact that 0-credit courses should not replace credit-bearing curriculum. However, that is not the purpose of the dissertation preparation course. The subject area has experimented with a variety of means by which to relay formal requirements for the different kinds of dissertations and provide guidance. Philosophy has faced difficulties when our partner subject areas have tied dissertation information and preparation to particular courses, because not all of our students do enrol in these. The 0-credit course option guarantees that students on all degree programmes are informed about their dissertation options. Similar benefits have been bestowed on students taking an optional year abroad. The course entirely consists in online videos and guidance documents for submitting a dissertation proposal. Students regularly comment on the fact that Philosophy's dissertation information is far more accessible than that of our partner subject areas.</p> <p>ii. Philosophy will undertake a review of its guidance provided to students. The responsibility of providing this guidance and resources will be assigned to particular role holders, with reminders issued by the teaching office. The guidance will be posted at a more accessible place on the website.</p>	
8.	The review team recommends that undergraduate students are made more aware that they are	Autumn 2019	This will be mentioned at the welcome talks for returning students. The events will be made more	

	welcome to attend Philosophy's research seminars.		visible on the website.	
9.	It is recommended that the School considers extending the scope of the PPLS Writing Centre's provision to include support for first year students.	2019-20	In 2018-19, the PPLS Writing Centre offered a pilot programme of writing workshops for Year 1 undergraduates. The events had between 50-120 participants. In 2019-20, these workshops will be expanded in scope and offer support to all years, including Year 1. PPLS is not in a position to extend individual writing tuition to Year 1 undergraduates. To ensure fairness, this would require offering writing tuition to the 1,000 students in our mandatory year 1 courses, more than double the number covered at Year 2. To cover these numbers would require a substantial increase in the number of PhD students who provide staffing.	
10.	It is recommended that Student Recruitment and Admissions considers the potential value of providing Subject Areas with additional management information about widening participation students to allow support to be enhanced optimally.	2019-20	<p>A strand of the University's Widening Participation strategy relates to the development of tools and datasets to enable Schools and subject areas to better understand their WP cohorts, in order to anticipate and respond to their needs.</p> <p>Work has already been undertaken to clean the data, which it is intended will be shared via the online data dashboards.</p> <p>On an interim basis, data has been shared with Heads of Schools regarding WP cohorts and students with protected characteristics. This included PPLS.</p> <p>This work is being overseen by a subgroup of the Widening Participation Strategy Implementation Group, and will be delivered in AY 19/20.</p>	
11.	It is recommended that Estates and Buildings takes the Subject Area's feedback on the Dugald Stewart Building into account in future estates developments.	On-going	<p>Philosophy will continue working with students to relay staff and student concerns about the available spaces.</p> <p><u>Response from Estates Dept:</u> Projects for all capital developments involve full engagement with building users. This is achieved through input from the Project Team and User Intelligence Groups which include representation from staff and students who will use the building post project. Coupled with this post occupancy reviews take</p>	

			<p>place following the first 12-18 months of occupancy and this process includes feedback from building users. In relation to ongoing use of buildings from a space perspective, the Space Strategy Group (a sub committee of Estates Committee) acts as a conduit in the development of space in line with current pedagogy coupled with student and staff need. The Students' Association President and one of the Students' Association VPs sit on Estates Committee and we have representation from the Students' Association on the Space Strategy Group. We are also currently developing our approach so as that we strengthen the student voice in Capital developments going forward.</p>	
12.	<p>It is recommended that the work being undertaken at College-level on joint degrees considers whether it might be possible to better align the Special Circumstances and Boards of Examiners meetings for the degrees owned by each of the Subject Areas.</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>Special Circumstances 2020-21 (Expected)</p>	<p>The College Dean of Undergraduate Education met with the TPR Liaison, Incoming Exam Board Convener and School Director of Quality in August to discuss the recommendation. The recommendation was broken down into three main issues:</p> <p>1. Challenges created when Special Circumstances decisions diverge between Schools. It was noted that the Service Excellence Programme is undertaking a project to align decisions on the validity of Special Circumstances. The results of this project aim to reduce such cross-school discrepancies.</p> <p>2. Changes introduced at University-level that now ensure there is a gap between course and programme boards means that External Examiners must stay in Edinburgh for a longer period of time in order to attend boards. College has highlighted that External Examiners do not have to physically attend all programme boards and that there may be electronic solutions available to ensure external examiners can engage throughout the exam board process. The Subject Area will investigate the possibility that externals attend only the Course Boards and Single Honours Programme Board.</p> <p>3. Challenges are created when course marks are not</p>	

			<p>ratified by partner Schools in time for progression boards. The University produces a list of key dates annually, which has a deadline for publication of course marks in Euclid. This precedes publication to students and joint Programme boards by a week. Philosophy will work to remind joint degree partners about these deadlines, and seek advice from College where necessary.</p>	
	<p>Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review</p>	<p>Themes from the report were presented at the 2019-20 welcome meetings for Year 2 through Year 4 students. The initial findings were discussed at the final Staff Student Liaison meeting of academic year 2018-19. The report in its entirety was discussed at a Staff Student Liaison Committee meeting in 2019-20</p>		