

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

14 week response report

TPR of: Classics, University of Edinburgh

Date of review: 14 & 15 November 2018

Date of 14 week response: 24 May 2019

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 appoint a dedicated Widening Participation Director (or equivalent) from the current departmental staff who can lead the work of a Widening Participation and Outreach Committee. This individual should ensure that initiatives are developed in partnership with the School and the College, in line with the University's Widening Participation Strategy.	2019- <i>ongoing (to be reviewed 2021)</i>	The Department has recently re-established the Outreach Committee with a chair and new committee members, with new remit specifically focused on WP (as well as its current remit on outreach with local primary schools ('Literacy through Latin' project), School Teachers' events (one organised already in May 2019), and further liaisons with secondary schools). In line with the recommendations of the new University WP strategy, this committee will work closely with the new School WP champion to ensure that Classics continues to develop its overall WP strategy within the School's strategic aims.	
2.	The Review Team recommends that the subject area create a role for a dedicated Classics staff member to act as an Equality and Diversity Officer with a view to monitoring and enhancing the department's profile for diversity in admissions and for finding new ways of embedding equality and diversity throughout the curriculum.	2020	At the moment the practice is to have a School Equality and Diversity Director (currently a Classicist), with Classics representative on the School E&D committee. Changes to the current system (i.e. to create Departmental E&D officers) would have to be decided at School level. Discussion to be held at School level.	
3.	The Review Team recommends that the Curriculum Officer review the process of course allocation at Honours level and moves away from the lottery system. The new system should be operated by professional services staff and made as transparent as possible to students and staff.	Completed	Taking lots to decide Honours course allocation has always been a last resort, and the Curriculum Officer has written a document which contains careful explanation of a number of steps are taken to allocate students fairly and consistently before the need of a lottery in a small minority of cases. Allocation will be administered once again by the Lead Teaching Organisation Administrator, with academic oversight and communication by Curriculum Officer and consultation of the Head of Department in case of queries.	05/2019

4.	The Review Team recommends that the subject area ensure that transferable skills be embedded in all Classics programmes, in a consistent way, by being delivered within compulsory core courses. These transferable graduate skills should link visibly to the pathways on offer and future avenues for employment.	2020	The Classics Teaching Committee and then the whole Department at a dedicated Away Day met to discuss how best to embed transferable skills. A number of important transferable skills for programmes were agreed upon and will be written into course descriptions both on EUCLID and in course handbooks, and where applicable in course proposals. Oversight and consistency will be ensured by the Classics Teaching Committee. The process has been partially completed and will be reviewed in the 2019-20 academic session.	
5.	The Review Team recommends that the School Co-ordinator of Adjustments and the Head of Subject Area remind all staff that lecture slides should be provided to all students through LEARN at least 24 hours in advance of each class.	Completed	This has been carried out.	05/2019
6.	The Review Team recommends that the plans to introduce a new subject-area lead administrator be progressed as a way of strengthening subject-area identity and aiding staff professional development. This role should include direct student interaction within SSLC meetings and involvement with teaching planning.	Completed	The role was approved this academic session (2019-20) and the person is in post.	05/2019
7.	The Review Team recommends that the profile of the Student Support Team be raised amongst first- and second-year students in the Classics Subject Area and that its role is clearly defined.	Completed and ongoing – review in 2020	Recommendation noted. The School has gone to considerable lengths to raise the profile of the Student Support Team among students and the Head of Classics will continue to liaise closely with the School DoPS and UG Director of Teaching to ensure students in the Classics Department are fully aware of the team's role.	
8.	The Review Team recommends that the private meeting space identified by the School be furnished and made available to the Student Support Team as soon as possible.	Completed	The School has carried out this action.	05/2019
9.	The Review Team recommends that the School work in partnership with the Dean of Students to identify ways of enhancing the operation of the Personal Tutor System, including reviewing the support for staff dealing with rising cases of mental health among students.	During 2019/20 academic session	The College is working closely with the Director of Student Wellbeing to ensure staff in student facing support roles have access to suitable training and support resources to deal with rising number of complex mental health cases among students. The Director of Student Wellbeing is currently working on a Student Support Team Professional Development Framework, in addition to the support available to staff through existing University Services including the Counselling Service and Chaplaincy. A recent meeting between Health in Social Science and the Director of Student Wellbeing also discussed these concerns, which the College plans to explore through a wider forum. The College operates a Student Support Forum that acts as a network for sharing ideas and providing information to Student Support	

			<p>Officers. The College also operates a Network for School Senior Tutors to discuss concerns and share good practice in personal tutoring and student support.</p> <p>A university-wide review of the Personal Tutoring system is shortly to begin, but recommendations for improvements to the system in the interim period across CAHSS were incorporated in the recent College review of the PT system overseen by the Dean of Students. This document was circulated to all Schools in CAHSS and Heads of Schools were asked by the Head of College to consider the key recommendations as part of their student experience action plans. Meetings will be arranged with individual Schools to discuss local challenges, as and when required. A meeting can be arranged with the Classics subject area, or the School of History, Classics and Archaeology, to address local concerns and discuss possible ideas for enhancement.</p>	
10.	The Review Team recommends that the Dean of Students and the Assistant Principal Academic Support further explore the link between promotion and teaching and administrative duties across the University, potentially as part of the University-wide review of the Personal Tutor System.	During 2019/20 academic session	<p>The College recently undertook a detailed review of the Personal Tutor system. As part of this review, the links between annual appraisal and personal tutoring were examined. One of the key recommendations to Heads of Schools was that personal tutoring should form part of the formal appraisal process in Schools. The review was shared with the Assistant Principal Academic Support and Deputy Secretary Student Experience for consideration as part of the University-wide review of the Personal Tutor System. This will no doubt investigate the links between promotion, teaching and wider academic/pastoral support roles.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Assistant Principal is currently engaged in a review of academic career paths which will consider these issues. A major challenge will be to establish an evidence base for the quality of PT support provided by individual PTs – essential for any link to promotion and reward. However, the Assistant Principal’s findings to date suggest that the use of student evaluations in this context is being resisted implacably by a subset of University staff. As of May 2019, there is a University-wide, nothing-off-the-table, review of the PT system, led by the former PG Director of the School.</p>	
11.	The Review Team recommends that the School change the practice of re-assigning Study Abroad students to the International Officer to act as Personal Tutor. This will ensure that students undertaking a year abroad keep their original Personal Tutor in addition to the extra support provided through the International Officer.	Completed	The School never had this practice. The Classics Department on two previous occasions adopted this practice as a temporary solution but it is no longer its policy.	05/2019

12.	The Review Team recommends that the subject area find ways of promoting the PGCAP and Edinburgh Teaching Award opportunities to all Postgraduate Tutors at the earliest possible stage in their careers and systematically builds a schedule of further professional development opportunities into a reflective mandatory annual teaching review.	Session 2020-21	It is possible for graduate tutors to take the PGCap, but it is not usually done because of the amount of time it takes (most graduate tutors are only going to be doing 300-400 hours of teaching and marking in their careers); the IAD normally point them towards a less time-consuming range of courses to enhance their teaching practice. Oversight by supervisors and mentors ensures a careful schedule of professional development. The School is introducing a local iteration of the Edinburgh Teaching Award.	
13.	The Review Team recommends that the Head of Subject Area find a clearer way of communicating the option of an annual teaching review to Postgraduate Tutors.	Completed	The Head of Classics has written to all GH tutors offering them an annual teaching review. This will be the standard practice every year from now on.	
	Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review	The Classics department's Student Staff Liaison Committee will share the report and recommendations, and this set of responses, with the students in advance of the meeting in semester 1 of academic session 2019-20. Any points raised by the students will be discussed by the Classics teaching committee/ departmental meeting and fed back to the students at the following SSLC.		
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review			