

The University of Edinburgh's Centre for Open Learning

Internal Periodic Review – 1 Year response report

Guidance for completion of Internal Review 14 week and year on responses

1. Schools/Subject Areas should use the template for 14 week/year on responses.
2. The 14 week/Year on report should list all the recommendations from the final review report.
3. The School/Subject Area is responsible for reporting on progress with all recommendations, including those remitted to other areas of the University for action.
4. Any urgent recommendation should be highlighted along with a deadline for response.
5. Please report on the progress towards the completion of each recommendation. An explanation of how the recommendation will be taken forward and the expected date for follow-up or completion should be recorded.

Internal Periodic Review of: The Centre for Open Learning

Date of review: February 2020, Report Published September 2020 https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/final_report_-_centre_for_open_learning.pdf

Date of 14-week response: 14/10/2020

Date of year on response: 08/07/2021

Rec. no	Recommendation	Timescale for completion	Comment on progress towards completion and/or identify barriers to completion	Completion date
Complete, have consulted with all parties		In progress		Not in progress/stalled
1 Remitted to the University Senate Education Committee (Philippa Ward)	The Review Team recommends that the University's Senate Education Committee create opportunities for the Centre for Open Learning to fully embed its activities and broad range of expertise in language teaching, adult education and widening access into the fabric of the institution. The Committee should ensure that COL has a voice in institutional discussions about key projects and planning and help raise its profile within the University, ensuring that the excellent progress made by the Centre's own marketing team can be developed to help it grow sustainably.	April 2021	<p>14 wk response</p> <p><i>1.2 University Senate Education Committee</i></p> <p>Progress has been made since the IPR process was completed and COL now has a Vision and Mission that has been consulted and agreed upon. The pivot to remote delivery played to COL's strengths in some way and we have enjoyed being an integral part of the ART Transitions courses and picking up opportunities for growth. To some extent this will be ongoing but there is much to be pleased about here in recent months but external support from the wider University remains crucial and we would like to discuss this further.</p> <p><i>Senate Education Committee. Recommendation 1 from the IPR of COL was remitted to the Committee and was considered at its meeting on 10 September 2020. The minute of the meeting is as follows:</i></p> <p>1.1 Internal Periodic Review of Centre for Open Learning – Recommendation Remitted to Senate Education Committee</p> <p>The Committee considered the recommendation from the Internal Periodic Review (IPR) of the Centre for Open Learning (COL) that COL should be given opportunities to fully embed its activities and broad</p>	

			<p>range of expertise in language teaching, adult education and widening access in the fabric of the institution.</p> <p>The Assistant Principal Digital Education noted that the Edinburgh Futures Institute was keen to work with COL to consider access routes to PGT programmes in particular.</p> <p>The Committee recognised that COL was represented on the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences' (CAHSS) Undergraduate Education Committee and therefore had access to Senate Education Committee through that route. It was also noted that the Dean of Learning and Teaching for the College of Science and Engineering (CSE) sat on the CAHSS UG Education Committee and that there was therefore a link between COL and CSE. As such, Education Committee agreed that the correct structures were in place to allow COL to contribute to University-level discussions around Education, but recognised the need to remain mindful of COL's contribution, particularly during forthcoming discussions around curriculum transformation.</p>	
	<p>1 year response</p> <p>COL is much better represented and involved in the wider institution, at least in terms of leadership roles, from which we hope wider opportunities will emerge.</p> <p>Examples include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Head of COL and Director of ELE on Curriculum Reform Reference Group - Director of Open Studies sits on the Community Board and Data Science Education Centre of Excellence Group - Deputy Head of COL sits on the University WP Strategy Group - Director of Digital Education sits on Library and Information Strategy Committees - Director of Learning and Teaching sits on CAHSS UG Committee - Director of QA sits on CAHSS Quality Committee - Director of EDI sits on CAHSS EDI Committee - Head of COL was appointed Dean of EDI (CAHSS), chairing the CAHSS EDI Committee and leading the EDI and Ethics section of the University's new Digital Strategy - Head of COL invited to join Prof Sian Bayne's Digital Education group as part of the Curriculum Reform project - Director of English Language Education sits on the Student Recruitment Management Group - EFI have indeed been in touch with us to collaborate with COL in terms of enrolment, design and support for part-time study. COL would like to be more involved (co-sponsor?) the Senate Education Committee's review of Standalone Courses given that we have expertise in this area and it has been strategically agreed that COL is the University's main hub for part-time educational opportunities and English Language provision. COL has also been approached in terms of CPD and MOOC platforms, again a sign that COL can offer the wider University insights and perhaps a public-facing home for part-time study. 			<p>June 21</p>
<p>2 Jointly remitted to Student Systems and</p>	<p>The Review Team recommends that Student Systems and Administration, Information Services and other key</p>	<p>Sep 2021</p>	<p>14 wk response 2.1.1 Student Systems and Administration and Information Services</p>	

Administration (Lisa Dawson) and Information Services (Jennifer Milne)	University stakeholders continue to work with the Centre's Senior Management Team to find a viable solution for better integrating the Centre and its students into the University's systems. This should facilitate the collection of essential data on student admissions, retention and progression, helping to support the Centre's plans for growth. Where students cannot be integrated into the University's existing systems, it is recommended that the Centre receives the required support and funding to develop existing systems for handling admissions and on-programme tracking of students across all provision.		This project is underway, and we hope to have a more substantial sign of progress at our next update. That said our Systems Analysis Project is in collaboration with the College CIO, Registrar, and our in-house professional services colleagues. From an academic point of view, we are trying to move to more centralised points of data collection that had previously been the norm (another benefit to restructure) and have been emphasising the importance of the quality of that data and how it can better inform our decision making.	
	<p>1 year response</p> <p>COL has been asked a number of times recently to share its expertise and experience in this area, there is demand for a review of these systems and we continue to work with colleagues from ISG and elsewhere to address it. We hope that the developments in student engagement monitoring might prove fruitful in terms of us being able to evidence the impact of our provision on transition, retention and student outcomes, which we cannot do in any meaningful way at present. We'd like to continue to make progress in providing our non-matriculated student cohort with access to university systems and services with a rationale for this. Our Deputy Head of COL is working with CAHSS Admissions to make our data visible within Admissions data dashboards so COL's impact on progression and retention might be measured.</p>			
3 Remitted to the COL Senior Management Team	The Review Team recommends that the Centre engage staff at all levels in the development of its strategic vision for the future, particularly when developing the theme of community and identity. Staff should be consulted through staff forums and workshops, with additional events set up to engage students in these themes.	Oct 2020	<p>14 wk response</p> <p><i>2.7.1 COL Senior Management Team</i></p> <p>In early Sep 2020, Phase 2 of our GASP project was launched which focuses on teaching colleagues, citizenship roles, governance and decision making and introducing our first COL-wide WAM. At every point, we have involved staff (and where appropriate, students) in the feedback and consultation process for this. Our Vision and Mission will be launched to all COL staff in November 2020 with our Action Plan 2021-2023; both are complete as a result of consultation with staff and students. The newly established COL SMT came into effect from August 1st 2020 and so we now have a much more representative group with which to write our Action Plans and set our strategic direction. Staff feedback tells us that there is an improved sense of community, particularly between academic and professional services teams. This has been marked green, but that said, we will continue to work with the wider institution to ensure that our vision and mission are understood both in terms of our identity and purpose, and how they might engage with us.</p>	
	<p>1 year response</p>			

	<p>All of the above had now happened and so we are nearly in the position to mark the end of the COLGASP Project. We report progress against our Action Plan every two months and circulate this to all staff, we have tried to use our newsletters to communicate how we are bringing our Vision and Mission to life in a meaningful way, taking it beyond the static website statements. Our approach to our Action Plan and monitoring its success is expected to be mirrored in other parts of the organisation and for other strategic projects.</p> <p>We still have some way to go in realising our ambitions to support and nourish our staff and student communities, financial restraints as a result of Covid have meant that we have reluctantly had to pause some of our projects and so will have lost momentum here.</p>		
<p>4 Remitted to the COL Senior Management Team</p>	<p>The Review Team recommends that the Centre set up a short-life working group to outline the existing challenges with estates and buildings (including those relating to accessibility) and explore the various options for development through an evidenced report. This will help to identify specific areas that require escalation, while also helping to establish a structured dialogue between staff and students about community and identity in the Centre.</p>	<p>Apr 2021</p>	<p>14 wk response <i>2.8.3 COL Senior Management Team</i> The impact of Covid has meant that we have been unable to prioritise this, but it remains an action which we hope to resolve.</p>
	<p>1 year response No significant progress here but the Head of COL and DoPS have contributed to the College-wide Post-Covid Estates project where we were able to outline our preferences.</p>		
<p>5 Remitted to Estates (Gary Jebb)</p>	<p>The Review Team recommends that the University Estates department support the Centre to establish greater ownership of its learning and teaching spaces. Estates should support the School to develop the space in</p>	<p>Apr 2021</p>	<p>14 wk response <i>2.8.3 Estates</i> We have had no communication from Estates, but it should be noted once again that the impact of Covid on our estates planning has once again limited our progress with this action.</p>
	<p>1 year response No communication to update on</p>		
<p>6 Jointly remitted to the COL Senior Management Team and Timetabling Unit (Scott Rosie)</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Timetabling Unit continue work with the Centre for Open Learning to ensure that classrooms assigned are suitable for the teaching needs of each class. The room booking system should also be reviewed and enhanced to ensure that it does not disadvantage the Centre when assigning rooms shared with other Schools.</p>	<p>Apr 2021</p>	<p>14 wk response <i>2.8.2 Timetabling Unit; COL Senior Management Team</i> Continual improvements are ongoing, we now have a COL Priority Room Allocation Model (PRAM) in place. We still need to address with the support of senior management, our Pre-sessional room allocation (mainly relating to the availability of lecture theatres and large teaching spaces). COL continually runs into issues during our summer teaching period where (normally) we would be unsuccessful in competing for rooms with the Festival and external bookings. COL had been hoping to bring the timetabling team into the review of Pre-sessional provision so this can be solved in partnership and we hope that this can still be the case but had been adjusted due to Covid pivots and increased pressures on staff time.</p>

	1 year response We continue to make excellent progress with our timetabling project but this remains at 'amber' for now.		
7 Remitted to Learning Technology Support (Neil Bruce)	The Review Team recommends that Learning Technology Support (LTS) develop an out-of-hours support model with clear routes for escalating immediate and longer term technology support issues, which is available to staff teaching evening classes in the Centre.	Feb 2021	14 wk response <i>2.8.4 Learning Technology Support (LTS)</i> Again, there has been no rationale for pursuing this beyond the efforts made to ensure that our online provision is accessible for students and staff in light of Covid restrictions. We would like to suggest that longer term, this it remitted to our Digital Services Manager Magdalena Getler who would be expected to lead this for COL.
	1 year response		
8 Remitted to the College Offices (Dr Sabine Rolle, Professor Neil Turner & Professor Judy Hardy)	In recognition of the type of language support the Centre offers students from a wide range of backgrounds, it is recommended that the three College Offices find ways to facilitate deeper collaboration between the Centre and individual Schools, particularly in the areas of ELE and Languages for All.		14 wk response <i>1.3 College Offices</i> To my (J Hoy) knowledge we haven't had an update on this one given the significant shift to online delivery and Covid response. We keep discovering more and more advantages to there being a central governance process for all part-time or non-traditional provision and would like to see if COL could take a leadership role here in the future. The CAHSS College Office plan to arrange a preliminary meeting with the Centre for Open Learning Senior Management Team to explore the detail of the recommendation and discuss how deeper collaboration may be achieved. The College will also invite the respective Deans of Learning and Teaching from Colleges of Science and Engineering and Medicine and Veterinary Medicine to that meeting and explore ways of progressing the recommendation at an institutional level.
	1 year response The Director of Languages for All has been nominated to join the Future Skills Work Stream as part of the Curriculum Transformation Board which would offer an opportunity to embed language skills into this project. Alongside this, it is the intention for the Director of LFA, Director of ELE and Head of COL to meet with Colm Harmon to consider how best to embed languages in the Curriculum Transformation Project, mindful of the need to decolonise, to provide opportunity, to reflect on the uses of IELTS etc. We would like to perhaps offer a staff event where we consult and involve staff in thinking about language study as part of curriculum transformation. We continue to communicate to LLC if we observe ways to offer joint contracts or if there are areas of crossover. The Head of DELC within LLC remains a useful contact for us in this area.		
9 Jointly remitted to Head of Centre, Director of Professional Services and College Registrars (Dr Bruce Nelson, Liz Elliott and Catherine Elliott).	The Review Team recommends that the Head of the Centre, the Director of Professional Services and College Registrars in each of the three Colleges explore the options for developing a revised funding model for English Language Education pre-sessional and in-sessional support to ensure future plans for growth	Sep 2021	14 wk response <i>1.3 Head of Centre, Director of Professional Services; College Registrars</i> Our Director of English Language Education presented a paper to the UoE Exec but failed to secure an outcome. COL continues to resource and subsidise English Language in-sessional provision across the institution. Our Director of Professional Services is picking this up with the CAHSS Director of Finance.

	can be carried out sustainably in the face of increasing demand.			
	<p>1 year response No update to report here, COL continues to fund the in-sessional English provision across the institution.</p>			
<p>10 Jointly remitted to Director of Learning and Teaching (c/o Hannah Jones) and Institute for Academic Development (Dr Jon Turner)</p>	<p>The Review Team recommends the Centre develop a more structured collaborative working relationship with the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) to ensure language and skills support for students, can be developed and delivered with optimal efficiency drawing on the wide pool of expertise in both areas.</p>	<p>Feb 2021</p>	<p>14 wk response 2.3.2 Director of Learning and Teaching; Institute for Academic Development <i>The below comment is from Hannah Jones, Director of English Language Education, COL.</i> There are numerous IAD/ELE collaborations, including the ALL Transitions course that was offered through ART. We would appreciate a more structured approach to our collaborative work, including as a first step, a kind of pulling together of everything that we do across IAD and COL to see where there may be overlap, duplication and gaps. This could lead to much clearer communications from both areas, avoiding confusion on the part of students, who might reasonably think that a lot of what we do is the same, or (maybe worse) that IAD's work is for home students and COL's work is for international students, the review recommendation gives a push to make it actually happen.</p> <p>I'd suggest we go back to the start with the meeting suggested by Jon Turner, attended by the COL SMT. This might help us to establish an overall strategy for collaboration.</p> <p>Taking this forward though is probably best done by Heads of Subject Area, at least that would be my perspective from ELE.</p>	
	<p>1 year response For the purposes of this IPR, we should consider this recommendation complete. We continue to have good relationships with our colleagues in IAD and will evolve these relationships as needs be and within our available resources.</p>			<p>June 2021</p>
<p>11 Jointly remitted to COL Senior Management Team and Institute for Academic Development (Dr Jon Turner).</p>	<p>The Review Team recommends that the Centre develops an internal CPD framework for academic staff using the existing Edinburgh Teaching Award. This should incorporate a mentoring support model and should be facilitated with the help of the Institute for Academic Development (IAD).</p>	<p>Apr 2021</p>	<p>14 wk response 2.7.3 Senior Management Team; Institute for Academic Development CPD opportunities are much more prevalent that they had been in previous years, budget reductions as a result of Covid-19 have meant that our already lean budget planning can no longer include the commitment to CPD we had intended to provide to staff (across professional services and academic contracts). I (JHoy) worry that our comparatively tight budget management within COL leaves us little room for manoeuvre if we are asked by College to reduce once or even twice as has been the case, often hitting the types of activity that present an opportunity for staff collaboration and community building. A new CPD Policy will be approved in the coming months. Whilst we intend to introduce this, COL has no governance or systems in place as</p>	

			regards academic promotion and so we seek advice from other parts of the institution in terms of how we can embed this.	
	<p>1 year response</p> <p>Our budgets remain frozen but our commitment to CPD and training means that we will try to find resource wherever possible. COLGASP has brought about revised and appropriately standardised Job Descriptions for academic staff which include Scholarship and Citizenship for the first time and so have been budgeted for. Whilst these allocations are often very small as a % of overall allocations, they do present opportunities for us in terms of providing CPD for our staff (academic and professional services).</p>			
<p>12</p> <p>Jointly remitted to School Teaching Office and Director of Professional Services.</p>	<p>It is recommended that the Centre review the rationale and deadlines for the course registration process across Short Courses and Languages for All. The Centre should continue to streamline the process where possible, communicating deadlines and reasons for closure in advance of course registration closing, supported by a clear and consistent policy.</p>	<p>Oct 2020</p>	<p>14 wk response</p> <p><i>2.1.3 School Teaching Office; Director of Professional Services</i></p> <p>Whilst the decision that was queried during the Review was the result of consultation with staff, there is good reason why our deadlines have to be adhered to, but these are not always visible to staff despite our efforts. The current approach to deadlines for booking was approved by the COL Executive Committee with the papers available to all staff. The rationale focuses on customer service, to avoid giving customers too short notice of cancellations - and also to provide sufficient notice to staff if their course is running or not. Beyond that, there is a workload (linked to integrated systems point above) between someone booking and course start date that shouldn't be underestimated, and more importantly there are accessibility issues which we don't find out about until the student enrolls (sometimes later) which means we need time to put in place adjustments/suitable rooms. The deadline used to be 2 weeks; we did reduce to 1. We can and should review, but we would need to resolve issues above relating to data and systems first. We agree we can publish the rationale more thoroughly and address the communications issue and so will continue to review our systems and processes, mindful of the people involved in them.</p>	
	<p>1 year response</p>			
<p>Please report on steps taken to feedback to students on the outcomes of the review</p>	<p>The nature of our provision means that the students who were involved in this process will have moved on to other modes of study. That said, we intend to communicate this through our Marketing and Comms team so we celebrate the commendations and highlight where we will make improvements. We continue to plan our SSLC meetings and we expect to proportionately increase student representation in our Governance and decision-making structures which is a key part of the Second phase of our Governance and Academic Structure Project, now underway.</p>			
<p>Commendations</p>	<p>It's not been asked for but I (Jenny Hoy) felt it was important to formally note what our response to the 11 commendations within this process were, particularly at the time of writing, when staff morale is low given the contexts within which we're all working. COL found the IPR process constructive and affirming, particularly given the enormous amount of change that the Centre has been undergoing in recent years and subsequently in response to Covid. We have fabulously committed staff who regularly go the extra mile to support colleagues and our students, and so we were particularly glad to see this reflected in the IPR. The commendations have been shared with the wider COL staff with our gratitude. The IPR and its results were discussed in team meetings and our COL Executive Committee, and a summary of the process and the final report were shared in an all staff newsletter. Having the IPR feedback has been enormously helpful in providing a reminder of the 'external' investment in our collective success, particularly given our wish to be understood and valued across the University but there is much work still to be</p>			

	done here. For completion, the 12 minor notes included in the final report are all either complete or being addressed in our substantial Governance and Academic Structure Project.
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review
<p>The IPR came at an important time for us as a Leadership Team. We were already undergoing a significant and complex period of change, we had colleagues settling into new roles within a new academic structure, professional services colleagues were becoming used to this new structure as well as their own complementary structural shifts, and so being able to use this process to reflect and galvanise for the future was helpful and affirming.</p> <p>The IPR therefore was a thread running through a holistic period of reflection and so to that end, many of the recommendations here have been addressed in full or in part as a result of us growing in confidence and being invited to contribute far more to the wider institution than had perhaps been the case in previous years. Our staff survey results show progress too which is reassuring. Although there are areas which we must still focus on, we were reassured to see improvement in our data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I feel supported by my line manager (2018 - 79%, 2020 - 82%) - I have everything I need to do my job effectively (2018 - 63%, 2020 - 82%) - I receive regular and constructive feedback on my performance (2018 - 47%, 2020 - 63%) - If I do great work, it will be recognised (2018 - 34%, 2020 - 52%) - I have the opportunity to contribute my views before changes are made which affect my role (2018 - 27%, 2020 - 52%) - My school/dept deals effectively with bullying/harassment (2018 - 26%, 2020 - 46%) 	