

The University of Edinburgh

Internal Periodic Review

Year on response report

**Internal Periodic Review of:** Philosophy

**Date of review:** 14-15 March 2019

**Date of year on response:** July 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 <b>recommends</b> 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	<p>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.</p> <p><b>Year on report update:</b> Pre-honours courses continue to be taught by only 1-2 faculty members for AY 20-21. Meetings between faculty members associated with prehonours courses, and subsequent departmental discussion, were delayed by industrial action and the Covid19 crisis, so will continue into AY 20-21. Incorporation of the Philosophy Skills workshops into prehonours courses continues.</p>	
2	The review team <b>recommends</b> that the Subject Area continues looking	Completed	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	June 2020

	<p>carefully at the variety, appropriateness and timing of the assessments it uses.</p> <p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that Philosophy reviews its approach to formative feedback and ensures that all courses adhere to Regulation 15 of the Taught Assessment Regulations.</p>	Completed	<p>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 <math>\exists</math>Logic platform for marking.</p> <p><b>Year on report update:</b> Logic 1 has introduced periodic forms of assessment, in time for academic year 20-21.</p> <p>Philosophy believes it is in compliance with Regulation 15, but that because the forms of formative 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.</p>	September 2019
3.	<p>It is <b>recommended</b> 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>It is <b>recommended</b> that the review of induction arrangements pays particular attention to students entering the University through non-</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>	<p>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>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</p>	<p>September 2019</p> <p>September 2019</p>

	traditional routes, from widening participation backgrounds, and with additional support needs.		provide peer academic and pastoral support under the direction of the School.	
4.	<p>The review team <b>recommends</b> that Teaching Fellows who serve as Head Tutors are allocated time to provide in-person feedback for the Tutors they observe.</p> <p>It is <b>recommended</b> 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>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>In September 2019, PPLS will develop a plan to encourage and support staff members to work toward HEA Fellowship.</p> <p><b>Year on report update:</b> Work on this was started during 19-20 but held up by industrial action and the Covid19 crisis.</p>	September 2019
5.	The review team <b>recommends</b> that Philosophy considers ways in which it can strengthen and develop its student partnerships.	2019-20	<p>Philosophy will review activities to discern activities suitable for student partnerships in coordination with the Head of Student Support and Enhancement.</p> <p><b>Year on report update:</b> Work on this was started during 19-20 but held up by industrial action and the Covid19 crisis.</p>	
6.	The review team <b>recommends</b> that the Subject Area continues to seek out	2019-2020	As it creates a repository of assessment styles, Philosophy will highlight which of these teach transferrable skills. The careers consultant will also be involved in the final session of the Philosophy	

	<p>meaningful opportunities to embed group work and other transferable skills within the curriculum, and ensures that these are visible to and recognised by students.</p>		<p>Skills workshops to highlight how academic skills can be transferred to employment.</p> <p><b>Year on report update:</b> the final Philosophy Skills workshop was lost to the Covid19 crisis. This will be retried in academic year 20-21.</p>	
7.	<p>It is <b>recommended</b> that the Subject Area considers whether the dissertation course should be embedded within the credit-bearing curriculum going forwards.</p> <p>It is <b>recommended</b> that Philosophy reminds students of the resources that are available to support them in their learning at relevant points during their programmes.</p>	<p>2019-20</p> <p>Completed</p>	<p>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>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> <p><b>Year on report update:</b> this information has been revised and is now listed alongside course handbooks on the philosophy department webpage.</p>	<p>September 2019</p> <p>September 2019</p>

8.	The review team <b>recommends</b> that undergraduate students are made more aware that they are welcome to attend Philosophy's research seminars.	Completed	This will be mentioned at the welcome talks for returning students. The events will be made more visible on the website.	September 2019
9.	It is <b>recommended</b> that the School considers extending the scope of the PPLS Writing Centre's provision to include support for first year students.	Completed	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	September 2019
10.	It is <b>recommended</b> 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.	Completed	<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. 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> <p><b>Year on report update:</b> PPLS colleague, Prof Graeme Trousdale, is working with the College Office, SRA and Student Systems to develop aspects of the WP Strategy in CAHSS. This includes the enhancement of the data sets and dashboards available to staff.</p>	

11.	It is <b>recommended</b> that Estates and Buildings takes the Subject Area's feedback on the Dugald Stewart Building into account in future estates developments.	Completed	<p>Philosophy will continue working with students to relay staff and student concerns about the available spaces.</p> <p><b>Year on report update:</b> Email from estates 25<sup>th</sup> June: "As per the previous update Estates continue to facilitate effective engagement mechanisms to ensure the views of end building users are sought through the User Intelligence Groups and this information informs the ultimate design of the building. Work commenced last year to strengthen the student voice in Capital developments which has informed our approach. However in light of the current Covid crisis this work has been suspended and will recommence as we come out of lockdown restrictions. We continue to conduct post occupancy reviews which informs our approach and again in light of Covid this programme is currently suspended and will recommence as we move out of lockdown restrictions."</p>	June, 2020
12.	It is <b>recommended</b> 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>Completed</p> <p>Special Circumstances</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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Challenges created when Special Circumstances decisions diverge between Schools.</b> 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.</li> </ol> <p><b>Year on report update:</b> A new centralised 'Extensions and Special Circumstances' team that will be taking over the approval of extensions and SCs for all students from September.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>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.</b> 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.</li> </ol>	

		2020-21 (Expected)	<p><b>Year on report update:</b> the procedures for exam boards in 19-20 were, as a result of covid, entirely online. This worked very well and give support for reducing the time that external examiners are required to be in Edinburgh in future years.</p> <p><b>3. Challenges are created when course marks are not ratified by partner Schools in time for progression boards.</b> 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><b>Year on report update:</b> this was all highly affected by Covid 19 so will be revisited during academic year 19-20.</p>	
For Year on response only	Any examples of a positive change as a result of the review		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As a result of the review the department had meetings to discuss prehonours courses, which were good for building mutual understanding of how faculty approach those courses and what they think most valuable about them. This will guide further reflection on our prehonours offerings.</li> <li>- Logic 1's move to a short assignment structure was another positive change.</li> </ul>	