

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 23 November 2007

Review of Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Responses to the Recommendations arising from the Review of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School held on 15 May 2006

Mrs Marjory Wright, Clerk to the Review Panel

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The Review Panel commends the Graduate School on the quality of its teaching provision. The Graduate School is also to be complimented on its approach to student representation. The Panel was impressed to find that two-thirds of the student representatives who met with them had attended the SRC Course Representative training.

The Graduate School had prepared an informative Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The production of the SER had been a team effort that had skilfully merged contributions from a diverse range of disciplines into a comprehensive document. Whilst this manner of preparation had not lent itself to deep reflection, it had been an extremely valuable exercise, which had provided Programme Co-ordinators with insight into how other programmes operated and had given the Graduate School an opportunity to evaluate its progress since its establishment 5 years previously, and to identify where it needed to improve.

The Graduate School clearly had a strong research identity, but its role in relation to postgraduate taught provision was less well established and it appeared to be poorly understood. The Review Panel formed the opinion that the Graduate School would benefit from reappraising its role in relation to the provision of postgraduate taught education and to promoting the benefits of an integrated approach to taught postgraduate provision throughout the Faculty.

Postgraduate taught students also lacked a sense of identity within the Graduate School and the Panel felt that it was extremely important that steps be taken to address this.

The Review Panel particularly wishes to draw the University's attention to the Graduate School's concerns in relation to the VAT status of the British Heart Foundation Glasgow Cardiovascular Research Centre and the Glasgow Biomedical Research Centre buildings. Academic staff believed that if the VAT anomaly was not resolved, the restrictions that it imposed could deny students the opportunity of learning from some of the University's finest researchers.

The External Subject Specialist commended the University on the introduction of a University-wide postgraduate template.

Response from the Faculty of Medicine

Following the DPTLA review of PGT programmes, excluding Dentistry and Nursing, within the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School in May 2006, the Review Panel made the following recommendations endorsed by the Academic Standards Committee.

These recommendations were considered at a meeting between the Executive Dean, Faculty Secretary, Head of Graduate School, Chair of Graduate Education Committee and the Graduate School Administrator on 18 December 2006. Subsequently, members of the Graduate School Board, Graduate Education Committee and taught postgraduate Programme Coordinators were invited to comment on the draft responses which they fully endorsed.

All parties were in agreement that future DPTLA Reviews of taught postgraduate provision should encompass all programmes which fall under the remit of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School, including those in Dentistry and Nursing.

Recommendations to the Graduate School

Recommendation 1

*The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School urgently reappraises its role in relation to the provision of postgraduate taught education and seeks the Faculty's assistance in promoting the benefits of an integrated approach to taught postgraduate provision. (Paragraph B.2)*

***Action:** The Head of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School*

Response:

The Faculty of Medicine Graduate School has 15 postgraduate taught programmes, many of which developed in clinical or other academic sites throughout the city over the years. Students and staff had strong Department and Speciality identity, but until recently had no focal point in the University with which to identify. This is true not only for students, but also staff. This situation has changed with the emergence of the Wolfson Medical School Building and the development of the Graduate School over the last three to four years.

Uncertainty over the Graduate School's role in postgraduate taught education, particularly with students, is principally an issue of perception and continued efforts are being made to improve the School's profile, including the introduction of a new logo and appropriate referencing to the 'Faculty of Medicine Graduate School' in key documentation. A very successful inaugural PGT induction session was held in October 2006 for new PGT entrants, all students now have 24-hour access to the Wolfson Medical School Building and the Graduate School Offices have relocated to a more accessible location. Appropriate signage is being organised for the 'Graduate School Corridor' and should be available prior to commencement of the next academic session. Improvements and standardisation of the postgraduate taught programme information on the Graduate School's web site will be completed by end June 2008 with the aim of providing consistent, collegial information for applicants; the content of individual programme sites should be directed towards more detailed information appropriate for registered students. The release of a new Secretarial Assistant post within the Graduate School was approved earlier in the year and the appointed candidate took up post on 1st May 2007. This appointment will enable the Graduate School to improve its overall service to staff, students and applicants.

Improved emphasis on shared teaching and resources between cognate postgraduate taught programmes is one of the Graduate School's principal objectives and a key feature in one its new degree families, e.g. MSc (Clin Sci). This concept is likely to be extended to other related programmes, but may be deferred subject to planned relocation to the Educational Centre at the new South Glasgow Hospitals Site. As noted in recommendation 3 below, meetings between the families of degrees have been scheduled during June, July and August and those which have taken place have already identified potential for shared resources.

Due to the imminent departure of our Graduate School Administrator, Tania Sprott, some short-term plans have been delayed to allow her replacement to establish him or herself in the post.

Recommendation 2

*The Review Panel **recommends** that high priority be given to the implementation of a CPD strategy to make the Graduate School more able to respond to NES bids. (Paragraph C.4.9)*

Action: *The Head of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School*

Response:

It is anticipated that improved support from Research & Enterprise will better facilitate more credible bids for new NES initiatives. For matriculated postgraduate programmes and courses, negotiations concerning a satisfactory split in the funding allocation model have recently been agreed with 25% of income accrued transferring direct to the course provider. The reporting structure for the new Faculty-level CPD Committee has also been established and it will report directly to the Faculty's Education Strategy Committee recognising the role of CPD as a wider Faculty concern which is not limited to postgraduate business.

Recommendation 3

*The Review Panel **recommends** that, in addition to the annual meeting for Programme Co-ordinators, the Graduate School considers facilitating scheduled meetings of "Families of Degrees" (see C.4.6) on at least two or three occasions per year to provide course teams with an opportunity to discuss common issues and share good practice. (Paragraph B.3)*

Action: *The Head of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School*

Response:

The Graduate School hosts annual meetings with Programme Coordinators and appoints academic mentorship for new Programme Coordinators. The above recommendation is accepted. The idea of holding additional facilitated meetings of 'families of degrees' has been discussed with Programme Coordinators to ascertain the most desirable format and it has been agreed that these should be held at least once per year normally between February and April. Inaugural meetings for each of the families of degrees - Medical Science, Clinical Science, Health Science, Dental Science, and Psychology - have been arranged during June, July and August 2007 and will be facilitated, at least in the first instance, by the Graduate School. The meetings held during June and July 2007 have proved very constructive.

Recommendation 4

*The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School gives consideration to providing generic guidance to promote efficient and effective feedback and to encourage consistency across programmes. (Paragraph C.5.8)*

***Action:** The Head of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School*

Response:

Agreed, templates for minutes and other advice concerning feedback, etc, will be provided with a view to providing collegiate programme documentation, web sites, minutes and other reports. It is anticipated that preliminary advice, etc, will be provided no later than end December 2007 to allow implementation in the next academic session.

Recommendation 5

*The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School develops a policy for the recording and dissemination of SSLC minutes. (Paragraph E.4)*

***Action:** The Head of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School*

Response:

Agreed. Guidance notes and a template with standard discussion items will be prepared and circulated by end December 2007 to allow implementation in the next academic session.

Recommendation 6

*The Review Panel **recommends** that the Graduate School gives consideration to publishing a web-based record of programme and course changes to enable students to see the improvements that had been made. (Paragraph E.5)*

***Action:** The Head of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School*

Response:

Agreed. A web-based summary of programme and course changes, drawn from Annual Monitoring Reports, will be hosted on the Graduate School web site. This will be completed normally in September in each academic session prior to the new intake of PGT students.

Recommendation 7

*The Review Panel **recommends** that the composition of the Graduate School Board be modified to ensure the effective representation and participation of taught postgraduate students. (Paragraph C.6.15)*

***Action:** The Head of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School*

Response:

Postgraduate taught students are from a wide range of professional backgrounds and are studying, for the most part, diverse 12-month Masters' programmes delivered across the Faculty. All students commence their programme in September each year.

The Graduate School disagrees with the Review Panel's recommendation to include taught postgraduate student representation on the Graduate School Board for three principal reasons: (i) lack of continuity from year to year (ii) the inability of individual students to represent the taught postgraduate student body which encompasses disparate taught postgraduate programmes and (iii) difficulty identifying students early enough in their programmes for them to attend meetings, but late enough for them to understand what the issues are within the programme they have joined.. The Graduate School proposes instead to facilitate an annual meeting of all PGT student representatives circa May each year to discuss best practice and explore relevant issues. It also aims to refer to student representatives in situations where consultation is desirable. A very useful, inaugural meeting with PGT student representatives across the School was held in June 2007. The student representatives were appraised of the recommendation to have more effective representation and participation from taught postgraduate students and are supportive of the Graduate School's response.

Recommendation 8

*The SER listed a number of key plans for the enhancement of existing provision. Whilst commending the Graduate School's foresight, the Review Panel **recommends** that it would be helpful to prioritise these plans and assign an appropriate timescale to each. (Paragraph F.3)*

Action: *The Head of the Faculty of Medicine Graduate School*

Response:

Agreed. Key plans for enhancement of existing provision are outlined below:

Programme and Course Development

- Development of Masters-level descriptors to facilitate effective implementation of the Code of Assessment was completed in September 2006.
- Improved international marketing and recruitment to relevant programmes and development of improved links with international institutions is being progressed with immediate effect and has resulted in a recent marketing campaign (February/March 2007) which has encompassed an advert in The New Scientist, programme profiles and a feature banner on FindAMasters.com, a feature banner on FindAPhD.com, and improved links with the International and Postgraduate Service. A Glasgow International Biomedical Network is also being developed to facilitate the success of the Faculty and the institution's internationalisation objectives and, in particular, improve selection of the highest quality applicants to the Graduate School.
- Develop new courses and programmes in line with employers' developing needs within institutions such as the NHS with immediate effect.
- Exploration of alternative project structures to deal with problems related to ethics approval and budget allocations is being advanced and is a consideration in the approval documentation for new programmes and in discussions with Programme Coordinators at the present time.
- Ensure flexible programme structures which encourage CPD and improve student access to programmes with immediate effective.
- Develop and seek, guidance, support and funding on e-learning opportunities to meet market demands by end September 2008.

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- Explore ways in which to increase the practical elements and problem based learning components of some courses within budgetary constraints by September 2008.

Students

- Exploration of a Graduate School pre-session course: on cultural orientation; expectations at UK universities for Masters-level study and within Medical Science; and improved communication to better integrate and cater for the overseas student intake is at an advanced stage and will be implemented with effect from August 2007.
- Improved induction and orientation sessions for students on subject-specific material to fill in basic knowledge gaps (e.g. Medical Genetics) is being addressed as part of the pre-session course above.
- Explore the use of a 'buddy' system to support the integration of overseas students by June 2008.

Staff Development and Recruitment

- Encouragement to staff, including clinical teaching staff, to attend sessions discussing the latest research on teaching and learning enhancement is an ongoing objective and was addressed at the annual Programme Coordinators event in April 2007.
- New appointments to meet programme staffing needs in line with succession planning (e.g. Clinical Pharmacology) as needed.

Facilities

- Investigation of improved laboratory and classroom space/facilities across the University is an ongoing issue and will be addressed as part of the planned relocation to the South Glasgow Hospitals Site circa 2012.

Recommendations to the Faculty

Recommendation 9

*The Review Panel strongly **recommends** that the Faculty reviews its resource allocation model to ensure that the expanding role of the Graduate School is taken fully into account. (Paragraph B.4)*

Action: *The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine*

Response:

The Graduate School now has a location in two adjacent rooms on the south corridor of the Wolfson Medical School Building (distinct from the Undergraduate Office) and is seeking access to an adjacent third room to provide more appropriate facilities. A new Secretarial Assistant post within the School was released and the successful appointee took up post on 1st May 2007.

It is acknowledged that further expansion of the Graduate School may be required to support the international ambitions of the university which will introduce significant additional pressure on the postgraduate territory. This situation will be monitored.

Recommendation 10

*The Review Panel strongly **recommends** that the Faculty review the staffing resource required to provide adequate IT support to its centrally supported computer clusters and clarify where responsibility lies for supporting Divisional computing clusters. (Paragraph C.6.7)*

***Action:** The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine*

Response:

While the Faculty IT pool has recently been expanded, IT support for postgraduate clusters at hospitals sites remains an acute, unresolved, problem. It is acknowledged that many of the current issues may be solved following relocation to the new South Glasgow Hospitals Site circa 2012.

Recommendation 11

*The Review Panel **recommends** that the Faculty (and Heads of Division) as a whole address the adequacy of support that mentors offer to probationary staff across all aspects of provision. (Paragraph C.6.6)*

***Action:** The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine*

Response:

This is generally perceived as more of a divisional responsibility and one outwith the remit of the Graduate School. The Head of Graduate School, at Faculty Management Board, has, however, drawn the attention of this issue to Heads of Academic Divisions. The Executive Dean will continue to emphasise this through the Faculty Management Board

Recommendation 12

*The Review Panel **recommends** that the Faculty explore the possibility of providing the Graduate School with sufficient resources to introduce and support a VLE. (Paragraph C.6.8)*

***Action:** The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine*

Response:

The Graduate School is supportive of this recommendation and the improvement in direct communications with students which it would achieve. The School plans to explore this issue further with the Education Strategy Committee. Achievement of this objective will have associated resource implications which will be a priority in the November 2007 budget setting process.

Some programmes (e.g. Health Care, Medical Genetics, Public Health) have launched very useful, effective Moodle courses and this practice is being actively encouraged across other programmes within the School.

Recommendation 13

*The Review Panel also **recommends** that the Faculty explore, through the Education Strategy Committee, the possibility of linking the Graduate School with the Undergraduate Medical School system (VALE). (Paragraph C.6.8)*

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Action: *The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine*

Response:

See 12 above.

Recommendation 14

*The Review Panel **recommends** that the Faculty consider whether the resources currently allocated to the delivery of postgraduate taught programmes are realistic. (Paragraph C.6.12)*

Action: *The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine*

Response:

The Graduate School welcomes transparency in the resources allocated to Divisions to specifically run programmes and courses, rather than salary costs, etc.

It is recognised that some programmes are long standing and do not operate with the support of a realistic and updated Business Plan. The Graduate School has asked all Programme Coordinators to produce Business Plans, including research expenses and support costs, for their respective programmes to determine real running costs, etc, and demonstrate cost effectiveness. This exercise will be completed by July 2008.

These realistic plans will be incorporated into the Faculty's budget setting

Recommendation 15

*The review Panel **recommends** that the Faculty develops a culture which demonstrates its commitment to taught postgraduate education. This should include plans to raise the profile of the Graduate School in relation to taught postgraduate programmes so that all taught postgraduate students identify with the Graduate School. (Paragraph C.6.14).*

Action: *The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine*

Response:

This issue has been addressed under recommendation one above and is also being addressed through a number of other areas.

Recommendation 16

*Whilst acknowledging that issues of capacity, security and supervision would require to be addressed, the Review Panel nevertheless **recommends** that consideration be given to permitting controlled 24-hour access to the Study Landscape to postgraduate taught students. (Paragraph C.6.5)*

Action: *The Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine*

Response:

Twenty-four hour access to the Study Landscape of the Wolfson Medical School Building was extended to all postgraduate students with effect from October 2006..

Recommendations to the University

Recommendation 17

*The Review Panel **recommends** that the University actively encourage and facilitate the sharing of Honours and Postgraduate Taught courses, both within and across Faculties. (Paragraph C.4.8)*

Action: *The Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching)*

Response:

This has been in the past and will be highlighted in planning meetings with Deans throughout the year 07/08.

Prepared by: Janet Fleming, Senate Office

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