

UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Regulations Committee - Friday 27 May 2005

**Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Report of the Review of the Department of Music held
on Friday 4 March 2005**

Mrs Marjory Wright, Clerk to the Panel

Review Panel

Professor Andrew Nash	Clerk of Senate [Convener]
Professor Jan Smaczny	External Subject Specialist, Queen's University Belfast
Dr Mona Siddiqui	Senate Assessor on the University Court
Professor Jan McDonald	Member of Cognate Department, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies
Dr Sarah Mann	Teaching and Learning Service
Mrs Marjory Wright (Clerk)	Senate Office
Mrs Elaine Shearer	Senate Office
Mrs Janet Fleming	Senate Office

A. Introduction

- A.1 Since the Court Review of March 2000 the Department of Music has undergone a considerable amount of change and the Review Panel was impressed with the upsurge in vitality following Professor Butt's appointment as Head of Department and the strategic appointment of new staff.
- A.2 The teaching and learning was enhanced by the Department's involvement in, and commitment to, the improved provision of music within the University as a whole and the Review Panel noted the progress that had been made since the appointment of a non-departmental full-time administrative officer to take this forward. Although Music in the University did not fall within the remit of the review of teaching, learning and assessment, the Panel acknowledged that its strong link to the Department contributed to the quality of student learning provision and expressed a willingness to alert the Secretary of Court to the potential benefits to the University of subscribing to a University-wide permanent licence for performance venues.
- A.3 The Department had provided a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and supporting documentation in accordance with the University's requirements for the Review of Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. The SER had been made available to all members of staff and discussed at a Staff Meeting.
- A.4 The Review Panel congratulated the Department on the very orderly presentation of the SER, which they had found entertaining as well as factually interesting.
- A.5 The Review Panel met with Professor John Caughie, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Professor Elizabeth Moignard, Dean Elect of the Faculty of Arts, the Head of

Department, Professor John Butt, and all members of academic staff. The Panel also met with two probationary members of staff, with six Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) who represented hourly paid staff and with a range of undergraduate students representing all programmes, with the exception of the BEng with Music.

- A.6 The Review Panel considered the following range of provision offered by the Department:
- MA
 - BMus
 - BEng with Music

B. Overall aims of the Department's provision

- B.1 The overall aims of the Department's provision were stated in the SER and were readily available to students by means of the Music Department Handbook.
- B.2 The Department undertook a substantial amount of undergraduate teaching at both Faculty and cross-Faculty level and teaching and learning aims were met. The Review Panel identified no areas of particular concern.

C. Undergraduate and Taught-Postgraduate Provision

C.1 Aims

The Review Panel found the Department's overall aims for the different undergraduate programmes and specific aims for individual courses to be clear, informative and appropriate and readily available to students through their inclusion in the Music Department Handbook. The Panel noted that the Department did not currently offer a taught postgraduate programme. Whilst appreciating the reasons for not engaging in postgraduate taught programme development at the present time, the Panel encouraged the Department to give consideration to engaging in discussions with the Faculty, with a view to developing discrete courses which utilise its research strengths and which might fit into a wider Faculty postgraduate taught initiative. The Department responded positively to this suggestion.

C.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

- C.2.1 The Review Panel noted that the Department had formulated ILOs for each course over recent years in response to the Teaching and Learning policy of the University and that the specific ILOs for the three music programmes had been devised afresh for the newly-formulated Programme Specifications.
- C.2.2 It was noted from the SER that, despite appreciating the formulation of ILOs as a broad specification of what a student might be expected to achieve in any component of a programme, the staff were nevertheless unanimous in rejecting the concept of ILOs as the most central tenet of university education. The Panel explored with the Head of Department its concept of the "*Unintended Learning Outcome*" – the way in which students and staff alike might be inspired by unexpected conjunctions of ideas and creative thinking.
- C.2.3 The Review Panel found that, for the most part, the ILOs were clearly stated in the Music Department Handbook but felt that some could benefit from being reviewed in terms of how they were expressed.

- C.2.4 The students who met with the Review Panel felt that much of their learning was about being creative but they found the ILOs useful for essays and for the more practical courses.
- C.2.5 The Review Panel considered that the Department **demonstrated good practice** in its attention to the development of transferable skills as ILOs. The integration of authentic practical experience (eg recording concerts, planning concerts, composition projects in primary schools) within the curriculum enabled meaningful development of transferable skills and employability as well as crucially engaging students actively in the learning process.

C.3 *Assessment*

- C.3.1 The Review Panel noted from the SER that the Department complied with the University Code of Assessment and that students were provided with a clear explanation of the grading system in the Music Department Handbook.
- C.3.2 The Review Panel found the variety of teaching and assessment methods appropriate to the delivery of the undergraduate curricula and noted with interest and approval the introduction of moderated self-assessment in the Composition course.
- C.3.3 The Review Panel found the content of the Department of Music Handbook to be useful and informative but, in response to the requests of students, **recommends** greater clarity and a somewhat more user-friendly approach be adopted in the section describing the moderated self-assessment scheme that applies to the Composition course and clarity in the distinction between the weighting of performance and technical ability in assessing the Performance course.
- C.3.4 The Review Panel was impressed with the Department's departure from end of course examinations in favour of continuous assessment and the steps that it had taken to minimise the likelihood of plagiarism through an improved approach to the setting of assignments and would encourage the emulation of this elsewhere in the University in some measure, whilst stressing the importance of reviewing the process actively at regular intervals in terms of workload for both staff and students.
- C.3.5 Discussions with staff and GTAs indicated that continuous assessment resulted in a heavy workload during Semesters 1 and 2 and probationary staff reported that marking encroached on the Christmas and Easter vacation periods. However, there was a clear benefit to staff in that they were able to resume their research earlier than normal in the summer and students benefited from the ongoing feedback provided.
- C.3.6 Whilst generally appreciating continuous assessment, students advised the Review Panel that the timeliness of feedback depended on the marker and the size of the class, and that timescales were not always met. Staff agreed that this criticism was valid and explained that the complexity of double-marking, while advantageous, sometimes contributed to delays.
- C.3.7 Joint Honours students advised the Review Panel that Music coursework sometimes clashed with the Honours examinations in their other discipline and that there were some timetable clashes, particularly in relation to Physics with Music. The Panel **recommends** to the Department that the competing commitments of Joint Honours students be given due consideration when drawing up both teaching and assessment timetables to ensure that these students do not encounter clashes.

- C.3.8 The Review Panel explored the issue of assessment provision for students with a disability and was assured that appropriate arrangements were in place. The Panel noted that the University Gardens accommodation had limited access to students with physical disabilities.
- C.3.9 The Review Panel explored the Department's relationship with RSAMD. Although collaboration was desirable, current SHEFC funding arrangements limited opportunities. The Panel was advised that the Head of Department had recently met with his counterpart at RSAMD to explore the possibility of postgraduate level collaboration.

C.4 Curriculum Design and Content

- C.4.1 There was evidence that the undergraduate Music programmes complied with the Subject Benchmark Statement. The SER described the process of curriculum development and how the three programmes, BMus, MA and BEng with Music were structured according to the types of student each might attract. It was noted from the SER that since the three programmes and their respective cohorts were centred in one Department, there were opportunities for cross-fertilisation of interests and that students could be exposed to areas of music study that they might not have expected from their initial choice of programme.
- C.4.2 There was evidence that teaching was research led and that it capitalised on the research interests and strengths of staff.
- C.4.3 The Review Panel was impressed with the well thought through process of curriculum development at all levels. The Department had a robust process for the annual review of its curricula and **demonstrated good practice** in involving students in the process.
- C.4.4 The enthusiastic engagement of GTAs in the learning process of undergraduates was seen as another of the Department's strengths.

C.5 Student Recruitment, Support and Progression

- C.5.1 The Review Panel noted that the Department had responsibility for the recruitment and selection of students to the BMus programme and that it had its own Adviser and Admissions Officer.
- C.5.2 At the meeting with staff, concern was expressed at the declining level of musical literacy amongst entrants to the BMus programme, particularly those via the Scottish Higher pathway. Although the prospectus specified a requirement for merit in Grade 7 Associate Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) examinations, in practice, entrants' level of accomplishment ranged between Grade 5 and Grade 8, with the majority now entering the programme with Grade 5 (see also D.1).
- C.5.3 The Review Panel commended the Department's strategy of streaming Level 1 students undertaking the Integrated Musicianship course into groups to allow them to develop at a rate appropriate to their level of knowledge but **recommends** that the entrance requirement be made absolutely clear in recruitment material (see also D.1). The Panel also **recommends** that the Department consider the additional requirement that applicants should offer ABRSM or Trinity College London theory grades 6 to 8.
- C.5.4 The Review Panel was very concerned at the inadequate level of personal practical tuition support and noted, both from the SER and from the meeting with undergraduate students, that the budget provided did not cover the cost

of compulsory tuition that students were required to undertake, which had an impact on retention and progression and might make the BMus less attractive to potential applicants in a very competitive environment. The meetings with staff and students confirmed that the low unit of resource also restricted the intake of students to Performance Higher and Performance Advanced to those who had achieved Grade B at the preceding level. Undergraduate students advised the Review Panel that they had anticipated being able to carry on Performance to 4th year and they expressed disappointment with the latter restriction, having drawn their own conclusions as to the reason for it. The Review Panel **recommends** that the Faculty look with urgency into the possibility of improved funding provision for practical tuition.

C.5.5 BMus students advised the Review Panel that they benefited from having their Adviser of Studies located in the Department and a proportion of MA students also benefited in this way.

C.5.6 The Head of Department advised the Review Panel that the setting up of a memorial fund following the death of a BEng with Music student had enabled the Department to introduce an annual concert for BEng students which had helped to improve their integration into the Department.

C.6 *The Effectiveness of Provision*

C.6.1 The Department subscribed to the ethos of research led teaching and capitalised on the research strengths of staff in order to give students engaged and inspiring tuition.

C.6.2 Probationary Staff had settled into the Department well and made a strong contribution to teaching, learning and recruitment. They felt well supported but the Review Panel perceived them to be carrying a heavy assessment load and encourages the Head of Department to review their workload.

C.6.3 The statement at para 5.4 applies equally to the effectiveness of provision.

C.6.4 The Review Panel noted from the SER and from meetings with the Head of Department and with staff that the team teaching adopted by the Department appeared to be effective but **recommends**, nevertheless, that the Department also give consideration to introducing peer review of staff as a means of maintaining and enhancing quality.

C.6.5 The students and GTAs who met with the Review Panel were enthusiastic and demonstrated a commendable support of each other and for the Department.

C.6.6 Members of staff were enthusiastic and committed and students had found them to be knowledgeable and approachable.

C.6.7 Undergraduate students expressed the view that Aspects of Modernity and Historiography and Criticism courses appeared to run in the wrong order and that Historiography and Criticism might benefit from being a year long course. They reported that they had recently drawn this to the attention of the Department. The Review Panel **recommends** that the timetabling of these courses be reviewed.

C.6.8 The Department **demonstrated good practice** in relation to GTA training. GTAs felt well supported and appreciated the opportunities for in-house instruction and for having their teaching observed.

C.6.9 The provision of a biennial Careers evening for senior students was another area of **good practice**.

D The Maintenance and Enhancement of Standards of Awards

- D.1 Staff expressed concern at the low level of musical literacy amongst entrants to the BMus, particularly in relation to the Scottish Higher pathway. Although the prospectus specified a requirement for merit in Grade 7 Associate Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) examinations, in practice, entrants' level of accomplishment ranged between Grade 5 and Grade 8, with the majority now entering the programme with Grade 5 (see also C.5.2). The Review Panel **commended** the Department's strategy of streaming Level 1 students undertaking the Integrated Musicianship course into groups to allow them to develop at a rate appropriate to their level of knowledge but **recommends** that the entrance requirement be made absolutely clear in recruitment material (see also C.5.3).
- D.2 There was clear evidence that the Department engaged effectively with its External Examiners.

E. The Maintenance and Assurance of Quality

- E.1 The Department held an annual Course Review meeting at the end of the academic year where student feedback and preliminary (usually oral) versions of the External Examiners' reports were discussed and acted upon. Draft Annual Course Monitoring Reports (ACMRs) were discussed and ratified at a Staff Meeting early the following session.
- E.2 The Department **demonstrated good practice** in making the analysis of student questionnaires accessible to students by means of the Q drive and by feedback at Staff-Student meetings. This was further enhanced by the introduction of informal mid semester questionnaires in response to student demand.
- E.3 The SER indicated that staff had found the University's course approval process to be rather restrictive and unwieldy, rendering immediate problems with course procedures, content and assessment deadlines extremely difficult to deal with swiftly. The Review Panel anticipated that the forthcoming enhancements to CCIMS would help to alleviate these difficulties.

F. Enhancing the Student Learning Experience

- F.1 The Review Panel considered the Department's approach to the student learning experience to be positive. It **demonstrated good practice** in its provision of research led teaching and learning and in its ongoing consultations with students, as evidenced by its active Staff-Student Committee and the attendance of student representatives at Staff Meetings.
- F.2 Student representatives who attended Staff Meetings stated that they found it useful to see how the Department worked in relation to planning, discussing and implementing change and were satisfied that their opinions were being taken forward, although they appeared to have no formal means by which to disseminate this information to their peers.
- F.3 The Review Panel recognised that the Department's lead role, and student involvement, in the development of Music in the University greatly enhanced the student learning experience in theory, performance and the acquisition of technical skills. The imaginative partnership between the Department and concert-giving organisations was seen as an exciting development and was commended by the external Subject Specialist.
- F.4 BMus students reported that they benefited from having their Adviser of Studies located in the Department and a proportion of MA students also benefited in this way.

Both undergraduate students and GTAs spoke warmly of the Department and students indicated that the Music Department Handbook worked well in terms of informing them of staff contact details, assignment details and the timetable, but that the inclusion of the Department's telephone number would be helpful. GTAs had recently experienced some inconsistency in the receipt of e-mail communications and requested that this be addressed.

- F.5 The Review Panel was very concerned at the paucity of practice facilities for students and noted that additional temporary practice facilities were urgently required to improve the provision for current students and also to enable the University to compete more effectively with other institutions in attracting the best music students. The Panel therefore **recommends** to the Faculty, as an interim measure, that urgent consideration be given to identifying or applying for funding from the Teaching Infrastructure Fund to provide an adequate number of soundproofed modular practice facilities that could be placed in the former Archives accommodation adjacent to the Concert Hall and subsequently be relocated as and when the Department moves to other premises.

G. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas to be Improved or Enhanced in relation to Learning and Teaching and Conclusions and Recommendations

Key strengths

- The Department is commended on its well thought through process of curriculum development
- The Department demonstrates good practice in its provision of research lead teaching and learning and its ongoing consultations with students, as evidenced by its active Staff-Student Committee and the involvement of student representatives at Staff Meetings.
- The Department exhibits a robust process for the annual review of its curricula and its involvement of students in the process.
- The Department is commended on making the analysis of student questionnaires available to students by electronic means and by feedback at Staff-Student meetings.
- The initiation of mid-semester questionnaires in response to student demand is considered to be good practice.
- The Department demonstrates good practice in relation to Graduate Teaching Assistant training and is commended on the enthusiastic engagement of GTAs in the learning process of undergraduate students.
- The Department is commended for its strategy of streaming Level 1 students undertaking the Integrated Musicianship course into groups to allow them to develop at a rate appropriate to their level of knowledge.
- The Review Panel was impressed with the Department's introduction of continuous assessment and moderated self-assessment.
- The Department is commended for its attention to the development of transferable skills.
- The imaginative partnership between the Department and concert-giving organisations was seen as an exciting development and was commended by the external Subject Specialist.

- The Department is commended on the provision of a biennial Careers evening for students.

Areas to be improved or enhanced

- The Review Panel highlighted the importance of reviewing the process of continuous assessment at regular intervals in terms of workload for both staff and students and encourages the Department to engage in this at the annual review of its curriculum.
- The Department is encouraged to review the assessment workload of probationary staff.
- In relation to postgraduate taught provision, the Department is encouraged to discuss with the Faculty the possibility of developing discrete courses which utilise its research strengths and which might fit into a wider Faculty postgraduate taught initiative.
- The Department's telephone number should be included in the Music Department Handbook.
- Graduate Teaching Assistants requested that the recent inconsistency in the receipt of e-mail communications be addressed.
- The effectiveness of student attendance at Staff Meetings could be enhanced by the development of a mechanism to enable student representatives to feed information back to their peers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The Review Panel commended the Department highly on the overall quality of its provision and for the upsurge in vitality since the Court Review of March 2000. Members of staff were found to be enthusiastic and committed and students had found them to be knowledgeable and approachable. Both undergraduate students and GTAs spoke warmly of the Department.

The Panel applauded the industry of the Head of Department and the success of the Department under his leadership, and felt that the time was now right to proceed to a greater sharing of the administrative load both in succession planning and enhancing the personal development of members of the academic staff.

The Panel acknowledged that the strong link between the Department and Music in the University contributed to the quality of student learning provision and would therefore wish to alert the Secretary of Court to the potential benefits to the University of subscribing to a University-wide permanent licence for performance venues.

The Review Panel identified two areas of particular concern:

- i. Funding for practical tuition
- ii. Practice accommodation

It was hoped that a relocation in the near future would further enhance the Department's provision.

The Panel regretted that it had not had the opportunity to meet with BEng students, despite an invitation being extended to them, and was therefore unable to form an opinion on the teaching, learning and assessment provision for students undertaking the joint programme with Music and the extent to which BEng students were integrated

into the Department. Joint provision would be explored with students in the forthcoming review of the Department of Electronics and Electrical Engineering.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The Panel recommends that the Faculty, as an interim measure, gives urgent consideration to applying for funding from the Teaching Infrastructure Fund to provide an adequate number of soundproofed modular practice facilities that could be placed in the former Archives accommodation adjacent to the Concert Hall and subsequently be relocated as and when the Department moves to other premises. (*Paragraph F.5*)

Action: The Dean of the Faculty of Arts

Recommendation 2:

The Panel recommends that the Faculty look with urgency into the possibility of improved funding provision for practical tuition. (*Paragraph C.5.4*)

Action: The Dean of the Faculty of Arts

Recommendation 3:

The Panel recommends that entrance requirements for the BMus degree be made absolutely clear in recruitment material. (*Paragraphs C.5.3, D.1*)

Action: The Head of Department

Recommendation 4:

The Panel recommends that the Department consider the additional requirement that applicants should offer ABRSM or Trinity College London theory grades 6 to 8. (*Paragraph C.5.3*)

Action: The Head of Department

Recommendation 5:

The Panel recommends greater clarity and a somewhat more user-friendly approach be adopted in the section in the Department of Music Handbook describing the moderated self-assessment scheme that applies to the Composition course, and clarity in the distinction between the weighting of performance and technical ability in assessing the Performance course. (*Paragraph C.3.3*)

Action: The Head of Department

Recommendation 6:

The Panel **recommends** to the Department that the competing commitments of Joint Honours students be given due consideration when drawing up both teaching and assessment timetables to ensure that these students do not encounter clashes. (*Paragraph C.3.7*)

Action: The Head of Department

Recommendation 7:

The Panel recommends that the Department give consideration to introducing peer review of staff as a means of maintaining and enhancing quality. (*Paragraph C.6.4*)

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Action: The Head of Department

Recommendation 8:

The Panel recommends that the timetabling of Aspects of Modernity and Historiography be reviewed. (*Paragraph C.6.7*)

Action: The Head of Department

Prepared by: Janet Fleming, Senate Office

Last modified on: Wednesday 11 May 2005