

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DPTLA)

Review of Department of Scottish Literature: Tuesday 24 February 2009

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the Department of Scottish Literature. Reviews of *Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment* (DPTLA) are internal subject reviews focused on the quality of provision as experienced by students. The review looks at the range of programmes, course content, the teaching methods employed, assessment, facilities and much more.

The full report of the review is available publicly at:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_125476_en.pdf

Further information about the *DPTLA* process can be found at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/gae/dptla/>

Italicised words are explained in a glossary below.

Conclusions

The Panel was impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication of staff and *Graduate Teaching Assistants* (GTAs) within the Department, and with the focus on research-led teaching. With both staff and students citing it as a strength, the small size of the Department appeared to be of great benefit, allowing for a more personalised approach as well as a varied, if at times heavy, workload for staff. The student group were articulate and enthusiastic, showing a real interest in the subject, and were a credit to the Department.

The Department demonstrated a number of strengths, as well as an awareness of the areas requiring improvement.

Key Strengths

- The approachability and enthusiasm of staff and *GTAs* which was reported to inspire and excite student interest for the subject
- The quality of support provided to students and the individual attention given when required, particularly where students are experiencing difficulty
- The uniqueness of the Department and its international reputation for high quality research
- The annual trip to Arran, which brings together Honour undergraduate and postgraduate students, and inspired progression to postgraduate study and research

- The emphasis placed on raising awareness of *plagiarism* issues amongst students
- The committed approach to schools recruitment and the activities undertaken to further this
- The assistance and support given to students applying for further study or research funding

Areas to be improved or enhanced¹

1. Intended Learning Outcomes

- a) Revisit the *Intended Learning Outcomes* (ILOs) for the Department's courses and programmes and amend them in order to make transferable skills explicit within them. [Paragraph 3.2.3]

2. Assessment, Feedback and Achievement

- a) Give further consideration to ways in which the range of assessment methods could be varied. [Paragraph 3.3.1]
- b) Give serious consideration to the adoption of the *Turnitin* software for the more formal, systematic detection of *plagiarism*. [Paragraph 3.3.6]

3. Curriculum Design, Development and Content

- a) Give consideration to the requirement for students to complete the English Language 1 course, with a view to either removing its compulsory status, or to offering a clear rationale for its compulsory inclusion in the programme. [Paragraph 3.4.4]
- b) Include more formal teaching on, and assessment of, presentation skills in the undergraduate curriculum, in order to ensure all students have the required skills to confidently give presentations and chair seminars. [Paragraph 3.3.2]

4. Postgraduate Taught Provision

- a) Undertake a review of *Postgraduate Taught (PGT)* provision, with a view to potentially withdrawing MLitt programmes that are under-recruiting and developing more attractive alternatives if appropriate. [Paragraph 3.4.5]

5. The Quality of Learning Opportunities

- a) Increase efforts to engage fully with Faculty-wide issues and initiatives in order to benefit more effectively from these. [Paragraph 3.7.3]
- b) Revisit the possibilities for the encouragement of outgoing *Erasmus* students, and examine the feasibility of these to ensure students are not prevented from benefitting from the *Erasmus* scheme. [Paragraph 5.2]

¹ Numbers refer to the paragraphs in the full report that contain the relevant discussion.

6. Resources for Learning and Teaching

- a) Give consideration to making *GTA* representation a formal part of the membership of Departmental committees. [*Paragraph 3.8.5*]
- b) Include *GTA*s in the *Performance Development and Review* (P&DR) structure. [*Paragraph 3.8.6*]
- c) Take steps to ensure *GTA*s are able to access essential services such as the library and Information Technology Services with the same ease as University-employed staff. [*Paragraph 3.8.7*]
- d) Rather than house new post-doctoral students in the existing Departmental Library, every effort should be made to accommodate the post-doctoral students elsewhere, in order to ensure this valuable library resource is retained. This might potentially involve the relocation of the rooms belonging to History of Art. The Dean should initiate discussions with the Director of Estates and Buildings. [*Paragraph 3.8.12*]

Glossary of terms/acronyms used

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment or DPTLA

The University has a six yearly cycle of review of departments within it. The DPTLA is one of the main ways by which the University assures itself of the quality of the provision delivered by departments.

Erasmus

Erasmus is a European Commission exchange programme that enables students in 31 European countries to study for part of their degree in another country. The Erasmus programme is available to current students at the University of Glasgow who would like to study at an exchange-partner university in Europe. The University of Glasgow has exchange agreements with around 250 universities throughout Europe.

Graduate Teaching Assistant or GTAs

Graduate Teaching Assistants, Tutors and Laboratory Demonstrators are students, usually research students, who assist with teaching in the form of tutorials, labs and other activities that are part of undergraduate programmes in the department. They are paid an hourly rate by the University.

Intended Learning Outcomes or ILOs

Intended Learning Outcomes or ILOs describe what all students should be able to do or demonstrate, in terms of particular knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes when they successfully complete the course or programme that the ILOs relate to.

Performance and Development Review

Performance and Development Review is a scheme that provides all University employees with opportunity to discuss important information about their job, to give and receive constructive information and feedback, and establish any relevant learning and development needs. It also provides a mechanism through which individual job responsibilities and contributions can be linked to Department / Faculty strategic objectives.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the submission or presentation of work, in any form, which is not one's own, without acknowledgement of the sources. Special cases of plagiarism can also arise from one student copying another student's work or from inappropriate collaboration.

Postgraduate Taught or PGT

Postgraduate Taught refers to taught programmes at postgraduate level, usually Masters.

Turnitin

Turnitin is a remotely hosted, web based service that compares submitted material, e.g. a student's essay, with a wide range of sources and produces an originality report. It is intended to be a tool which can support students in their understanding and avoidance of plagiarism and can be used to quickly and efficiently locate sources of material in cases of suspected plagiarism. Turnitin originality reports can be used to highlight to students, with real examples, the exact meaning of the term plagiarism.