

Periodic Subject Review (PRS)

Review of School of Music: 14 February 2011

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the School of Music. *Periodic Subject Review* is an internal subject review 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_211380_en.pdf

Further information about the PSR process can be found at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/qea/psr/>

Italicised words are explained in a glossary below.

Conclusions

The Review Panel was impressed with the quality of Music's provision, the accomplishments of Music's staff and with the enthusiasm of both staff and students for their subject. All the students who met with the Panel were confident and articulate.

Music had adopted an exemplary approach to internal review which provided a platform for reflection and discussion between staff and students and proved to be an excellent resource to support the Panel's review of the Subject's learning, teaching and assessment. The deficiencies in the physical environment continue to be a significant matter of concern and the Panel was left in no doubt that the issues of disabled access and soundproofing require urgent attention and that it is of paramount importance for the University to engage in urgent discussion with both the School of Culture and Creative Arts and with Music on the longer-term strategy for creating an integrated and fit-for-purpose learning environment.

National Student Survey (NSS) scores are disappointing and Music has some work to do both to communicate effectively to students that it is actively addressing the issues that the survey has identified and to engage students in exploring mutually satisfactory solutions to any residual issues that they may have.

The Panel was concerned that Music might be striving to do too much within its limited resources. Since much of its provision is dependent on the knowledge and expertise of individual members of staff and cannot be readily shared by the wider School, the Panel is **recommending** that in the course of the next year, both the School and the Subject give serious consideration as to how they might deploy Music's shrinking resources to best advantage to maintain and enhance the quality of the student learning experience, whilst also safeguarding staff wellbeing through a balanced and achievable workload (see Para 3.8.13).

Key Strengths

- The uniqueness of Glasgow's undergraduate Music programmes
- The broad scope provided by the undergraduate music curriculum which offers a choice of 3 degree programmes for the study of Music
- The leading edge teaching and intellectually stimulating learning environment
- Helpful and approachable staff
- The good atmosphere within the Subject area
- The expertise and commitment of staff
- The setting, within the context of Glasgow's rich and varied musical culture
- The integration of students across the three undergraduate programmes
- The provision made to accommodate the variety of prior experience amongst students
- *Peer support*
- The wide and appropriate range of assessment methods employed
- The quality of opportunities for students to develop both general musical skills and specialist expertise
- The development of *graduate attributes* that reflect the spirit and content of the *Subject Benchmark Statements*
- The approach to *employability (commended)*
- The range of opportunities available to Music students to gain work experience
- The opportunities for independent learning provided within *Postgraduate Taught* programmes (PGT)
- The *Sound Thought* annual showcase event which combines scholarly papers by postgraduates with performance of postgraduate compositions
- The exemplary recording of Course Review minutes as part of *annual monitoring* process
- The inclusive approach to the preparation of the *Self Evaluation Report (SER) (commended)*
- Initiation of a project to explore ways of addressing Level 1 marking load **(commended)**

Areas to be improved or enhanced¹

1. Student Learning Experience

The format in which programme *Intended Learning Outcomes* were written in the previous iteration of programme specifications requires amendment and recommends that Music consults with the Learning and Teaching Centre when revising its programme specifications to ensure that programme ILOs are written in the appropriate format. (*Paragraph 3.2.2*)

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

2. Feedback on Assessment

Music should routinely share and discuss the *National Student Survey* results with students in the forum of the *Staff-Student Liaison Committee* with a view to demonstrating its commitment to addressing student concerns, exploring what students would find useful in feedback and seeking shared solutions to any concerns identified. (Paragraph 3.3.11)

3. Curriculum Design, Development and Content

Review the information on the Creative Practice 2 course contained in the Popular Music Studies Student Handbook, with a view to providing clearer information about the structure of the course and the parameters for interactions between the Course Tutors and students in relation to the student's project. (Paragraph 3.4.20)

4. Student Progression, Retention and Support

The Review Panel recommends that the variability in the clarity of advice to MA entrants regarding the flexibility of the MA programme is drawn to the attention of the *Chief Adviser* for the College of Arts so that it can be addressed in the training delivered to Advisers of Studies. (Paragraph 3.6.7)

5. Resources for Learning and Teaching

- a) In the course of the next year, both the School and the Subject give serious consideration as to how they might deploy Music's shrinking resources to best advantage to maintain and enhance the quality of the student learning experience whilst also safeguarding staff wellbeing through a balanced and achievable workload. (Paragraph 3.8.13)
- b) The University engages in urgent discussion with the School of Culture and Creative Arts and with Music on the longer-term strategy for creating an integrated and fit-for-purpose physical environment for Music and that, alongside this, it explores solutions to the following issues, which might be implemented in the shorter-term:
 - The absence of disabled access to both 14 University Gardens and the studios in the Gilbert Scott Building;
 - The lack of soundproofing in the 3 practice rooms located at 14 University Gardens and the resultant noise penetration which is clearly intrusive to teaching, assessment and staff research;
 - The absence of soundproofing in the Concert Hall and the resultant noise penetration which intrudes into adjoining spaces including examination halls. (Paragraph 3.8.23)
- c) University clarifies the line management for *Music in the University* and where responsibility rests for resourcing the regular maintenance of the University-owned musical equipment in the Concert Hall. (Paragraph 3.8.5)
- d) The School of Culture and Creative Arts ensures that the workload of probationary members of staff in the School is equitable and sufficiently realistic to ensure that they

are able to attend the *New Lecturer and Teacher Programme* and that the objectives of the probationary period are achievable in the context of their overall remit. (*Paragraph 3.8.9*)

- e) Consideration be given to including *Graduate Teaching Assistants* (GTA) in Music's peer observation scheme, when it is implemented, with a view to helping them develop as teachers. (*Paragraph 3.8.12*)
- f) Explores the booking arrangements for studio facilities with BEng in Music with Electronics students with a view to finding a mutually satisfactory solution to concerns expressed about the limitations of the current booking system. (*Paragraph 3.8.20*)

Glossary of terms/acronyms used

Advisers of Studies

Advisers of Studies play an important role in the support of students in respect of academic matters and, where necessary, help with any social or personal issues.

Annual Monitoring (of courses)

Annual Monitoring is a process undertaken at the end of each session by Course or Programme Leaders designed to encourage reflection on the operation of course and programmes – what went right, what could be improved, what students did and didn't like etc. – with a view to enhancing the student experience next year. The work done by the course or programme leaders is followed by a full reporting process through Schools and Colleges to Senate, with responses being made, as appropriate, at each level. The reporting procedure is designed to ensure that issues arising from monitoring are properly considered and responded to, and that enhancements and the sharing of good practice are promoted. Annual monitoring reports are reviewed by Periodic Subject Review Panels as part of the documentation provided by the Subject(s)/School.

Subject Benchmark Statements

The Quality Assurance Agency has published subject benchmark statements for a range of disciplines to set out clearly the academic characteristics and standards of UK programmes. Some benchmark statements combine or make reference to professional standards required by external professional or regulatory bodies in the discipline. Subject benchmark statements do not represent a national curriculum in a subject area rather they allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design, within an overall conceptual framework established by an academic subject community. They are intended to assist those involved in programme design, delivery and review. They may also be of interest to prospective students and employers, seeking information about the nature and standards of awards in a subject area.

Chief Adviser

The Chief Adviser co-ordinates and oversees the advising for a named degree programme and in particular has responsibility for assigning students to named Advisers of Studies.

Employability

Employability is about more than being able to get a job after University. It is about acknowledging and being able to demonstrate achievements, understanding and personal attributes that will contribute to success both during, and after, University.

Graduate Attributes

Graduate attributes are the skills, knowledge and qualities or attitudes developed by individuals through their programme of study that they will use to contribute effectively in work or other aspects of society in the future.

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 subject/school. 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.

Music in the University

Music in the University is a public music programme, embracing a diverse range of lunchtime and evening concerts and talks throughout the academic year. It promotes music-making University-wide and provides opportunities for all members of the University community to take part in a broad range of musical activities. It also draws on specific research and educational interests within the University, not only in the School of Music but also in other arts and sciences.

National Student Survey

The NSS is a national initiative that has been conducted annually since 2005. The survey asks students in their final year of a programme to provide feedback on their student learning experience. There are 22 questions in all, this can be found at:

<http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/>

New Lecturer & Teacher Programme or NLTP

Probationary staff are required to complete this programme run by the Learning and Teaching Centre. It comprises two Masters level modules:

- i. Academic Practice in Higher Education (taught module),
- ii. Developing a Portfolio of Academic Practice (assessment module).

Successful completion of the programme leads to the award of a Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice and to full practitioner status of the *Higher Education Academy* (HEA).

Peer Support

Peer Support can be used to refer to different types of activity whereby senior students provide support, in learning or more personal matters, to junior students. There is usually training involved for the senior students.

Periodic Subject Review or PSR

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

Postgraduate Taught or PGT

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

Self Evaluation Report

A Self Evaluation Report is a document prepared by the Subject(s)/School in advance of a PSR Review. Its purpose is to provide the Review Panel with an insight into the Subject(s)/School's view of itself, its strengths and areas it would wish to develop. It is normally prepared by the Head of School in conjunction with other staff but students should also be offered the opportunity to comment on whether or not it reflects the Subject(s)/School they know.

Staff: Student Liaison Committee or SSLCs

Staff: Student Liaison Committees are Subject/School committees which provide a formal opportunity for Student Representatives to discuss matters with, and give feedback to their subject area.

Sound Thought

An annual interdisciplinary showcase of the School of Music's postgraduate research; which include performances of new postgraduate compositions and research papers presented by popular and traditional musicologists, and improvisations.