

Executive Summary of Business for Teaching and Learning Committee



Title	Periodic Review 2012: Institutional Recommendations
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Type	Report and Discussion Paper
Date	28 th May 2012
Strategic context	
Summary	<p>Following the Periodic Review events that took place with each School between January and April 2012, a series of recommendations have been made, some of which are for School consideration, others of which are recommendations for consideration at institutional level.</p> <p>The Reports and School Action Plans will be considered by Teaching and Learning Committee in September but, in advance of this, in order to make progress prior to the start of the next academic session, members are invited to discuss the Institutional Recommendations with a view to establishing clear priorities and a work plan for the immediate future.</p> <p>The discussion and setting of priorities will be informed by the output of a workshop-style follow-up event held with internal panel members, including student panel members, on Friday 25th May. Output from this event, including a prioritised list and series of 'quick wins' is included here.</p>
Essential reading	
Risk analysis	
Resource implications	TBC
Effective date of introduction	
Recommendation	For discussion

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX
Teaching and Learning Committee

Periodic Review 2012: Institutional Recommendations

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The schedule of Periodic Review events is now complete with the final review, Education and Social Work, having taken place on 17th and 18th April 2012.
- 1.2 Although there has been a delay in the completion and circulation of reports, with only the report for the School of Law, Politics and Sociology currently available in final form, all others are at the stage where final drafts are either with panel members for feedback, or with the Schools for checking factual accuracy.
- 1.3 Following receipt of the final report, Schools are expected to draw up an action plan within three months. The expectation is that reports and action plans will be available for the September meeting of Teaching and Learning Committee.
- 1.4 In advance of the publication of final reports, and in order to progress priorities over the summer period in advance of the next academic session, a comprehensive list of Institutional Recommendations has been prepared and is given in **Section 2** below.
- 1.5 A follow-up event to consider the Institutional Recommendations has already been held with internal panel members, both internal academics, USSU Sabbatical Officers, and student panel members (all of whom were elected student representatives, trained for the role). A list of attendees is given as **Appendix 1**). This workshop-style event was held on Friday 25th May and produced two main outputs: a list of priorities, particularly from the student perspective, and a list of 'quick wins' where immediate action could make an immediate improvement. The priority list emerging from this event, together with the 'quick wins' is given in **Section 3**.

2. Institutional Recommendations

2.1 Section A: Taught Programme Design and Delivery

e-SUBMISSION/ FEEDBACK & TURNITIN

- The University should take steps to move towards on-line submission without delay. *PSY*
- Prioritising the move to electronic submission to enable the introduction of Turnitin for routine checking for plagiarism at the earliest possible opportunity. *BMEC*
- At University level, action is needed to allow electronic feedback for all assessments on Sussex Direct and not just coursework as currently configured. Currently electronic feedback can only be provided if assessments are set up as Coursework. *MFM*
- Review the University Teaching and Learning Strategy with a focus on e-learning, including investment in an appropriate infrastructure, to support School strategies and ambitions. *ESW*

JOINT HONOURS DEGREES

- To review the induction and management of Joint Honours degrees to ensure that students have a clear overview of the academic coherence of their degree and have access to support from the two disciplines. *SCLS, LPS, MFM*

- To review the management of joint programmes to provide clarity to students regarding expectations and regarding avenues of both academic and pastoral support. *English*
- Providing more detailed guidance to Schools to secure the student experience for students on Joint Honours programmes. *BMEC*

CLASS SIZES

- The University should provide clear guidance about teaching group sizes. *HAHP*

COHORT IDENTITY BY DEGREE COURSE/ COMMUNICATION

- Supporting the role of the Degree Convenor by central scheduling of contact slots for Induction and Re-Induction. *EngInf, LIFE SCI.*

ASSESSMENT/ FEEDBACK & TIMESCALE

- A review of the 15 working day requirement for feedback to judge whether it should be extended to 20 days under the new academic year structure. *BMEC*
- Release of marks to a group should not be held up due to late submissions and this systems issue should be addressed. *Global Studies*
- The University should review the framework and timelines for assessment and feedback. *HAHP*
- The University should consider ways of providing feedback to students on summative assessments. *HAHP*

2.2 Section B: Postgraduate Research Provision

- The University should consider the formal award of 30 credits for PGR students completing the ESRC training courses so that student effort can be formally recognised in their academic transcripts (as occurs for the 1+3 students formally enrolled on a PGT programme) *PSY*
- The Doctoral School should consider how the University may bring together the vibrant research community at University level. *PSY*
- Improve the accuracy and accessibility of management information on PGR completion rates, timeliness of submission of research outline. *Global Studies, ESW*
- To review and support further development of Sussex Direct to improve the features enabling PGR student training, monitoring and supervision to be recorded. *LPS*
- Review the management of the PGR process in relation to University level induction for those entering at different start points. *Global Studies*
- The Panel recommended that the University should review its current approach to annual monitoring (given that students register directly onto the PhD) to better emphasise the possibility of transfer from PhD to MPhil as part of the annual review. Current completion rates would indicate that a more robust method is needed and guidance provided to Schools and students in relation to expectations related to PhD completion. *MFM*
- The Panel recommended that University should review and better communicate the availability of training provided by the Doctoral School, the Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU) and by academic Schools and that this should feed into a more formal plan for skills development for each individual research student. *MFM*

- To review the process for monitoring and support progression for part-time postgraduate research students in order to improve completion rates within a more regular time frame. *HAHP*
- Future reviews of this nature should involve more junior staff. *HAHP*
- Review the IT Strategy and Research Strategy to ensure PGR students have access to appropriate IT equipment and support. *ESW*

2.3 Section C: Learning Opportunities

STUDENT IT ACCESS/ PORTAL

- The University should give consideration to the development of a single portal for students that would include the VLE (Study Direct), course administration (Sussex Direct), personal development (Skill clouds and Sussex Plus), the library (ASPIRE) and e-submission. *PSY, EngInf.*
- To review the IT policy in relation to access to internet downloads as the current policy restricts language student access to target language web-based materials. *SCLS*

LECTURE RECORDING

- To consider extending the lecture recording equipment to all lecture rooms and to support use by all academic staff to ensure consistency and equity of access to course materials. *LPS, PSY LIFE SCI*

TIMETABLING

- The University should ensure that the current policy of not scheduling Undergraduate teaching on Wednesday afternoon is implemented. *PSY*
- The University should consider how teaching should be paced over the new twelve week teaching structure to allow time for consolidation of information for students. *HAHP*

LIBRARY ISSUES/ CAMPUS BOOKSHOP

- The Library to improve signage of the various zones (silent, quiet) and to enforce them to improve the student experience. *PSY.*
- The University should provide support to Schools transferring library reading lists into the ASPIRE system. *PSY, LIFE SCI, LPS, MFM*
- The Bookshop on campus currently does not stock recommended books for all subjects and this is particularly problematic for American Studies. *HAHP*

SUPPORT FOR PLACEMENTS

- The Panel recommended that the University review its support for placements within the School. *MFM*

2.4 Section D: Student Support and Guidance

SIGNPOSTING FOR ALL NON-ACADEMIC SERVICES

- To review signposting of all University welfare services so that students know who to approach for a non-academic problem. *PSY, LIFE SCI, SCLS, LPS, MFM, HAHP*
- Investigate the possibility of producing a handbook for student representatives which could be available on line to assist signposting of students to the many support services provided by both the University and the Students Union. *BMEC*

ACADEMIC ADVISING

- To review the Academic Advisor system and to provide clear guidance to Schools on its implementation. *PSY, LIFE SCI, SCLS, LPS, EngInf, English, MFM, MPS*
- The role of the Academic Advisor needs further clarification so that students make appropriate use of this resource and this may include finding alternative methods of interaction other than office hours. *HAHP*
- Provision of a framework for an integrated approach to student support. *EngInf*

ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND SCHOOL PROGRESS COMMITTEES

- To review the terms of reference of the School Student Progress Committee to ensure that the remit of decision making is clear to Schools and to review the processes related to non-attendance. *English*
- The University should review attendance monitoring and consider a Student Charter to improve attendance. *HAHP*

DYSLEXIA: INCLUSIVE TEACHING

- The University should facilitate monitoring to ensure that standard 'inclusive teaching' adjustments for students with specific learning disabilities via Study Direct are being provided as planned. *PSY, LIFE SCI, LPS*

2.5 Section E: Maintenance and Enhancement of Quality and Standards

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AT SCHOOL LEVEL IN RELATION TO DEPARTMENT STRUCTURES AND CONSISTENCY OF EXPERIENCE

- The University should revisit the current Departmental and School structure with a view to promoting consistency of the student experience at School level whilst recognising and indeed celebrating individual discipline identity within a School interdisciplinary structure consistent with the reputation of Sussex. *LPS*
- There should be a review of the committee structures within the new Schools as there was evidence that some Schools had teaching and learning sub-committees for each discipline. *HAHP*
- The University should revisit the current Departmental and School structure with a view to promoting consistency of the student experience at School level whilst recognising and indeed celebrating individual discipline identity within a School interdisciplinary structure with the reputation of Sussex. In the case of MFM there is evidence of rigorous and robust engagement of students at the departmental level but little evidence of engagement with School level committees. Whilst it was great to engage students at the Department level the issue of adequate representation of students at School committee meetings is problematic as this is the formal level of engagement that links into University wide committees and ultimately Senate. *MFM*
- To review student representation during curriculum development and in particular to ensure that at least one language student representative is invited to attend the English School Teaching and Learning Committee. *SCLS*
- To review the current model of student engagement in curriculum development, following the formation of the Schools, given that there is no formal relationship between the University Teaching and Learning Committee and Department level Meetings, where students are involved in curriculum development. *MPS*

- To review the current model of student engagement in curriculum development, following the formation of the Schools, given that there is only a formal relationship between the University Teaching and Learning Committee and the School Teaching and Learning Committee. *English*
- In relation to Departmental committee activity, there needs to be institutional recognition that these structures add value and consideration of how best to close that loop. *Global Studies*

STUDENT FEEDBACK/ INVOLVEMENT IN QA

- To review the system for completing CEQs to ensure response rates improve to similar levels as the NSS. *SCLS, LIFE SCI, LPS, BMEc, English, Global, MPS, MFM*
- Produce specifications for Course Handbooks to ensure that the template refers to the previous CEQ outcomes and so feed that information forward. *Global Studies*

QA RISKS

- The University should review its academic framework to remove multilevel courses which are high risk in QA terms. Instead schools should be advised on a mechanism for sharing up to 50% of learning resources. *EngInf*
- Development of a QA oversight of Joint Brighton Awards. *EngInf*
- To review the marking policy to ensure that the processes for confirming marks continue to be appropriate and effective in providing accuracy and consistency. *English*

EXAM BOARDS/ EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORTS

- To review the statistics provided to Exam Boards to ensure that they are contextualised and relevant to the cohort sizes. *PSY*
- To review the process for acting upon University level concerns raised through the external examiner reporting process. *English, HAHP, MFM*
- To consider compensation/condonement regulations that allow for quantitative disciplines with a wider array of marks to enable student failure in a course to allow good performance in one area to accommodate failure in another. *MPS*

OTHER QA

- To consider providing a certificate/transcript to Foundation Year candidates. *MPS*

2.6 Miscellaneous/ School Specific Institutional Recommendations

- The Panel commended SCLS on the innovative portfolio, in particular the model of 'proficiency in languages' and recommended that the University should further develop this into an explicit language policy. *SCL*.
- For the University Executive to provide a decision on the School's move to the new academic building to reduce current staff and student uncertainty *LPS*
- Careful monitoring of the progress of students entering year 2 via the Study Group International Diploma programme from 2011/12 to determine whether this route is appropriate for the School. *BMEC*
- Continuing to invest in the staff base for research led curriculum to ensure that there is not an over reliance on the use of Associate Teachers. *EngInf*

- Ongoing monitoring of the relationship between IDS and Global studies to bring Quality Assurance and monitoring in-line with those of the University ie including formal QA structures and so facilitate the dissemination of good practice. Ensure that IDS has access to consistent and high quality management information. *Global Studies*
- In response to concerns raised by staff, students and External Assessors, the University is requested to confirm the structure and status of American Studies in the School to secure its identity and maintain its high profile nationally. *HAHP*
- The University needs to ensure there is an effective communication strategy for informing students about the new structure of the academic year. *HAHP*
- Ensure that there is an appropriate representation of Black and Minority Ethnic students across the prospectus. *PSY*.
- Continue to support the School's non-traditional provision. *ESW*
- **Consolidate and celebrate!**

3. Output from 25th May Follow-Up event with Internal Panels members

3.1 Main Priorities

There was a clear consensus that the following represent the highest priorities (in priority order):

1. Signposting for (non) academic services and better training/induction for staff of procedures.
2. Academic Advising – focus and clarity.
3. Quality, Quantity & framework of all assessments and feedback to students.

3.2 Other Priorities

- “Emerging Technology Strategy” (E-learning/submission).
- Organisational Structural issues emerging from 2008 restructuring (i.e. American Studies).
- Joint Honours Students (with an emphasis on joint academic advising).
- Improving the response rate and effectiveness of Course Evaluation Questionnaire's (CEQ's).
- Existence of a Student Charter to map the “learning relationship” and mutual obligations.
- Postgraduate Research (PGR) support and skills (with improved monitoring of progression).
- Clearer structures and guidelines for AT teaching workloads

3.3 ‘Quick Fixes’

The following were identified as areas where action could be taken quickly and simply, or (*italicised*) where action had already been taken, in response to the recommendations:

- *Junior staff to be better involved in future periodic reviews.*
- Joint Honour students to have one academic advisor from each subject area.
- PGR students to gain credits for completion of ESRC training courses.

- *Support for reading lists i.e. Aspire.*
- To offer both electronic and paper CEQ's.
- Release of marks not to be impacted by late submissions.
- Wednesday afternoons 'off' for all students including postgraduate and foundation year students.
- The structure and status of American Studies to be confirmed and made clear.
- Showing date of assessment AND feedback deadlines for each assessment on Sussex Direct to emphasise mutual student/staff expectations.
- Consider renaming of student IT portals and VLE.
- PC provision to be improved for PGR students.
- Library signage to be improved.

28th May 2012

Participants at Periodic Review Follow-up Event: May 2012

1. David Chichon – USSU President
2. Poppy Firmin – USSU Education
3. Ariel Cohen – USSU Communications
4. Indi Hicks – USSU Welfare
5. James Hickie – USSU Activities
6. Becca Melhuish – USSU Operations
7. Candice Nicholas – Year 1 Geography
8. Amy Smith – Year 3 Drama
9. Emma Vanstone – Year 1 Business and Management
10. Katy Gibbons – Year 2 Film
11. Jemaine Stacey - PGT Psychology
12. Sophie Bishop - Year 2 Sociology
13. Mahmoud Elsherif – Year 2 Biology and Environmental Science Rep
14. Sophie Enever – Year 3 Philosophy
15. Aruna Dahal – Year 2 Development
16. Rohan Satpute - PGT Informatics
17. Frances Landreth Strong – Year 2 Anthropology
18. Eleanor Tubman - Year 4 Physics
19. John Clark – PG IDS Rep
20. Georgica Racu – Year 1 Informatics Rep
21. Hannah Dray – Year 1 American Studies
22. Nathaniel Torok – PGT Digital Documentary
23. Dave Boyne – PGR History
24. Lyndsay Burtonshaw - Year 1 International Relations
25. Louise de Souza – Year 1 Law
26. Christopher Mortlock - Year 3 Music
27. Annie Fernando – PGT Social Work
28. Terri Desmonds – PGR LifeSci
29. Richard Follett – HAHP Director of Teaching & Learning
30. Bernard Weiss - Head of School of Engineering & Informatics
31. Barbara Crossouard - Lecturer in Education
32. Robert Cook – Professor of American History
33. James Hirschfeld - Professor of Mathematics and Senior Tutor
34. Linda Buckham – Director of Careers & Employability Centre
35. Kitty Inglis – Librarian
36. Carol Shergold – Head of Learning Systems
37. Barbara Bryan – Special Projects Manager

In attendance:

Professor Clare Mackie – Pro-Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning
 Sam Riordan – Head of Academic Services
 Mark Howell – Teaching and Learning Projects Officer