

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DPTLA)

Review of Department of English Language: Friday 20 February 2009

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in the Department of English Language. 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_125473_en.pdf

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

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

Italicised words are explained in a glossary below.

Conclusions

The Review Panel was very impressed by the commitment demonstrated by the Department to its taught programmes but even more to its students as individual learners. The amount of time that staff seemed to be prepared to give to students was very generous and, although this might accord with abstracts such as *retention* policy, the Panel did not hear that expression used. It was clear that systems had been developed to facilitate the identification of students in difficulties but these are dependent on teaching and administrative staff doing a great deal of work. The result is not, however, a Department characterised as bureaucratic and officious but, rather, as one that is efficient and above all welcoming and friendly.

Key Strengths

- Commitment to the delivery of an undergraduate programme in English Language, English Linguistics and Philology in accordance with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) benchmarks and the Department's traditional strengths and complementing the work of cognate departments in the *School of English Language and Scottish Language* (SESL)
- Support for Masters programmes which blur the distinction between taught and research strands of postgraduate work, this resulting in cohorts of satisfied and enthusiastic MLitt students as well as a rich stream of doctoral candidates
- Enthusiasm for research and teaching – the latter, notably, from Level 1 upwards - as complementary components of academic life
- Inclusive attitude towards students which has stimulated their appetite for learning and generated an unusual degree of loyalty and affection

- Commitment to student support at the level of the individual student
- Mutuality among staff which in its formal presentation is revealed in 'pairing' to cover teaching commitments but informally presents in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere which students at all levels find liberating and enabling

Areas to be improved or enhanced¹

1. Intended Learning Outcomes

- a) Revisit the statements of its *Intended Learning Outcomes* (ILOs) for all programmes/courses and revise these as appropriate in order to conform with the published guidance. [Paragraph 5.2.1]

2. Assessment, Feedback and Achievement

- a) Proceed with the review of the assessment regulations and amend as appropriate their presentation to students. [Paragraph 5.3.7]
- b) Revise the *Programme Specification* for the MLitt in Medieval and Renaissance Studies so that the *ILOs* accurately reflect the criteria on which assessment will be made and that redundant criteria are removed. [Paragraph 5.3.8]
- c) Considers the feasibility of providing feedback on Honours essays orally as a matter of course. [Paragraph 5.3.6]

3. Internationalisation and Student Mobility

- a) Keep under review student take-up of opportunities for study abroad and that, if students prove unwilling or unable to subscribe to the proposed longer absence from Glasgow, the subject be raised for discussion in *SESL* and at Faculty where other possible remedies might be sought. [Paragraph 4.5]

4. Student Recruitment

- a) Develop the strategies already under consideration to increase future recruitment to Level 1 with a view to increasing numbers of students at Level 2 and in Honours. [Paragraph 5.5.4]

5. Learning and Teaching Resources

- a) With respect to the problem of technical support in the *STELLA* Laboratory, the solution proposed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts that this might be provided by *Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute* (HATII) should be explored and, if not viable, that an alternative be sought. [Paragraph 5.9.2]

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

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.

Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute or HATII

HATII is one of the world's leading centres for computing and information studies in the arts and humanities.

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.

Programme Specifications

Programme specifications are documents that aim to provide the core factual information about a programme of study to a range of stakeholders, including students or potential students, e.g. Level of award, number of credits, programme aims, intended learning outcomes, etc.

Retention

Retention refers to the continuation and progression of a student at the University of Glasgow.

School of English and Scottish Language and Literature or SESLL

The School is organised into three constituent Departments of English Literature, English Language and Scottish Literature, each with a distinctive research and teaching focus, and includes STELLA; (see above) the associated computing facility.

Software for Teaching English Language and Literature and its assessment or STELLA

The STELLA lab is a dedicated facility, the only one of its kind in the UK. The project supports Information and Communication Technology in teaching and research.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education or QAA

The Quality Assurance Agency checks how UK universities maintain their own academic standards and quality. The QAA reviews and reports on how they meet their responsibilities identify good practice and make recommendations for improvement. The QAA publish guidelines to help UK universities and colleges develop effective systems to ensure students have the best learning experience.