

**INTERNAL TEACHING REVIEW OF  
SCHOOL OF GEOSCIENCES**

**SUMMARY REPORT**

PANEL VISIT: TUESDAY 29 AND WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

This summary is extracted from the full Final Report of the Internal Teaching Review of the School of Geosciences, following the review carried out in September 2015. It includes the Panel's overall impressions of the provision, a record of the Panel's commendations and recommendations, and the Panel's conclusions. Details of the commendations and recommendations can be found in the Final Report.

**A OVERALL IMPRESSIONS**

The Panel is grateful for the co-operation of staff and students throughout the Internal Teaching Review (ITR), with staff and students providing their opinions freely. The overriding impression of the Panel is that the School of Geosciences provides an extremely supportive environment for students. New members of staff evidently also soon felt at home within the School.

The range of degree provision is more than adequate, and the quality of teaching and supervision, particularly at postgraduate taught (PGT) level is excellent. All students felt supported by an approachable and friendly staff, and postgraduate research (PGR) students were appreciative of the support provided by their PGR supervisors. There is a strong research culture evident within the School, and PGR students felt included within this ethos.

It was clear to the Panel that the School administrative and technical staff are extremely dedicated and contribute hugely to the support provided to students, despite being severely under-staffed.

Throughout the ITR process, however, it was clear that there was scope for individual disciplines to work much more closely together, with differences in approach appearing to result in unnecessary duplication of effort. Further, the Panel felt that the School's plans for growth, however commendable, may not be deliverable given current and anticipated resource, and that consequently these plans might impact negatively on the student experience, and on the morale and wellbeing of staff. Further, the Panel felt that the School's recent growth in student numbers has placed increased pressure on existing resources. There were particular concerns regarding administrative support and computing facilities, with signs of stress within the School's provision. The Panel strongly suggests that further growth, in the absence of enhanced resource, is unsustainable and places at risk both the student experience and staff morale.

**B COMMENDATIONS** (*numbers refer to the relevant paragraph of the Panel's full report*):

**3 Staffing**

3.3 Staff new to the School within the past eighteen months commented that they had been made to feel very welcome. The Panel **commends** the School for ensuring that all new academic staff are allocated a mentor, a role which was much valued by the staff they

supported. The staff whom the Panel met felt able to approach colleagues other than their mentors for guidance on teaching and learning matters, including career progression. That said, the impression that probationary staff had received was that the School felt that only research activity, as opposed to teaching activity, was of value to career progression. The Panel **recommends** that this message is rectified and that the three routes for promotion namely *Teaching & Research*, *Teaching & Scholarship* and *Research*, are made clear to all new staff during annual review. Further, the Panel **recommends** that the School ensure that all new staff are fully aware of continuing professional development opportunities, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in HE Teaching and Learning which none of the new staff who met the Panel were aware of.

- 3.5 New staff commented that they had all had a meeting with the Head of School and their mentor within three weeks of arriving at Aberdeen to set one- and three-year objectives; the Panel **commends** the School for this practice.
- 3.6 The Panel noted the use of external industry-based staff, particularly at PGT level. The School felt that such colleagues can bring a level of industry-based expertise to the programmes that university-based staff are less equipped to do. The Panel learned that external staff meet with their PGT Programme Coordinator at least once each year, but that there is constant dialogue throughout the duration of the course on which they teach. In turn, externals do more than merely 'guest lecture'; they mark and make use of MyAberdeen and support students in the same way as their university-based colleagues. The Panel **commends** this practice.
- 3.8 The Panel **commends** the commitment and dedication of the administrative and technical staff, all of whom contribute hugely to the support provided to students, despite being severely under-staffed. The Panel **recommends** that administrative staffing resource and workloads be considered with a view to enhancing and streamlining procedures within each discipline to avoid duplication and encourage best practice. As an aside, the Panel also **recommends** that School staff engage fully with the Professional Services Review currently being undertaken across the institution.

## 5. Course and Programme Design, Approval and Accessibility

- 5.1 The Panel **commends** the disciplines of Geography & Environment and Geology-Petroleum Geology for their willingness to undertake comprehensive reviews of their undergraduate degree programmes in recent years, and for the development in PGT programmes over the past 5 years. Whilst there were different driving forces in each discipline, both areas have found good and efficient ways to develop and enhance their provision, making excellent use of Programme Advisory Board (PABs) at PGT level in particular. Similarly the Panel **commends** Archaeology for having established its programmes so well in a reasonably short period of time. The Panel **recommends** that, resource allowing, PABs for all PGT programmes be established, and that all disciplines make greater use of PABs at undergraduate level too.
- 5.3 The Panel **commends** the School for identifying space for use as 'Home Rooms' for its PGT cohorts, to allow PGT students a base, not just for classes, but for group interaction and study and to promote a sense of cohort belonging. Nevertheless, the Panel **recommends** that the School reflect on its adherence to, and use of, these home rooms (which might be

considered a 'luxury' in other areas of the University), as it appeared their size might be a limiting factor in encouraging future growth in student numbers.

- 5.5 The Panel **commends** the efforts the School makes to ensure inclusivity as much as is practicable, including during field trips where mobility of students may be a concern. The Disability Officer spoke knowledgeably about supporting students on a case by case basis, and the practices used by the School to provide suitable adjustments to the teaching environment in order that all students can participate fully in the normal programme. The SED provides a range of **commendable** practices employed by the School to address all aspects of inclusivity and differing learning needs of students. The Head of Student Support and Advice comments that *'we have extremely good links into the School, which has meant that we have been able to provide excellent support to a number of students over the years, who have either had complex personal issues or complex disability-related requirements.'* The Panel is concerned however that so much knowledge and responsibility for disability related provision rests with one member of staff, and **recommends** that the School appoint a Deputy Disability Officer to share the role to ensure succession planning.

## 6. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- 6.1 The Panel **commends** the School for its commitment to teaching excellence.
- 6.2 Field classes, short and longer term visits, are a fundamental and welcome aspect of the School's provision in all three disciplines. Students across the board were entirely positive with regard to these activities and the level of support received from staff during trips away. The School is to be **commended** in this, and in particular in its commitment to preserve field classes as a key teaching and learning tool. Further, staff are to be **commended** for their willingness to run field classes on two or three occasions as necessary, in light of decreasing staff resource and increasing student numbers.
- 6.3 Students felt that staff made every effort to deliver in-the-field teaching and assessment activities within the context of lecture based material in class, and students highly valued the opportunities provided during field classes for immediate feedback on the skills they were developing. The Panel **commends** both academic and administrative staff for ensuring that students receive such a valuable teaching and learning experience.
- 6.7 The Panel **commends** the School for the variety of assessments across all three disciplines at all levels of study. The students were particularly enthusiastic in this regard, recognising that the variety of methods ensured that all had opportunity to perform well in a range of assignments that suited their learning styles. The Panel **commends** in particular the use of oral exams in the level four Glaciology course offered by Geography.
- 6.8 There were varying levels of satisfaction from students concerning feedback on assessment and evidence of different practices in use within disciplines. The Panel **commends** the efforts of staff in providing detailed feedback such as returned essay and report scripts, but **recommends** that disciplines seek to ensure consistency is applied to improve the overall standard of feedback being returned to students.

## 7. Course and Programme Monitoring and review

- 7.2 The Panel **commends** staff who have 'experimented' with in class written assessment questionnaires, similar to Student Course Evaluation Forms (SCEF), as informal, mid-term

feedback, and recommends that this practice is used widely throughout the School to gather early evidence of student satisfaction (or otherwise).

## **8. Academic Standards and Infrastructure**

8.2 The Panel notes the School's use of subject benchmarks, and also **commends** the School on its engagement with Sixth Century Courses (6CCs).

## **9. Training and Supervision of Research Students**

9.1 The Panel was impressed by the level of community spirit amongst the PGR students it met, and **commends** PGR Supervisors on their level of accessibility and 'constructive direction' which was highly appreciated by students.

9.2 The Panel **commends** the School for its practice of ensuring that all PGR students have two supervisors. Students noted that changes to supervisors had been handled well and students had been kept well informed in such instances; importantly students felt well supported by other staff when supervision gaps had occurred.

9.3 The Panel **commends** the School for its flexibility in allowing new PGRs to attend those undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses they felt would be of help to their studies.

9.4 The Panel heard that the School organises a conference each June for its PGR students in their first and second years of PhD to present and discuss their research, and **commends** the School for this practice.

9.5 The Panel **commends** the School for encouraging PGR teaching assistants to utilise their own ideas in their tutorial delivery, but **recommends** that the School properly monitor the payment of teaching assistants for their work in teaching and assessment; some students informed the Panel that they had not been paid for lectures.

9.9 The Panel reviewed the process of monitoring PGR student progress. The Panel **commends** the use of advisory panels comprising a member of the supervisory team, a member of academic staff from the student's discipline and a member of staff from a different, though related, discipline area. The Panel noted that the student's main supervisor is not involved in the final assessment. However it **recommends** that the Supervisor role in these meeting be fully clarified.

## **10 Personal development and employability**

10.1 The Panel learned of several instances of good practice in regard to embedding employability within UG teaching, such as the reflective career planning report assessed for the level 4 course *Geographical Issues*, the level 4 GPG course which incorporates visits from employers and CV structuring, and the level 3 *Professional Archaeology II: Post-Excavation Analysis and Employment* course which has been specifically designed to include a component where students are required to apply for a 'real' archaeology job, prepare a cover letter and CV and undergo an interview. The Panel **commends** the respective disciplines for all of the aforementioned creative practices.

## **11 Professional units/bodies**

## **12 Staff training and educational development**

- 12.1 The Panel **commends** the School for allowing new teaching staff, including those at the early stages of their academic careers, to innovate and be creative with the courses and tutorials that they deliver and/or participate in.

## **13 Student involvement in quality processes**

## **14 Public information / management of information**

## **15 Student support, retention and progression**

- 15.1 The Panel **commends** the School for its open-door policy and for creating a supportive environment in which students feel committed and have a sense of belonging.
- 15.2 The Panel also **commends** the School for its introduction of 'Director's Clinics' at PGT level in the early stages of each semester, citing this as an example of good practice.

## **16 Recruitment, Access and Widening Participation**

## **17 QAA Quality Enhancement Engagements**

- 17.1 The School Director of Teaching was nominated for, and subsequently won, the University's Excellence in Teaching award in 2011; the Panel **commends** this commitment to excellence in teaching.
- 17.2 The Panel also noted that a project undertaken in the summer of 2013, *Digital Literacy: Mathematical support for level 2 Geoscientists*, was supported by QAA funds. The project aimed to generate a set of MyAberdeen-based self-learning modules for students to access, covering some elementary mathematical concepts and applications, corresponding with the material being dealt within programmes within the School. The Panel **commends** the School for this commitment to supporting students in this way.

## **18 Recent Developments**

## **19 Quality Enhancement and Good Practice**

- 19.1 The PGT team are to be **commended** for all their efforts to establish their PGT portfolio.

## **20 Impediments to Quality Enhancements**

- 20.1 The Panel notes that growth in Geology undergraduate numbers over the last five years has resulted in escalating constraints on fieldwork provision and staff resource, particularly in terms of the field centre site sizes; the Panel heard that field classes had been re-run on 2 or even 3 occasions. The Panel **commends** the School for this commitment to maintaining the educational and wider learning experience of its students.

**C RECOMMENDATIONS** (Numbers refer to the relevant paragraph of the Panel's full report):

**3 Staffing**

- 3.1 The Panel noted that student-staff ratios (SSRs) are variable within the School between disciplines, between years and between Levels 1-4 in the undergraduate provision, and agreed that this makes academic planning challenging in the short to medium term. .... The Panel **recommends** that the School is mindful of staffing levels across all disciplines.
- 3.2 The Panel also noted that as part of the School Plan currently in development, a new workload model was being established. Staff were clearly aware of this, although some expressed concern at its underpinning rationale, believing that other valued activities, such as the different requirements and extra workload needed to address both science and humanities provision, be contained therein. The Panel **recommends** that the School be mindful of the different needs and requirements within individual disciplines, particularly in Human Geography where concern had been raised.
- 3.3 Staff new to the School within the past eighteen months commented that they had been made to feel very welcome. The Panel **commends** the School for ensuring that all new academic staff are allocated a mentor, a role which was much valued by the staff they supported. The staff whom the Panel met felt able to approach colleagues other than their mentors for guidance on teaching and learning matters, including career progression. That said, the impression that probationary staff had received was that the School felt that only research activity, as opposed to teaching activity, was of value to career progression. The Panel **recommends** that this message is rectified and that the three routes for promotion namely *Teaching & Research*, *Teaching & Scholarship* and *Research*, are made clear to all new staff during annual review. Further, the Panel **recommends** that the School ensure that all new staff are fully aware of continuing professional development opportunities, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in HE Teaching and Learning which none of the new staff who met the Panel were aware of.
- 3.4 In regard to new staff, the Panel also **recommends** that greater coordination of undergraduate and postgraduate teaching takes place, particularly in regard to probationary staff. Whilst probationary staff did receive lower teaching activity workloads, commensurate with the stage they were at, there was a perception that they were also informally co-opted into additional teaching commitments above and beyond their initial identified workload. In addition, requests to new staff to help staff fieldtrips often came with very little notice, and inhibited the ability of staff to plan workload accordingly. The Panel **recommends** that all requests for teaching go through formal School channels.
- 3.7 The Panel felt that amongst staff in general, there was almost no evidence of a sense of engagement in regard to activities to support the Athena Swan application. The Panel **recommends** that the School offer Athena Swan awareness raising sessions and actively promotes engagement with the process as soon as practicable.
- 3.8 The Panel **commends** the commitment and dedication of the administrative and technical staff, all of whom contribute hugely to the support provided to students, despite being severely under-staffed. The Panel **recommends** that administrative staffing resource and workloads be considered with a view to enhancing and streamlining procedures within each

discipline to avoid duplication and encourage best practice. As an aside, the Panel also **recommends** that School staff engage fully with the Professional Services Review currently being undertaken across the institution.

#### **4 School Organisation**

4.2 The Panel learned of the School's plans to restructure on the basis of research groupings akin to those of the Research Excellence Framework (REF). The School felt that this will engender greater interdisciplinarity within the School, which in turn will promote growth in provision and aid cross-fertilisation of teaching. With plans still in development, the Panel is unclear as to the impact this may or may not have on the student experience longer term. The Panel urges caution, and **recommends** that the School ensure structures are in place to prevent individual disciplines from losing their identity, and that the School is mindful of the importance of these identities to the student experience and student recruitment.

4.3 The Panel also **recommends** that flexibility for the differing approaches preferred for the delivery of both humanities and sciences in those areas offering both MA and BSc variants be preserved. The Panel was conscious of perhaps an emergent degree of isolation in regard to Human Geography.

4.4 The Panel feels the membership of individual discipline teaching committees to be too small to be effective, and **recommends** that membership is revised accordingly; the Panel feels that this would help hugely with improving internal communication within disciplines. The Panel also strongly **recommends** that student representatives be invited to join all School teaching and learning committees, including at UG, PGT and PGR level, without delay. To foster greater interdisciplinarity, and the sharing of good practice, the Panel **recommends** that the School develop an overarching School Teaching Committee, it too to have student representation amongst its membership.

4.5 The Panel learned that Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLC), particularly in Geography & Environment and Archaeology, are often poorly attended and thus limited in their capacity to foster discussion and provide meaningful formal feedback to the School. The Panel **recommends** that the School works with the Aberdeen University Students' Association (AUSA) to raise awareness of these committees and their purpose amongst the School's student body, and to think more creatively about ways in which to encourage students to more actively engage with SSLCs, and other formal mechanisms for garnering student feedback. [See also sections 7 and 13.]

#### **5. Course and Programme Design, Approval and Accessibility**

5.1 The Panel **commends** the disciplines of Geography & Environment and Geology-Petroleum Geology for their willingness to undertake comprehensive reviews of their undergraduate degree programmes in recent years, and for the development in PGT programmes over the past 5 years. Whilst there were different driving forces in each discipline, both areas have found good and efficient ways to develop and enhance their provision, making excellent use of Programme Advisory Board (PABs) at PGT level in particular. Similarly the Panel **commends** Archaeology for having established its programmes so well in a reasonably short period of time. The Panel **recommends** that, resource allowing, PABs for all PGT programmes be established, and that all disciplines make greater use of PABs at undergraduate level too.

- 5.2 The Panel noted that in the development of at least one of its newer PGT programmes the School has felt under-supported by the institutional Marketing Team and consequently that the programme was under-marketed and student numbers were lower than expected. The Panel **recommends** that the School liaise directly with the Director of External Relations and Head of Marketing to discuss School needs and that the Marketing Team is involved in the development of new and revised programmes from an early stage.
- 5.3 The Panel **commends** the School for identifying space for use as 'Home Rooms' for its PGT cohorts, to allow PGT students a base, not just for classes, but for group interaction and study and to promote a sense of cohort belonging. Nevertheless, the Panel **recommends** that the School reflect on its adherence to, and use of, these home rooms (which might be considered a 'luxury' in other areas of the University), as it appeared their size might be a limiting factor in encouraging future growth in student numbers.
- 5.5 The Panel is concerned [however] that so much knowledge and responsibility for disability related provision rests with one member of staff, and **recommends** that the School appoint a Deputy Disability Officer to share the role to ensure succession planning.

## 6. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

- 6.4 Students were, in the main, complimentary about the organisation and running of such field classes and felt that, whilst they could be costly, the School explained clearly the rationale behind the costs and that value for money was attained. Students would however prefer to receive details of field classes, including dates and likely costs, at an earlier date to allow them to search for the cheapest flights and other travel deals. The Panel **recommends** that the School seeks to address this and to inform students of field class dates and other practical information as soon as is practicable. The Panel noted the professional body that accredits the BSc Geology & Petroleum Geology degree, the Geological Society of London (GSL), stipulates a level of student field work to be undertaken. In the light of increasing costs of fieldwork and the pressure that this places on some students and the School, coupled with the expense of GSL accreditation itself in a time of restricted finances, the Panel **recommends** that the School reflects upon how valuable accreditation by the GSL is to the School and its recruitment.
- 6.5 From feedback provided by students, the Panel was made aware of apparent disparities regarding health and safety procedures and requirements for risk assessments for both field and laboratory classes. The Panel acknowledges that in some instances variations are wholly appropriate. Nevertheless, the Panel **recommends** that the School review its Health and Safety policies and procedures, ensuring that strictly defined minimum requirements are clearly understood by both staff and students.
- 6.6 In discussion with students it became apparent that whilst in the field for the Geology 5-week mapping projects, some supervisors were with students for a couple of hours, whilst others were present for up to four days. The Panel **recommends** that the School investigate this discrepancy to ensure that students have realistic expectations as to the quantity and type of support they can receive during project field work and that ideally supervisory support should be equitable. In addition, the Panel recommends that the School ensures that staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in project advising.
- 6.8 There were varying levels of satisfaction from students concerning feedback on assessment and evidence of different practices in use within disciplines. The Panel **commends** the efforts



of staff in providing detailed feedback such as returned essay and report scripts, but **recommends** that disciplines seek to ensure consistency is applied to improve the overall standard of feedback being returned to students.

- 6.9 Of particular concern amongst students was the lack of feedback on examinations. As provision of examination feedback is institutional policy, the Panel **recommends** that the School seek to find a time-effective method for providing generic feedback on examinations, whilst making students aware of their right to receive feedback of a more personal nature. Students were very positive in regard to the turnaround times for feedback on assessment.
- 6.10 Honours students also specifically commented that they would 'have liked to have been better prepared for honours' level study'. The Panel **recommends** that all disciplines within the School take this on board and consider how they can better manage the expectations of students progressing from level 2 to level 3.

## 7. Course and Programme Monitoring and review

- 7.5 The Panel is uncomfortable with the School placing so much reliance on informal methods of gathering student feedback during field work and laboratory classes and whilst the Panel recognises the value of this, it reminds the School that such informal practices should be used only to supplement, but not replace proper quality assurance channels. The Panel **recommends** that the School continues to encourage students to engage with the SCEF system, and in doing so **recommends** further that the School consider making use of class time to allow students to complete SCEFs in class on their mobile electronic devices, now that a 'mobile' version of the SCEF is available.

## 8. Academic Standards and Infrastructure

- 8.3 In conversation with staff the Panel noticed that there might be some misunderstanding of when the Grade Point Average method of classifying honours degrees and awards at PGT should be used. In conversation with UG students, the Panel observed a lack of understanding as to how their degrees would be classified in due course. The Panel **recommends** that the School seek to raise the awareness of both staff and students in regard to the processes to be used for classifying awards for the next few years.

## 9. Training and Supervision of Research Students

- 9.5 The Panel **recommends** that the School ensures that its PhD students and PhD supervisors are aware of the courses that are run by the Centre for Academic Development. Some of the students interviewed had taken the Centre's courses and found them to be extremely useful.
- 9.7 The Panel **commends** the School for encouraging PGR teaching assistants to utilise their own ideas in their tutorial delivery, but **recommends** that the School properly monitor the payment of teaching assistants for their work in teaching and assessment; some students informed the Panel that they had not been paid for lectures.
- 9.8 The Panel was impressed by the dedication and enthusiasm of PGR students involved in teaching. However, there were concerns about the amount of informal instruction and support that such tutors provide. The Panel **recommends** that workloads of PGR students be closely monitored. There were also concerns around the consistency of training for PGR

students who teach. The Panel **recommends** that the School ensures proper provision of training for tutors and demonstrators is monitored by the School.

- 9.9 The Panel reviewed the process of monitoring PGR student progress. The Panel **commends** the use of advisory panels comprising a member of the supervisory team, a member of academic staff from the student's discipline and a member of staff from a different, though related, discipline area. The Panel noted that the student's main supervisor is not involved in the final assessment. However it **recommends** that the Supervisor role in these meeting be fully clarified.

## **10 Personal development and employability**

- 10.2 Notwithstanding good practice evident in honours years, the Panel feels that the School should be seeking to embed employability skills more explicitly in sub honours courses, and **recommends** that the School actively seek to do so as part of the annual course and programme monitoring process. Undergraduate students with whom the Panel met seemed unfamiliar with the institution's Aberdeen Graduate Attributes (AGAs), and the Panel **recommends** that the School be more explicit regarding the specific attributes that it expects students to acquire in the course of each module. Further the Panel **recommends** that the School appoint a School Employability Officer to champion the embedding of employability and AGAs throughout the School at all levels of study.

## **11 Professional units/bodies**

## **12 Staff training and educational development**

- 12.2 The Panel noted from interviews with new staff that another member of staff was always available to answer any questions one might have. New staff discussed their attendance at the two day teaching course run by the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) but in general the Panel noted a lack of connection to central University-wide resources and support systems and thus a failure to take up useful opportunities such as the courses offered by the CAD. The Panel **recommends** that the School encourages all new staff to take advantage of such continuing professional development opportunities whilst their teaching and other workloads are relatively light.

## **13 Student involvement in quality processes**

- 13.6 The Panel therefore **recommends** that the School works with AUSA to foster a greater sense of student involvement in, and engender a culture that highlights the importance the School places on, student feedback. The Panel is mindful that this also requires engagement from the students across the degrees and levels of study.

## **14 Public information / management of information**

## **15 Student support, retention and progression**

- 15.6 The Panel **recommends** that the School raise the profile of the Senior Personal Tutor, ensuring the role is well advertised to students and staff, and that the remit of the Personal Tutor in particular is made clear to students. The Panel further **recommends** that the School ensure that staff who are Personal Tutors actively participate in the role and are clearly

made aware of their responsibilities. The concerns raised by staff and students in regard to the Personal Tutoring system need to be fed back to the University and the School is strongly encouraged to engage in providing feedback on the system, including contributing to the Senior Personal Tutor's Forum which meets each semester.

- 15.7 The Panel **recommends** that the School appoint a member of staff to take on responsibility for retention-related activities within the School, including analysis of the School-level data that are circulated annually, and promotion of activities to support students who may be at risk of not completing their studies.

## 16 Recruitment, Access and Widening Participation

## 17 QAA Quality Enhancement Engagements

## 18 Recent Developments

## 19 Quality Enhancement and Good Practice

- 19.3 The Panel does [however] feel that the structure of the School does not help to provide mechanisms for staff to share good practice or learn from others in other disciplines. Whilst there is evidence of cross-disciplinary working in regard to PGR student supervision, the Panel **recommends** that the School seek to provide opportunities for the sharing of good practice in learning and teaching in taught programmes and enhance cross-disciplinary interaction of staff.

## 20 Impediments to Quality Enhancements

- 20.4 The Panel was informed that staff felt there had been too much disinvestment of some areas of Geography and the Panel is concerned this will have an impact on the School's provision within these areas and on future recruitment levels. It is the responsibility of the School to ensure that this doesn't impact on the student experience, and the Panel **recommends** that the School keeps this issue under close review so as to ensure no further dilution of core provision.

## D CONCLUSION

The Panel wishes to thank all members of staff within the School of Geosciences for the significant work that went in to the production of the ITR documentation, and for their commitment to the review process. In particular it wished to thank the students and staff the Panel met during the visit. Their candour and willingness to engage with the processes ensured that the event was a successful examination of the work of the School.

The panel recommends **unconditional revalidation**. Where this report makes **recommendations**, the Panel requests that the School provide, as part of its 1-year follow-up report, an overview of what progress has been made and, where the recommendations have not been followed, the School's arguments leading to and justifying these decisions.