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University of Aberdeen
Internal Teaching Review (ITR)

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
Virtual Panel Visit: 22-24 June 2021

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INTRODUCTION

1.1   The Internal Teaching Review (ITR) of the School of Social Science was largely intended to take place under the University's published process and procedures, which are available here: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/internal-teaching-review-6112.php. However, as a response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the move to homeworking, as well as the time of year in which the review was being completed, the format of the ITR was amended slightly as follows:

(i) student engagement was focused on remote involvement in the Pedagogic Partnership session via the completion of an online document, which removed the requirement for students to engage during specific sessions in the review; and

(ii) the review was scheduled to take place over the course of three working days, to ensure that panel members had adequate time to engage with other activities as required

1.2   Additionally, as a response to increased workload pressures resulting from the move to blended learning, the Critical Analysis document was streamlined to address the following key areas:

(i) School context: to include student numbers, demographics and outcomes; highlight any areas of teaching and learning practices that are specific to the School and a summary of the School's response to the previous ITR

(ii) Positive aspects of the School's teaching and learning: to include examples of positive practice and particular strengths of the School as well as how this good practice is shared both within the School and beyond

(iii) Challenges that have been encountered in the School's teaching and learning provision: to include potential areas identified for improvement and an action plan for how they might be addressed – or whether these were issues for discussion at the ITR. It was advised that this section was not only focused on response to the COVID-19 pandemic

(iv) Future plans: to include areas for development in the next few years, e.g. new course/programme developments, partnerships proposed

1.3   The ITR Panel was comprised of:

Prof Kath Shennan   Chair
                           School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition
                           Quality Assurance Committee

Dr Timothy Mighall	School of Geosciences
Dr Isabel Crane	School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition
Mr Ondrej Kucerak	Vice President for Education, Aberdeen University Students' Union
Dr Catherine Allerton	External Subject Specialist, London School of Economics
Dr Scott Brown	External Subject Specialist, University of Dundee
Prof Nick Prior	External Subject Specialist, University of Edinburgh
Mrs Morag MacRae	Clerk, Academic Services

1.4   The Panel considered the documentation provided by the School, by way of an evidence-based Critical Analysis (CA) as detailed in 1.2 above. In addition, prior to the virtual visit to the School, members of the Panel were provided with access to the School's Quality Assurance (QA) repository, containing the School's annual monitoring materials (Annual Course and Annual Programme Reviews (ACR and APR)), Course Feedback Forms, minutes from meetings of Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLC), and External Examiner Reports (EERs), as well as the minutes from various School Committees. Consideration of this documentation, along with the School's submitted CA, enabled the Panel to identify key themes for further exploration.

1.4   The Panel conducted a virtual visit to the School via Microsoft Teams, where they met with a range of staff. As detailed in 1.1 above, students took part in the review using an online feedback form which was considered and responded to by staff during the Pedagogic Partnership Session. This, combined with student feedback compiled using SSLC minutes and Course Feedback Forms, provides insight into the student experience provided by the School.

1.5   The themes for focused discussion agreed with the School prior to and during the visit were:

(i)   **Staffing and Sustainability,** particularly in terms of the School's consistently high student-staff ratios (SSRs)

(ii)   **Student Experience and Employability,** specifically surrounding the embedding of employability skills into the curriculum

(iii)   **Assessment and Feedback,** with particular focus on the diversification of assessment in a blended learning environment

(iv)   **Student Support,** which aimed to address the diverse requirements of students engaging with their studies during a global pandemic

1.6   This report is split into three sections:

(i) Part A gives the overall impressions of the teaching provision within the School, formed from the whole ITR process;
(ii) Part B covers the outcome of various meetings held throughout the review, focusing on a small number of themes as outlined above. It also details the Pedagogic Partnership Session, which involved more free-form discussion; and
(iv) Part C details the School action plan which will form the basis of the one-year follow-up report.

PART A: OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

2.1 The Panel were impressed with the School's high-quality course content, which was being effectively delivered in spite of current challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and the School's high student-staff ratios (SSRs). It was clear that delivering quality education to all students was at the centre of the Schools' ethos.

2.2 Student feedback was very positive overall and recognised the "extra mile" attitude of the caring and compassionate staff population within the School. However, the Panel were concerned that this may have increased the emotional burden on teaching staff, who were often the frontline responders to a wide range of issues. It was suggested that a strengthened link to the Personal Tutor provision may alleviate this.

2.3 The Panel heard abundant evidence that the School was innovative and driven by finding creative solutions in terms of assessment, employability, and the provision of field trips. The diversity of assessments was particularly impressive, with an excellent focus on future employment without compromising academic quality or content delivery.

2.4 It was evident that good practice was shared within the School using informal processes. However, the Panel highlighted the need for further opportunities for teaching staff to continue to share their own practices in a more formal setting, potentially once additional pressures due to the global pandemic had diminished slightly.

2.5 The Panel were impressed at the devotion of teaching staff to delivering very high-quality education across the School, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. However, it was recognised that this often led to a lack of time for research, and it was suggested that the School reassessed the processes in place to ensure that staff are able to continue with research and teaching simultaneously.

PART B: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT; OUTCOMES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH STAFF AND THE PEDAGOGIC PARTNERSHIP SESSION

4.1 Theme: Staffing and Sustainability

4.1.1 The School highlighted that the biggest challenge they faced was the need to drive down SSRs. They highlighted positive changes with the introduction of the new Senior Management Team, who were more open to conversation surrounding the issue. The Politics and International Relations SSR was at its best level in 15 years, but the

continuing effects on staff morale, recruitment, retention, and institution-wide workloads could not be ignored. Some measures have been introduced to offset the effect of the SSRs: Anthropology courses were created at Levels Three and Four for non-Honours students, and staff have assisted with cross-departmental dissertation marking.

4.1.2 It was noted that the School has no control over undergraduate recruitment, which is of concern in terms of the likely effects of Brexit on future EU student registration rates. EU students make up a relatively large proportion of the undergraduate population at present, and any post-Brexit decrease will ease the SSRs but will likely be problematic in other ways. The School intends to shift their student population towards an increase in postgraduate student recruitment from across the globe.

4.1.3 It was highlighted that staff recruitment had not increased in line with the growing student population, and that the Sociology department had lost five staff in as many years with only one being replaced. The newly introduced undergraduate criminology programme was likely to bring up to fifty new students to the School but only one member of staff was to be recruited. In addition, staff were usually hired at entry level regardless of the position they were replacing, which impacted others in the School in terms of workload. Staff were concerned about the failure to provide temporary replacements for staff on long-term leave and the resulting impact on staff workloads and stress.

4.1.4 It was agreed that Level One courses should be taught by core staff to make them known to students early in their studies but teaching assistants had also been employed to help alleviate workload pressures. Despite requiring guidance from core staff, the utilisation of PhD and teaching assistant staff had helped with workload pressures, particularly with regards to marking. In addition, staff are rotated in terms of responsibility to ensure that no single member of staff remains a course coordinator for a lengthy period.

4.1.5 Both School staff and the Panel were keen to ensure that the School considered improving their workload modelling processes. It was reported that workload models were broadly effective on a departmental level in terms of teaching allocation, but they did not allow for sufficient research time, nor did they address increasingly time-consuming pastoral care. It was agreed that transparency was key, and reports varied between departments in terms of whether the calculations were clearly communicated to staff.

4.1.6 The administrative staff explained that their team was split to cover students and the related workload evenly. The greatest pressure was felt from students in large cohorts enquiring about the return of marks. Administrative staff reported no significant difference in workload with the increase in January start students but believed this may be due to these students preferring to contact academic staff instead.

4.2   Theme: Student Experience and Employability

4.2.1   It was reported that January-start postgraduate students experienced a variable level of success in terms of engagement, with the emergency implementation of January starts on many programmes being problematic due to the 2-3-1 model, i.e., where the dissertation phase is sandwiched between the two teaching terms. Enhanced dissertation supervision of these students was often required, which impacted further on staff workloads. The School monitors the January start student intake closely for planning purposes, and recruitment seems to largely be into larger programmes. The School intends to offer the existing Research Methods course during both semesters to ensure all postgraduate taught students have undertaken the course prior to beginning the research component of their studies, but there were concerns from the panel that this may also impact on staff workloads.

4.2.2   The Museum Studies programme has made substantial changes to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the related impact on the availability of practical experience through assessment. The programme was restructured to facilitate the start of a January cohort and students were encouraged to "buddy" with a September start student to socialise and provide mutual study support. Two class representatives were also recruited to reflect the differing needs of the two cohorts, and the January start representative has been key in welcoming the next cohort of January start students. Staff were pleased with the success of the programme, particularly in terms of moving their core exhibition-based course online.

4.2.3   It was recognised that the School did significant work to emphasise employability skills and work-based opportunities. Alumni are invited to speak at a graduate prospects event at School level, and the Anthropology student society organises staff/student evenings which provide opportunities to connect with alumni of note. It was agreed that the link between the School and the Careers Service was often based on a successful relationship with academics in the School, but that students also received direct communications from Careers.

4.2.4   The securing of placements for students had been very difficult during the global pandemic as many had been rearranged, withdrawn, or deferred. Others had moved online, and a small number were available in the local Aberdeen area. All staff agreed that placements were key to students of social science, and that it was vital to secure appropriate opportunities for as many students as possible. It was noted that unpaid placements in larger cities were problematic, as they provided excellent experience to students but were often not feasible financially.

4.2.5   The Careers Service were commended for their early involvement in the student experience, with opportunities presented from pre-registration until after graduation. Early engagement was key, but it was recognised that there was a difficult balance to strike between ensuring that students gained core academic knowledge while also gaining skills for future employment. The School-based "Working Together:

Employability for Arts & Social Sciences" course was praised for providing an excellent knowledge and skills base for students at a critical time in their university career.

4.2.6   The Careers Service works flexibly with Schools to provide innovative solutions to employability challenges. Recently, a workshop with Museum Studies was created for the purposes of enhancing practical skills. This link was commended by the Panel as being of great use to students throughout the School. Additionally, the Careers Service runs seminars on topics such as time management and making mistakes in the workplace, which have been created in response to feedback that employers increasingly look for skills rather than a specific subject-based background.

4.2.7   It was reported that student engagement with the Careers Service had decreased slightly across the institution during the global pandemic. However, online engagement has been positive and students within the School continued to engage with initiatives such as the STAR Award and the Leadership Academy.

4.2.8   The School reported that they had experienced some challenges in engaging fully with articulating students. The Widening Access team were currently looking at ways to provide enhanced support to this group, and it was agreed that the creation of more virtual safe spaces for students to discuss their own individual experiences would be useful in enabling supportive conversations, not only with articulating students but across the School.

4.3   Theme: Assessment and Feedback

4.3.1   The School was commended for its diversification of feedback during blended learning. Attempts to assess a diverse skill set were recognised, while seeking to avoid diversifying too much and confusing students. Staff were also aware of the dangers of over-assessment, particularly in response to student feedback that fewer assessments would be preferred. Ultimately, the School are looking for a combination of traditional and non-conventional formats which minimises the impact on staff workloads and meets student expectations.

4.3.2   The Panel queried whether standardising assessment across the School, or even the institution, would be beneficial to students. School staff were open to the idea of having e.g. a 1500-word essay for a 15-credit course but were concerned about the employability skills element of assessment. They emphasised that it was crucial to provide opportunities to gain and enhance skills which would allow students to succeed in the job market after graduation.

4.3.3   The Panel queried which methods of gathering feedback had been most useful within the School. Typically, the School uses the institutional standard methods of Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings and Course Feedback Forms, but other methods were also employed. The School had excellent links with their student class representatives who gathered feedback throughout the year. Some staff reported using mid-term feedback surveys but were wary of knee-jerk reactions which would ultimately disadvantage students, as well as the potential impact on completion of the

final Course Feedback Form. Some courses in Anthropology had a regular feedback channel to provide students with an opportunity to raise concerns which course coordinators or tutors could address promptly.

4.3.4   In response to concerns that the feedback loop perhaps had not been closed effectively, staff highlighted that they began referring to Course Feedback Forms and disseminating information about the feedback received and how it would be addressed. It was noted that there was still the potential for such forms to be an inaccurate representation of the issues affecting the majority of students, as completion rates were low and it was suspected that those responding may be particularly satisfied or dissatisfied with the course in question.

4.3.5   Staff reported that the nature of most student feedback surrounding assessment concerned the timing or workload involved, rather than the format of the assessment itself. Students appeared to enjoy having a diverse range of assessment types, as well as the increased guidance for completion that came with the introduction of new formats. The feedback received surrounding the requirement to participate in ungraded discussion online was useful for future cohorts. The Panel suggested that teaching staff ensured they recorded any informal feedback for purposes of their own career performance and progression.

4.3.6   One staff member described their use of continuous assessment, which included an element of self-assessment for students. It was reported to be beneficial to students while promoting student interaction and the provision of high-quality peer feedback. However, it was noted that this type of assessment involved a great deal of work from staff. Students also highlighted that they enjoyed the opportunity to be creative through assessment, and non-traditional frameworks were often preferred for this reason.

4.3.7   The Panel asked for details of the opportunities presented to staff to share good practice within the School, and it was agreed that this was often done informally. Monthly teaching cafés were organised which were a positive experience for staff throughout the School, and the intention to expand seminars to include discussion on teaching innovation was welcomed. However, it was agreed that further opportunities would be appreciated and that perhaps the Centre for Academic Development could support the School in investigating the options available to them.

4.3.8   Administrative staff felt that the number of changes to assessment in the past year had resulted in an increase in requests for extensions, as students who fell behind early on were then likely to be overwhelmed by the regularity of assessment deadlines. The introduction of online marking had made a positive difference to the admin role, however, in that there was no requirement for manual administrative work between the completion of marking and the distribution of marks. It was believed that this had reduced pressure on staff, and therefore the School would likely continue with online marking in future years.

4.4   Theme: Student Support

4.4.1   Staff reported that January start students and many international students required enhanced support and expressed a desire for this to be considered fully when looking at workload modelling. It was agreed that existing systems were not designed for January start students, which added to confusion and increased their requirement for support. Significant work had been undertaken surrounding induction to mitigate the issue, and it would be monitored going forward.

4.4.2   Student Support staff also reported an increase in requests for assistance from postgraduate students. There was also a noted increase in mental health concerns which were handled by both School and Professional Services staff, and it was agreed that institutionally it should be recognised that, in present circumstances, students may need more assistance. Personal tutoring was regarded as a triage mechanism for these issues, in that only some tutors were equipped to handle concerns rather than passing them on to other members of staff.

4.4.3   In general, it was agreed that the personal tutoring system does not always provide the opportunity to establish trust between staff and students, and that many students approached course coordinators in place of personal tutors. Increased training for pastoral issues was requested for those dealing with day-to-day queries from students, as staff were aware that Mental Health First Aiders may be at risk of being overwhelmed due to increased support needs of students during the pandemic.

4.4.4   Student loneliness was addressed as an issue of concern during blended learning. Staff reported introducing a coffee morning online for students writing their dissertations, who may be particularly vulnerable to loneliness. Additionally, the use of mood boards at the start of webinars was agreed to be an effective way to anonymously check in on how students were feeling. However, staff remained concerned that there was more to be done to address the issue.

4.4.5   The Panel asked about the ways in which School administrative staff were able to support students across the three disciplines. It was reported that staff are assigned to ensure an even spread of work but also to ensure that cover can be provided when necessary. They feel well equipped to deal with communications from students, and report excellent working relationships with academic staff. It was highlighted that the handling of plagiarism cases was done by three officers, with one from each discipline, and that enhancements might be required to ensure that all students received parity of experience in this regard.

4.4.6   Student Support staff reported having been very busy throughout the year, particularly in relation to student financial hardship. Unlike in previous years, end of year assessment stress had not noticeably increased their workload, but they expected an increase in requests for support when students return to campus.

4.4.7   Registry staff reported an increase in applications to suspend studies due to issues with engaging fully online, and several students in Level Two felt underprepared for Level Three. However, feedback had also been received to suggest that online learning

had benefited other students. The School were reported to be excellent in providing support to students who require extensions and extra support.

4.4.8   The School reported using a database to track disability provision for students, but they expressed a desire to update this process in the future. Many students wrongly assume that disability provision involving extensions will be granted automatically, and hence communications surrounding this may need to be enhanced. It was agreed that disability provision tends to be quite standardised, and work is ongoing institutionally to address this.

4.5   Pedagogic Partnership Discussion

4.5.1   The pedagogic partnership discussion backed up many of the points mentioned during the focused meetings. A summary of the points raised can be found in Appendix A. The School are invited to consider this appendix to help inform future practice. Student comments are highlighted in blue and staff comments in green, with related responses given in corresponding boxes on each side of the table.

4.5.2   There was agreement between staff and students on the success of the variety of assessment offered by the School, with both parties seeing the advantages in going beyond the traditional essay-then-exam format. They also agreed that the personal tutoring system could be enhanced, as other staff often took on the tutor role informally to compensate for a distant relationship with assigned personal tutors. Both staff and students were keen to return to in-person classes wherever possible.

4.5.3   Staff and students had potentially different experiences of relationships with the Careers Service. Students felt they would like to see clearer links between their studies and the initiatives and support offered by the Careers Service, but staff believed that significant enhancements had been made in recent years. There were also differing opinions on the delivery of feedback, with one student noting that they would appreciate a more direct approach. Staff felt this could be interpreted as a lack of constructive criticism, and hence there is a balance to be found between delivering helpful feedback without being too subtle in terms of wording used. Team teaching was also experienced in different ways, with some students disliking the number of staff involved in the delivery of a single course.

PART C: SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

5.1   Continue to monitor and address student-staff ratios and related workloads by:

(i) working within the School and with Senior Management to investigate mechanisms to address the SSR

(ii) creating a transparent workload allocation model which factors in time for pastoral care, particularly for students who require increased support

(iii) considering an increase in the utilisation of PhD students to facilitate pre-Honours tutorial work

(iv) ensuring that all recruitment is undertaken on a "like for like" basis

(v) aiming to provide cover for all staff on long-term leaves of absence

5.2   Aim to enhance support made available to staff by:

(i) working with central University teams to provide increased mental health training for frontline staff (e.g. course coordinators)

(ii) enhancing links to the Student Support team to alleviate the pressure on course coordinators when handling complex cases

(iii) investigating the promotion of the personal tutor system to new and existing students

(iv) encouraging staff to provide feedback to central teams regarding the existing personal tutor system, with the aim of promoting institution-wide enhancements

5.3   Provide increased opportunities for staff by:

(i) furthering the provision of the effective sharing of good practice between teaching staff, potentially with the assistance of CAD

(ii) ensuring that sufficient opportunities for the undertaking of research are given to staff, and that this is reflected in workload modelling

5.4   Enhance the overall student experience by:

(i) providing increased support for January start postgraduate students, particularly in terms of an appropriately timed research methods course and increased pastoral guidance

(ii) continuing to work with the widening access team to enhance support for articulating students

(iii) emphasising the existing link to the Careers Service, particularly in terms of the provision of workplace experiences and placements

(iv) providing safe spaces, virtual or otherwise, for open communication between students

(v) standardising the disciplinary process with regards to plagiarism hearings to ensure parity of experience for all students

(vi) incentivising student involvement in committees and emphasising these opportunities in terms of the related employability skills

Appendix A – Pedagogic Partnership Session feedback

Student led – What are we doing well?

Student comments	Staff comments
Having a number of varied forms of continuous assessment.	**This is what we try to aim for as well**
Engaged lecturers going above and beyond to help students by answering questions via email during term time	
Updating students about industry events (such as conferences), job opportunities and funding/ scholarship opportunities	
Passionate lecturers truly concerned about student development, both academically and professionally. Very keen to help in what they can. Very responsive and enthusiastic.	
Advertising to students that there is always support for when they are needing it from course coordinators or lecturers.	
The lecturers are very keen to deliver the information to the students in an amazing way, and they are grateful for what they have provided	
Staff are very responsive and seem to genuinely want to help students in any way they can - at times the extent of this really has been amazing	
staff are very approachable	
wide variety of topics covered across modules makes for an interesting student experience	
some innovative styles of teaching and assessment I encountered at honours level were fantastic	
overall I hold the lecturers I have had in very high regard, both in terms of their professionalism and on a personal level.	

Student led – What are we not doing well?

Student comments	Staff comments
Engaging with students about future endeavours or careers	**School have discussed a lot and made advances. Need to know better how to secure internships etc. Relations with alumni is good but could do more with it to help secure internships. Need to follow up with careers re lists of internships** **Many internships in museum studies are unpaid (underfunded sector) - how do we ensure students get recompense for their efforts and that all students can take up the opportunity** **Plans to widen out employability course to be interdisciplinary - would connect students up with local stakeholders**
Not using the entire scheduled lecture time for content	**Different expectation with online lectures. Need to manage students' expectations**
Not making readings available online (or choosing ones that can be accessed via the library online)	**No reason why access online should not happen. Sometimes limited availability in library**
Flipside of above - sometimes an apparent lack of engagement with students, with regard to course materials but especially with regard to future prospects. Engagement - good or bad - essentially comes down to the lecturer. Regardless, the positive engagement mentioned above has, in my experience, more than made up for the not-so-positive engagement mentioned here.	
Socsci personal tutors don't seem to have been engaging with students and may as well not be assigned from the lack of support. Additionally, engagement in lectures fluctuates massively depending on the lecturer and the content, making it difficult for continuous interest in the course.	**Only a very few students engage with the personal tutor system. Staff feel the PT system doesn't work and would be best if students have to talk to someone (e.g. PT/adviser) right at the start of their studies. That helped build relationships.** **Could meet with all tutees in first instance on e.g. Teams, students engaged with that well. Then could**

	have individual meetings with each as they want it.
Significant disparities between lecturers in terms of effort they put into their modules and their attitude towards students	
lectures in first and second year contained far too many people. However, I appreciate that the PIR department is likely to think the same and is just doing the best it can with the resources it has	**Team teaching appears to go down well for many students. Was a strategic decision to go for team teaching, keeps things fresh and interesting**
too much use of old fashioned forms of assessment, eg exams	
not enough use of assessments that mirror the kind of professional work that most students hope to enter into, eg report writing. I only wrote one report in my time at university.	
Feedback on bad work can be too sensitive. I know this is a difficult one to tackle as everybody responds differently to criticism, and I've no doubt there is a big picture here that I'm not privy to. For me though, if a piece of work a student submits gets a bad alphanumeric grade, there's not much point describing it in euphemistic terms such as "a lively attempt" and "good". The student knows from the alphanumeric grade that the work was bad. They probably just want to be told what was wrong with it in very candid terms, so that they can do better next time.	**Need to balance out positive aspects of work and what needs improved.**

Student led – What should we stop doing?

Student comments	Staff comments
Online tutorials, obviously covid dependent. I think having live lectures recorded and posted online gives people flexibility and the ability to go over topics again if it wasn't clear initially in the lecture. However, if possible seminars and tutorials should be in person.	
Online classes. I would vastly prefer to be in person (i still think it is helpful to record lectures where possible for those that cant make it or to catch up) for student engagement	Gallery view on Teams allowed online tutorials to function pretty much like in person tutorials Dependent on students using their cameras
Online tutorials (if possible)	
selecting course books that have to be bought rather than accessed for free online	

Staff led – What are we doing well?

Staff comments
Significant progress since last review. Working collectively, standardised procedures, doing more with fewer staff. Creativity is great
Doing more with less. Relates to high SSRs. Lots new programmes and courses, people volunteer to do extra - needs recognised that fewer staff make it difficult
Professionalisation
Standardising better practices, more interaction between people across the School, esp. In relation to change to online teaching. Some changes for Covid will be retained; better engagement of students in online environment
Cultural change in areas like employability
Engaging students and helping them to critically think about the world
Wider range of different assessments across degree programmes
Decolonization of courses
Great online support from CAD
Making good use of online platforms
Better use of virtual learning environment
Adapting well to the sudden radical change in teaching over the past year
Doing teaching that involves applying learning to real world situations and issues
Running courses across different disciplines, both in terms of teaching and students
Giving students a wide range of experience in different disciplines
Supporting students
Developing assessments in which students are proactive e.g. student-led dissertations, projects etc.
Abundance of research-led designed teaching at level 3 +
We're developing more on-line courses for external students

We've been trying different formats for recorded lectures (video and podcast, for instance)
Increased concern for "engagement"

Staff led – What are we not doing well?

Staff comments
I would like to improve our capacity to offer fairly paid internships (quite specific to Museum Studies).
Joined up thinking in relation to student support.
Clarity and efficiency in admin process, such as setting up an On Demand Course.
Improve clarity and emphasis on procedures (in the University in general) in relation to PGT students who are often left aside. Issue is a central one and poss a sector problem too. Interested in how the School can improve this.
Informing students about how their degree programme works/ classification is worked out
Progress on scholarships and internships is perhaps limited
SSRs
Documenting and recording double marking for honours - to make sure it has actually been done
We could improve our processes in terms of teaching development to allow for more flexible degree structures, combining online and in person learning modules, and perhaps apprenticeship approaches.
Standardise procedures for essay extensions
We could have a better sense of what different departments in the School do in terms of teaching practice. It's difficult to comment on what 'the School' is doing in a general sense.
This is maybe somewhat beyond the School but the whole C7/C6 system does more harm than good.
Communication across the School. Possibly need a session at start of term to make it clearer to students how their degree is classified, what's needed for a First , what our expectations are. Also related to knowing what other parts of the School are doing - would help standardisation.

It would be good if we had more opportunities and funding to do field trips. Need space in curriculum but also funding. Less of a tradition for field trips in this School but could they be done? Could there be joining field trips with e.g. geography (interdisciplinary working!). How could this work in terms of timetabling? But putting it into the curriculum will encourage students to come
The student records infrastructure is quite archaic and this makes it harder to search for information about students. It's particularly a problem in relation to PhD students and working out the timing of their PhDs e.g. how much more time they have available if they have taken time out or have taken extensions.

Staff led – What should we stop doing?

Staff comments
Lectures - The last year has shown (me at least) that live lectures are not necessary. Don't need to stop doing them but is dependent on what the course coordinator feels is best for that course. Mix of live and recorded would work
Less convinced about 'stopping lectures entirely' but in the same vein - exams. There's a place for both for me, but let's definitely think about how best to deploy them?
Student course evaluations - or at least (again) think about how best to facilitate better! Tendency of staff to focus on the negative aspects even if they are minor. Need to be careful of gender aspects, i.e. females tend to get more negative comments than males. Use of reflective exercises throughout term gave good feedback and high response rate. Problem of consultation fatigue.
Putting undue pressure on PhD students to submit their thesis by a strict deadline.
We have a rather poor system for penalising students for late submission of coursework. This penalises students by giving every late submission the same mark rather than taking off a specific number of marks. Better late submissions are then penalised more heavily than weaker ones.
Undergrad dissertations first-marked non-anonymously by dissertation supervisors. However, this goes back, ultimately, to SSRs - if there were more staff, it would be easier to find two staff members equally qualified to supervise and first-mark a dissertation
Personal Tutoring