University of Aberdeen
Internal Teaching Review (ITR)

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Panel Visit: Tuesday 23 and Wednesday 24 April 2019

INTRODUCTION

1.1   The Internal Teaching Review (ITR) of the School of Education was undertaken under the University's revised ITR Process and Procedures, maintained under review by the University Committee on Teaching and Learning (UCTL). The Process and Procedures are available here: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/internal-teaching-review-6112.php.

1.2   The ITR Panel was comprised of:

Professor Kathleen Shennan	Convener, Dean for Quality Enhancement and Assurance
Dr Michelle Macleod	School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture Undergraduate Committee
Dr Jerry Morse	School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition Quality Assurance Committee
Dr David Muirhead	School of Geosciences Postgraduate Taught Committee
Miss Ivana Drdakova	Aberdeen University Students Association
Dr Stephen Day	External Subject Specialist, University of the West of Scotland
Mr Derek Robertson	External Subject Specialist, University of Dundee
Mr Matt Fullerton	Clerk, Academic Services

1.3   The Panel considered the documentation provided by the School of Education, by way of an evidence-based Critical Analysis (CA). In addition, prior to the visits 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)), Student Course Evaluation Forms (SCEF), 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 two-day site visit to the School where they met with a range of staff, as well as undergraduate (UG), postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) students. This report is split into four 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 quality assurance aspects arising from scrutiny of the material provided prior to the visit and the initial discussion with the Head of School (HoS) and several key members of senior staff and

(iii)   Part C covers the outcome of various meetings with staff and students, focusing on a small number of themes identified during Part B, or in the Pedagogic Partnership Session, which involved more free-form discussion.

(iv)   Part D details the jointly devised School action plan which will form the basis of the one-year follow-up report.

Part A: OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

2.1   Overall, the panel commended the quality of teaching and learning within the School. The panel found the staff within the School to be highly collegiate and supportive of each other and their students. The panel noted the level of support that established members of staff give to more junior staff and Associate Tutors and found this approach to be particularly impressive.

2.2   The panel was heartened by the support demonstrated by the School to its students. While many students reported that the personal tutor system was not working well within the School, they praised the support that was available to them from academic and administrative staff. Similarly, although support provided to students from the external schools while on placement was reported as variable, there was no indication that students were not fully supported by the School of Education during their school experience.

2.3   The panel found the School to have excellent processes in place to ensure consistency of marking which are particularly useful for new members of staff and Associate Tutors. The use of rubrics was also noted in helping achieving consistency of marking. The panel did urge, however, that care be taken to ensure their use is consistent and does not limit the feedback available to students.

2.4   The panel noted that Staff in the School did appear to be over-stretched and, until sufficient growth in the School translates to increased staffing levels, the School needs to reflect on its internal processes to identify where efficiencies can be made. It was acknowledged by the panel that steps in this regard have been undertaken, i.e. in simplifying the proforma for school experience assessment and looking at alternative ways of doing school visits but recommended that more needs to be done to reduce the 'pressure points. Members of the panel suggested that this might be achieved through reviewing the timing of assessments, nature of the assessments and year-round staff workload.

2.5   The panel acknowledged that the School is due to undergo a major change in the structure of the MA Education programme to incorporate school placements into years one and two. The panel were heartened by this, noting that it will help to address many of the concerns of students regarding their confidence to undertake teaching of their own in years three and four and will align our students better with those from other institutions which should also help the student school experience. The School can be commended for the approach taken to planning these changes, notably the high level of engagement with staff and students and their adoption of a 'garage sale' exercise.

2.6   The Panel stressed that the comments from students regarding the curriculum (expressed below) were voiced by some students in the groups the Panel met but this was not a uniformly held view. The panel noted that other students found the curriculum gave them the preparation they needed to undertake their school placement. Although some of the comments appear quite negative the Panel are content, from discussions with the external subject specialists and in the final "wash-up" session, that some of the rationale for the School's pedagogic approaches have been misunderstood by some students and the School acknowledge that they need to do more to explain to students the nature, breadth and limits of their programmes.

PART B: QUALITY ASSURANCE

3.1   **Preparatory Work:**

3.1.1   The aim of the Panel's preparatory work was to gain assurance that the School's teaching provision met with the University's requirements, as well as that of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), and to identify (i) areas of good practice and (ii) areas for development in the School's provision. This process informed the Panel meetings with the School and allowed those meetings to focus on enhancement.

3.1.2   Overall, the Panel was content with the quality of provision offered within the School, was assured that the School had robust QA processes in place and that EERs were positive, indicating that the School was maintaining appropriate standards.

3.1.3   Minutes of School meetings showed good communication between central University Committees and School Committees. SSLC minutes confirmed that student views were being listened to and acted upon (evidenced also in the School's Annual Programme Reviews (APRs)) and there was evidence of the School trying different ways to increase online student engagement with SSLC-type meetings. Minutes from Examiners' meetings were detailed and showed good reflection on each programme by the programme leader with fair and transparent consideration of borderline students.

3.1.4   The Curriculum maps developed as part of the ITR submission were commended for their linkages to both the subject's professional standards and Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). The panel commended the mapping to Aberdeen Graduate Attributes.

3.1.5   The CA showed clear evidence of the School responding to student feedback, even making major changes to their model of delivery. For example, the Panel noted the move to disaggregate Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) programmes from the MA programme in response to negative student feedback.

3.1.6   The Panel noted the School's confidence in the feedback it provided, substantiated by positive student comments, as well as its marking procedures, particularly in relation to online teaching. Panel members were also encouraged to see the School considering and revising at their marking processes, for example those related to placement reports, to reduce the time required for them to be produced.

3.1.8   It was also noted that the School, in response to student feedback and expectations set out by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS), was in the process of remodelling the Degree of Master of Arts (MA) (Honours) Education degree programme, incorporating additional placements at levels one and two, amongst other changes.

3.2   Themes for Discussion:

3.2.1   The themes for focused discussion agreed with the School prior to the visit were:

(i)   **Assessment and Feedback,** paying attention to the consistency of assessment and the impact of recent changes within the School on feedback;

(ii)   **Supporting Students**, particularly in relation to school-wide initiatives, responding to National Student Survey (NSS) results, and placements

(iii)   **Supporting Staff,** regarding managing workload and compensating for recent loss of staff. During the Panel meetings.

(iv)   **Placements**

3.3   Discussion Points from Initial QA Session with the Head of School (HoS) and Senior Members of Staff:

3.3.1   The Head of School (HoS) informed the panel that the School had experienced an ongoing period of change since the School last underwent ITR. It was noted that these changes included growth of its portfolio of programmes, a strengthening of relationships with external partners, staffing changes and several changes of leadership. The panel acknowledged that interviews would soon take place to fill the currently vacant Nisbet Chair, a position of national significance and key to the School's strategy for research teaching and learning. The Panel noted the intention of the HoS to continue to integrate the School's research activities with its teaching.

3.3.2   The challenges that had arisen at an operational level as a consequence of the contraction in physical space at the School's disposal was discussed. This had required changes to be made to avoid a detrimental impact on the quality of teaching. The HoS voiced his intention to prioritise gains for both staff and students in the upcoming process of relocating the School.

3.3.3   The HoS emphasised to the panel the need for diversification, a strategy agreed upon in consultation with staff. The importance of the School's commitment to the local community and maintaining its current spread of subjects was acknowledged. It was also stressed that the School's model for online provision, along with its involvement with teaching delivery in Qatar and curriculum breadth offering, was vital to its strategy for the future. The importance of the School's participation in the Northern Alliance, a partnership between eight local authorities in the north of Scotland, was also noted.

3.3.4   The Panel questioned whether the School was too heavily committed to which the HoS noted the need to meet government and wider stakeholder requirements. The School's role in responding to the governmental and societal need for Gaelic language provision was discussed, as part of which staff confirmed that the recent departure of the School's Gaelic-speaking staff had made it an unsustainable, however work with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, a partner of the University of the Highlands and Island (UHI), was ongoing to develop a suitable alternative.

3.3.5   The Panel raised with the HoS concern regarding the potential impact on staff of the School's pursuit of diversification. The HoS reassured the panel and expressed confidence that more staff funding would be made available to the School when necessary. The HoS informed the panel that the School would, for now, operate according to a strategy for growth, enabling reinvestment. The panel noted that there were currently over two thousand students registered within the School, spanning multiple distinct disciplines, a key factor in the planned restructure of the School, allowing for greater focus on staff development in each area, while also providing other opportunities.

3.3.6   Discussion around the School's revised workload model confirmed to the panel that there had been extensive consultation with the whole School regarding its introduction. It was noted that the workload model was used by programme directors to assign work amongst their

teams and where a single member of staff is being pulled in multiple directions, the team responsible for maintaining the workload meet with programme directors and discuss how best to meet everybody's needs. It was acknowledged, however, that the time allotted for administrative tasks may not sufficiently cover the number of hours required for such activities.

3.3.7   The panel discussed with the School the efficiencies made to the assessment of placements, by means of adopting a more geographical approach to school visits by staff and by making changes to the pro forma for assessing the school experience. Incorporating a greater focus on dialogue with students and subsequent feedback, had yielded some gains for staff in terms of workload efficiency while also proving more useful for students. It was acknowledged, however, that such commitments remained a significant challenge for the School considering the current focus on student growth.

3.3.8   The panel were impressed with the robust system that the School had in place for supporting temporary staff, including allocation of a mentor during the early stages of their employment, provision of extensive guidance on the delivery of feedback, and opportunities to shadow staff on visits to external schools.

3.3.9   It was noted that a number of staff within the School were currently studying on postgraduate programmes at the University, and around a dozen staff and Postgraduate Research Students were actively pursuing Associate status with the Higher Education Academy (HEA). The HoS informed the panel that staff who already held membership with the GTCS may not think to seek the same with the HEA; however, increasing numbers were now seeking HEA membership in addition to GTCS registration. It was confirmed that two members of staff from the School of Education were currently enrolled on the Postgraduate Certificate (PGCert) in Higher Education Teaching and Learning, delivered by the Centre for Academic Development (CAD).

3.3.10 Members of the Panel queried the potential impact of the forthcoming changes to the MA programme on curriculum breadth for students. Staff confirmed that there would remain enough opportunity for students to engage with other subject areas such as Mandarin, which had proven successful in the past. It was further noted that the School also planned to establish new core courses incorporating a linguistic approach.

3.3.11 The panel were impressed to hear how recent gains in the School's National Student Survey (NSS) results had been achieved by a concerted effort to analyse the data and meet with students to better understand the reasons for negative responses. The School's analysis suggested that a large proportion of negativity from students was levelled at their experiences while on placement and, as a result, the School had introduced its own survey focused on placements to disaggregate the issues arising from external factors compared to those related to the School. It was noted that further efforts to improve NSS results included the implementation of designated teams of experienced staff working with marking groups to assure the provision of feedback, in addition to the introduction of a FAQ designed to address the issue of multiple staff answering the same questions and potentially communicating different information.

3.3.12 On the subject of placements, staff outlined efforts made to mitigate the impact a difference of personalities may have on a student's overall performance. Staff recognised the uneven playing field regularly presented by placements, which was the main driver behind the decision to exclude them when calculating degree classification.

3.3.13 While it was pointed out that the GTCS-operated placement allocation system did not prevent a tangible disparity between a student's experience, context was always considered when assessing performance and in ensuring the maintenance of certain standards. It was noted that the placement allocation system did not always allow students a full spectrum of experience in terms of the location and size of external schools at which they were placed.

3.3.14 In responding to a query from the Panel regarding inclusive practice and issues such as racism, patriarchy, and class - all of which, it was pointed out, are key to the development of TQFE students as standards of education - staff confirmed that inclusion is very much in mind when tailoring the School's programmes. It was noted that this included a focus on ethical awareness being built into courses as they are developed, as well as pedagogical projects aimed at creating a balanced professional. It was noted that the School had been the first such school in Scotland to attain the Athena SWAN Bronze award, for which such issues are central.

PART C: QUALITY ENHANCEMENT; OUTCOMES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH STAFF, STUDENTS AND THE PEDEAGOGIC PARTNERSHIP SESSION

This section details the discussions that were had with students and staff and represents the views expressed at the time of the panel discussions. As a result, this section reflects, for example, the student experience of the former MA programme. The changes being made to the MA programme will inevitably address some of the concerns raised by students in this section, but these concerns are noted in order to provide an accurate reflection of discussions held.

4.1   Theme: Assessment and Feedback

4.1.1   Some pre-honours students seemed unsure as to the purpose of their ePortfolio, which they indicated had not been assessed in their second year as they had been led to believe it would. Students were also unaware of whether it was possible to access the ePortfolio following submission.

4.1.2   Some PGDE students expressed to the panel that feedback was often lacking or not provided at all. They expressed frustration at the resulting lack of direction since this meant that they were being expected to teach without a clear idea of whether their understanding was correct. However, the panel heard that some students seemed uncertain about how to use Turnitin, the means by which they submitted their assignments, which may result in them not seeing the feedback that has been given.

4.1.3   Student feedback suggested there was some variation across the School in terms of feedback. Whilst feedback was often accompanied by a rubric, some students found receiving the rubric on its own to be particularly unhelpful. In contrast, however, other students stated that they had always received very in-depth feedback. Staff identified several mechanisms which had been introduced to improve the consistency of feedback, such as marking groups and meetings to discuss examination scripts and to establish expectations. Probationary staff noted that these measures, in addition to being extremely informative, had proven especially beneficial to cultivating a consistent approach to assessment and feedback.

4.1.4   Although a perceived lack of formative feedback was noted by honours students, postgraduate students praised the timely and constructive comments provided to them and demonstrated an understanding of how this could be used for forward learning.

4.1.5   Students found the feedback provided by external schools on their placement performance was usually very helpful.

4.1.6   Some PGDE Secondary students commented on what they considered to be the overly generic nature of many classes shared with PGDE Primary students, which had left some feeling as though their time on-campus was not always being used efficiently. The panel acknowledged that the School had plans to address issues such as these, by the separation of the PGDE Primary and Secondary programmes.

4.1.7   PGDE students mentioned that, while the content of their lectures was rich, topics were often very condensed and required considerable unpacking to fully comprehend. It was noted that students were regularly expected to attend an unsupervised session following a lecture, which many told the Panel they did not find productive without a member of staff present and students received no feedback from these sessions. Discussions with staff suggested that this illustrated that the students were unaware of the pedagogy behind this practice but acknowledged that they needed to make students more aware of the rationale behind this approach.

4.2   Theme: Supporting Students

4.2.1   The panel noted that the School made concerted efforts to signpost students to the correct contacts and resources at the earliest opportunities. Administrative staff noted that, unlike in many other Schools, their involvement with students typically began ahead of arriving in Aberdeen.

4.2.2   The panel acknowledged that the School's social media presence had more than doubled in recent years, primarily through its own accounts on Facebook and Twitter. This had enabled staff, through the School's administrative team, to regularly communicate with students and provide up to date information while also encouraging a sense of community.

4.2.3   Undergraduate students noted that the most favourable aspects of studying in the School were the approachability and overall level of support provided across the staff body and the sense of community they, and their peers, enjoyed. Similarly, postgraduate students hailed the pastoral care and academic guidance provided by the School and the University at large.

4.2.4   Overall, students felt well-supported by staff in the School, although not all students found the Personal Tutor system helpful. This was seen to be due to both inconsistencies at staff level and to lack of student engagement. The panel acknowledged that Personal Tutors were regularly being assigned responsibility for between six and eight students each. Some Personal Tutors were responsible for students enrolled outwith the School, contrary to what was understood to be the institutional norm. Multiple students commented that, at times when their assigned Personal Tutor was unavailable or uncommunicative, other staff within the School had provided them with extensive support when required.

4.2.5   Due to what they felt was a side effect of their tutors being overworked, undergraduate students reported feeling as though they were sometimes being left to learn for themselves

and, as a result, were overwhelmed by the prospect of taking on responsibility for teaching others. PGDE students echoed this sentiment, pointing out that they had often being told that staff did not have enough time to go into detail on particular topics. PGDE students felt that the teaching they received favoured breadth over depth. Discussions with staff indicated that this was the nature of the PGDE programme and that it required a lot of self-directed learning. The Panel felt that this fact should be made clearer to students at the outset of the programme to help manage student expectations.

4.2.6 Some students stated that they found the opportunity to enrol on curriculum breadth courses, such as those offered via Counselling Skills or outwith the School, to have been beneficial in widening their overall knowledge. Others, however, commented that such studies detracted from their overall degree intention.

4.2.7 The panel noted a degree of inconsistency in the amount of support being offered to students studying remotely. While one student complained of a lack of opportunity to engage with their peers, as well as the absence of meaningful representation for those enrolled in online education, their counterpart identified multiple ways in which students on their own programme were able to keep in touch, including social media. Both students agreed that it was very easy for students in their position to feel isolated.

4.2.8 Postgraduate students praised the accessibility and lack of technical difficulties in classes conducted through videoconference. However, they recounted problems in producing meaningful discussion because several students did not participate in live discussions, relying on recordings afterwards. It was felt that this approach potentially disadvantaged the whole class.

4.2.9 Students enrolled on flexible PGT programmes offered within the School commented favourably on the breadth of learning available and the opportunities to engage with different groups of peers from other areas, though often not regularly enough to form any kind of communal relationship. Despite this, students confirmed that staff were approachable and provided support when requested. While staff expressed confidence in their ability to support students, clearer signposting was required to ensure that students were accessing all the resources being made available to them.

4.2.10 Postgraduate research students remarked to the panel that they felt part of a community, noting regular seminars providing the opportunity to present their work to one another. Postgraduate research students were provided with up to £500 per year with which to attend conferences.

4.2.11 Central student support was of a high standard, but staff raised concerns regarding the delay many students were subject to when attempting to engage Student Support.

4.3 Theme: Supporting Staff

4.3.1 Overall, staff praised the transparency, openness, and consistent approach adopted by the School's management team.

4.3.2 Probationary staff spoke highly of the levels of support they received from colleagues within the School since arriving at the University. They recounted the guidance and support provided

by more experienced staff regarding placement visits, their first participation in which involves shadowing another member of staff. In difficult instances, where a student has been unsuccessful in completing their placement to a satisfactory standard, probationary staff commented on how helpful their colleagues had been in guiding them through what can easily be an overwhelming experience.

4.3.3   In addition, staff who had recently returned from maternity leave spoke of the high level of support and flexibility afforded to them by the School. Many staff spoke of an acute sense of belonging in the School because of similar accommodations being made on their behalf.

4.3.4   It was noted that the School's workload model had evolved in recent years, in order to provide transparency for staff, both within the School and across the University as a whole. Feedback from staff, however, suggested that the workload model did not always compensate for the time required to fulfil their duties, such as the delivery of online teaching, school visits or student recruitment, (particularly at PGT level). It was acknowledged that recent efforts to geographically group school visits had helped to reduce the time required for these visits. Similarly, the panel was informed that some staff felt that the amount of time allocated to supervise PGR students was not always appropriate. Established staff described a number of significant 'pressure points' throughout the academic year, due in part to the nature of the discipline and its commitments, noting that their working day would regularly need to be extended, often well into the evenings and weekend. While some members of probationary staff made a similar observation, it was clear, as a group, that they felt under no obligation to work beyond their contracted hours, with some commenting that they rarely took work home with them.

4.3.5   While affirming that their duty to students was always of the upmost importance, established staff said they rarely had time to adequately pursue research activities or professional development activities and were increasingly unable to set aside time to read up on recent developments within the sector. Concern was expressed by staff that this difficulty could adversely affect promotion prospects.

4.3.6   Probationary staff, however, were positive about taking on additional opportunities when they arose, with some commenting that their line managers provided frequent guidance on how best to accommodate their various obligations.

4.3.7   Administrative staff stated that, in addition to support from their line managers, they often supported each other and assisted in certain tasks at different times of the year, having cultivated a collegial approach to their work.

4.3.8   The impact of the recent contraction of space available to the School on specialist facilities such as those used for instruction of art, home economics, and sciences was discussed. It was acknowledged that although these rooms were now also being made available as general teaching spaces, this had so far resulted in only very minimal disruption.

4.3.9   The administrative processes for supporting the allocation of placements were reported as being complex and somewhat time-consuming. Staff indicated that efficiencies could be achieved if the current approach was reviewed. The Panel recommended that the School contact the Business Development team to evaluate what gains could be made in terms of productivity.

4.4   Placements

4.4.1   Pre-honours students voiced concern over their limited time on placement in 2nd Year and lacked confidence in their ability to teach based on the teaching they had received to date. While many students were content with their decision to study at the University, some felt jealous towards friends studying a degree in Education at other institutions where placements were perceived to be more numerous. However, in response, staff confirmed that the total placement period was the same as in other institutions (as required by GTCS) but was currently concentrated in the final two years. Honours students felt that the heavy focus on theory-based learning across their first two years did not adequately prepare them for honours and they noted the large disparity in the level of practical experience required of them upon entering 3rd Year. It is noted, however, that a fundamental review of the MA programme has taken place, to be implemented from academic year 2019-20, and staff were confident that these amendments, which include bringing placements into years one and two, should resolve these matters for future cohorts.

4.4.2   PGDE students stressed the overwhelming importance of what they learned during their time on placement. Students informed the panel that they perceived a disconnect between their school experience and the content of their courses. Several students felt that potentially fundamental topics, such as guidance on how to design and plan their teaching, were not explained in as much detail as they would have preferred. In addition, topics seemed to be taught in reverse order, making it difficult to apply their learning in practice and some students felt ill-prepared to teach certain subjects. Students agreed with the suggestion that curricular knowledge gained during their honour's years would have been more valuable if gained prior to undertaking their placements. In response to this, staff confirmed that curricular teaching was being taught throughout the School's programmes, however they acknowledged that students' perception of what they were being taught, particularly when packaged in an interdisciplinary context, may not always be clear.

4.4.3   Some PGDE students felt that crucial areas were not developed enough, being limited to one or two lectures and never revisited. As a result, some students expressed concern about their own ability to effectively teach certain subjects. PGDE Secondary students commented that they received no instruction on numeracy beyond what is expected by the Curriculum for Excellence, for example. In response to this, staff remarked on the inherent challenges presented by PGDE teaching but were confident that such fundamental topics were being covered at length.   The Panel felt that these comments from students may indicate a misunderstanding of what the PGDE programme is for, i.e. to teach students how to teach specialist topics and not to actually teach the students those topics. This perhaps needs to be made clearer to students.

4.4.4   The School's communication with the external schools where students were undertaking placements was discussed extensively. Students were provided with key contact details alongside their initial placement information, in addition to being informed of what to expect from their placements as part of their initial interview stage. It was the responsibility of pre-honours students to introduce themselves to the external schools and provide a generic letter containing links to relevant information. This was something that Honours students felt put too much pressure on them and led to inconsistent support from the external schools particularly where teachers' expectations did not align with student's ability. It was noted that students whose placements had taken place in and around Fife, for example, were being unreasonably compared to students from the University of Dundee who, despite being at the same stage in their studies, had received the material benefit of attending placements in

previous years. Changes to the structure of the MA Education programme should help address this concern for future cohorts. Staff stressed that communication with external schools was of the upmost importance and would review their processes for such communication.

4.4.5   Students who incurred travel costs because of their placement were reimbursed according to a set rate based on mileage, potentially meaning that some, including those who use public transport, were not always fully compensated. Although the University actively encourages its staff to offset their carbon footprint, students fulfilling placements and making use of public transport, were potentially being disadvantaged.

4.4.6   Students informed the panel of the variable nature of placements and the inconsistent levels of support being provided by external schools. Many gave anecdotal accounts of friends being placed under significant pressure, often due to interpersonal conflict with their assigned teachers. This was a concern for students given the teacher's contribution to the outcome of placements. Students, however, acknowledged the support they received from the School of Education to help them overcome placement issues. For example, the Panel noted an instance where parents had objected to a male student teaching their children as part of his placement. The student confirmed that while he ultimately chose to move to another class, both the University and the external school had been prepared to support him whatever his choice.

PART D: SCHOOL ACTION PLAN

This action plan was devised during the final part of the ITR in response to areas of development that had been uncovered during the ITR process. None of these areas for development detract from the positive impressions that the panel had during the ITR visit and which are outlined in Part A.

1. **Enhance understanding of assessment rubrics among students** by i) making assessment rubric available to students in advance and ii) tailoring the Common Grading Scale to better fit the different types of assessments.

2. **Enhance consistency for supporting students while away on placement** by i) improving communication between external schools and the University, ii) providing more robust documentation for students to provide to teacher mentors, iii) reinforcing the responsibility of the student (to both themselves and other students on placement at the same school), and iv) clarifying to students the role of Associate Tutors and their level of experience.

3. **Provide greater fiscal support for staff and students engaged with placements** by i) improving the reimbursement and relevant resources available for travel and ii) ensuring that students are aware of avenues for financial support at the University.

4. **Enhance dissemination of good practice**, such as the School's use of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

5. **Clarify aims of pedagogic approaches and enhance subsequent follow-up**, e.g. explain the rationale for the student-led workshops, ensure students stay for these, and provide some follow-up so students receive feedback on their work.

6. **Address the "pressure points" for staff** by i) enhancing the breadth of assessment used by the School, ii) reconsidering the timings of assessments and iii) considering whether internal moderation processes are more onerous than is necessary and iv) considering whether, for unclassified programmes, assessments need to be graded rather than being pass/fail only. This will require comparison with other institutions to ensure this approach would not impact on our students.