Panel visit: Wednesday 6 and Thursday 7 November 2013

Panel:

Dr Steven Lawrie  Convenor, School of Language and Literature
Dr Alan Denison  School of Medicine and Dentistry
Dr Mark Law  School of Natural and Computing Sciences
Miss Zoe McKellar  AUSA Vice-President for Education

Dr Donald Ballance  External Subject Specialist, University of Glasgow
Professor Peter Hobson  External Subject Specialist, Brunel University
Professor Hadj Benkreira  External Subject Specialist, University of Bradford

Miss Emma Hay  Clerk
Miss Clare McWilliams  Minute Secretary

The Panel met the following:

Head of School (incoming)  Professor Igor Guz
Head of School (outgoing)  Professor Tom O’Donoghue
School Director of Teaching and Learning  Dr Paul Davidson
Undergraduate Programme Leaders  Dr Alfred Akisanya
Dr Euan Bain
Dr Ana Ivanovic
Dr Oleksandr Menshykov
Dr Kaliyaperumal Nakkeeran

Undergraduate Level Coordinators  Dr Maria Kashtalyan
Dr Oleksandr Menshykov
Dr Kaliyaperumal Nakkeeran
Dr Andrew Starkey

Personal Tutors and

Undergraduate Advisers of Studies  Dr Marcus Campbell Bannerman
Mr John Cavanagh (Senior Personal Tutor)
Dr James Ing
Dr Maria Kashtalyan
Dr Fabio Verdicchio

Undergraduate Students  Mr Hussain Al-Momen
Mr George Brookefield
Ms Kalina Dimitrova
Mr Pavel Dobrev
Mr Brendan Dunn
Mr Phillip Riley

Undergraduate Students
(Levels 3 and 4)  Mr Firudin Aliyev
Ms Kirstin Davidson
Mr Philip McClenaghan
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<th>Role</th>
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<tr>
<td>School Disability Coordinator</td>
<td>Mr Harry Royston</td>
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<td>Mr Kevin Shannon</td>
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<td>Mr Joshua Squires</td>
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<td>School Retention Adviser</td>
<td>Dr Srinivas Sriramula</td>
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<td>Dr Andrew Starkey</td>
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<td>School Administration</td>
<td>Ms Yvonne Buckingham</td>
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<td>Mrs Joyce Clark</td>
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<td>Mr Grant Cordiner</td>
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<td>Mr Douglas Craighead</td>
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<td>Mrs Angela Henderson</td>
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<td>Mr Derek Logan</td>
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<td>Newly Appointed Staff</td>
<td>Dr Masood Hajian</td>
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<td>Dr Roozbeh Rafati</td>
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<td>Dr Yukie Tanino</td>
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<td>Director of Postgraduate Teaching</td>
<td>Dr Alfred Akisanya</td>
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<td>Postgraduate Taught Programme Coordinators</td>
<td>Mr John Cavanagh</td>
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<td>Dr Paul Davidson</td>
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<td>Dr John Harrigan</td>
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<td>Professor Ekaterina Pavlovskaia</td>
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<td>Dr Thanga Thevar</td>
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<td>Postgraduate Students (Taught)</td>
<td>Mr Opeoluwa Ajanaku</td>
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<td>Mr Zi Jian Chong</td>
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<td>Mr Alasdair Forsyth</td>
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<td>Ms Paulina Stelmach</td>
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<td>Postgraduate Research Supervisors</td>
<td>Dr Alastair Allen</td>
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<td>Dr Mohammed Imbabi</td>
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<td>Professor Tom O’Donoghue</td>
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<td>Professor Marian Wiercigroch</td>
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<td>Postgraduate Students (Research)</td>
<td>Mr Frank Birse</td>
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<td>Ms Magali Christensen</td>
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<td>Mr Ziaul Hossain</td>
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<td>Mr Vahid Vaziri</td>
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<td>School Examinations Officer</td>
<td>Mr David Hendry</td>
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**Additional Comments on the Self-evaluation Document were received from:**

- Ms Katja Christie, Deputy Academic Registrar
- Mr Peter Fantom, Head of the Careers Service
- Dr Lucy Foley, Head of Student Support
- Dr Darren Comber, Senior Educational Development Adviser
- Ms Alison Povall, School DIT Relationship Manager
- Mrs Christina Cameron, Policy, Planning and Governance

**Overall Impressions**
The panel commended the quality of teaching and learning in the School. The panel expressed its confidence in the maintenance of academic standards and noted strong indications of the School’s commitment to teaching and learning enhancement. The panel commended innovative teaching practices and noted exciting developments. The panel was heartened by the positive response from students toward the School.

The panel noted the existence of a keen sense of collegiality and a common goal amongst staff in the School in respect of the pursuit of excellence in teaching and research. The panel commended both the previous and current existence of a clear and purposeful leadership of the School and of a strong sense of strategic direction. The panel noted the organised nature of the School and the willingness and commitment of Staff.

The panel noted some areas requiring improvement, however, commended the School for steps already taken to both recognise and address these.

The panel noted a number of instances of good practice, recognition of which is implicit below.

Notes: The numbering of sections below reflects the numbering of the self-evaluation document (SED). Some sections of the SED attracted no commendations or recommendations.

Section 1: Range of Provision

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

1.1 The School of Engineering offers the following undergraduate programmes of study:

- Degree of Master of Engineering
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Chemical Engineering
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Civil Engineering
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Civil Engineering with Management
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Civil and Structural Engineering
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Civil and Structural Engineering with European Studies
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Civil and Environmental Engineering
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Civil and Environmental Engineering with European Studies
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Engineering with Management
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Engineering with European Studies
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Electronic Engineering with Communications
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Electronic and Computer Engineering
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering with Management
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering with European Studies
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering
- Degree of Master of Engineering in Mechanical Engineering with Materials
- Degree of Master of Engineering (Petroleum Engineering)

- Degree of Bachelor of Engineering
- Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Chemical Engineering
- Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Civil)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Civil with European Studies)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Civil and Structural)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Civil and Environmental)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Civil with Management)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Electrical and Electronic)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Electrical and Electronic with European Studies)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Electronics with Communications)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Electronic with Computer Software Engineering)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Mechanical)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Mechanical with European Studies)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Mechanical and Electrical)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Mechanical with Materials)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Engineering (Mechanical with Oil & Gas Studies)
Degree of Bachelor of Engineering (Petroleum Engineering)

Degree of Bachelor of Science in Engineering (General)
Degree of Bachelor of Science in Engineering (Civil)
Degree of Bachelor of Science in Engineering (Electrical & Electronic)
Degree of Bachelor of Science in Engineering (Mechanical)

International Foundation Programme in Petroleum Engineering

1.2 All Honours programmes offered are accredited by one or more of the following: the Institution of Civil Engineers, Institution of Structural Engineers, Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, Institution of Highways Engineers, Institution of Mechanical Engineers, the Energy Institute, the Institute of Chemical Engineers, the Institution of Engineering and Technology and the Institute of Measurement and Control. Successful completion of an Master of Engineering programme fulfils the academic requirements of the path to becoming a Chartered Engineer – as detailed by the UKSPEC – while successful completion of a Bachelor of Engineering programme leads to partial fulfilment of those requirements.

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

1.3 The School of Engineering offers the following undergraduate programmes of study:

Degree of Master of Science in Oil & Gas Engineering
Degree of Master of Science in Oil & Gas Structural Engineering
Degree of Master of Science in Project Management
Degree of Master of Science in Renewable Energy
Degree of Master of Science in Safety & Reliability Engineering
Degree of Master of Science in Safety & Reliability Engineering (Distance Learning)
Degree of Master of Science in Subsea Engineering
Degree of Master of Science in Subsea Engineering (Distance Learning)

1.4 With the exception of the Master of Science in Project Management, all of the above named programmes are accredited by the major professional engineering institutions.
Section 2: Aims of Provision

2.1 The panel **commended** the School on the commitment of staff to high quality provision, a recurring theme which came through in the review documentation and the review itself. The panel **commended** the School for its clear vision of what the School aims for in terms of its provision of teaching and supervision. The panel noted staff engagement with this aim, staff understanding of the procedures and processes in place designed to promote and sustain quality and the willingness of staff to professionally and enthusiastically engage in the process of making the system work effectively.

2.2 The panel were encouraged to note that the School’s aims were consistent with those of the Engineering accrediting bodies and the University as a whole.

Section 3: Staffing

3.1 The panel noted, at the point of publication of the Internal Teaching Review supporting documentation, the School had an average staff-student ratio of 1:20.7 and an increase in academic staff from 34.6FTE in October 2008 to 52.3FTE in November 2011, with 3 academic posts currently being advertised. The panel noted an accompanying significant increase in student numbers, particularly postgraduate taught, since the last Internal Teaching Review.

3.2 The Panel **commended** the School on the enthusiasm and commitment of its academic staff. The panel noted this as a particular strength given the remunerative rewards available in the current buoyant oil and gas sector. The Panel **commended** the absolute rise in academic staffing numbers following the previous ITR.

3.3 While welcoming the 65% increase in academic staff numbers since the last ITR, and that the overall staff-student ratio had improved by approximately 10%, the panel **recommended** that the School develops systems to ensure that the learning experience is not diluted at the expense of research and other activities.

3.4 The Panel noted the School’s initiatives in appointing Teaching Fellows, and **commended** the School on highlighting the value of the University’s teaching fellow career path and of encouraging such staff to follow this route.

3.5 The panel **commended** the development of the workload model and **recommended** that it be maintained in accordance with the School’s strategic vision.

3.6 The panel **commended** the varied and stimulating teaching environment provided, made possible by staff members active in varying disciplines and a wide range of research areas. The panel **commended** the willingness of staff to undertake various roles in supporting students and the School structure.

3.7 The panel **commended** the School on the loyalty, enthusiasm, commitment of its technical, administrative and support staff. The panel further noted that staff were strongly commended by students. The panel **recommended** that the School give increased consideration to the developmental needs of these staff.
3.8 In recognising the recent institutional investment in academic and technical staffing levels, the panel recommended that the School and College renew efforts to safeguard and augment administrative support to the School.

Section 4: School Organisation

4.1 The panel commended the organisational structure of the School.

4.2 The panel commended the strong, purposeful, ethical and collegiate leadership shown by the outgoing Head of School, who has acted as a catalyst for the School to flourish. The Panel noted and commended the smooth nature of the transition from the outgoing Head of School to the new Head of School.

4.3 The panel commended the positive towards teaching and the student experience, who demonstrated clear understanding of the powerful synergy between teaching and research.

4.4 The panel noted that teaching innovations had been showcased at appropriate University events and the panel commended the School for its commitment to the dissemination of good practice. The panel commended the School’s encouragement of attendance by staff at national teaching and learning events.

4.5 The panel commended the quality of the laboratory and technical facilities, a view endorsed by students and technical staff.

4.6 While recognising the value of the ‘Professoriat’, the Panel recommended that the governance of this group be reviewed such that expertise and contributions of non-professorial academic staff (particularly those with responsibilities for teaching) are sufficiently represented.

4.7 The Panel commended the strong commitment to safety demonstrated by staff and students. The Panel recommended that a Postgraduate Research Student be a member of the School Safety Committee.

4.8 The panel commended the School on the annual School Teaching Away Day and noted positive staff attitudes towards this.

4.9 The panel acknowledged the varying extent to which student representatives are invited to participate in committees such as the School Teaching and Learning Committee. The panel recommended that this be reviewed. The panel recommended that the School make available a permanent position for student representation on all appropriate committees. The panel noted enthusiasm from the student body for involvement in the School committee structure.

Section 5: Course and Programme Design, Accessibility and Approval

5.1 The panel commended the breadth of teaching methods and flexible approach to learning. The panel commended the School for carefully reflecting on its programme structures since last undergoing review. The panel agreed that the School’s programme structure and provision made good sense in pedagogic terms as well as in meeting the needs of its accrediting partners.
5.2 The panel commended the School for its ongoing plans for the creation of new Master of Science, postgraduate taught programmes.

5.3 The panel commended the measures and philosophy the school has in place to fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act (2010). The panel commended the work done by the School in supporting students with disabilities.

5.4 The panel commended the close engagement with Industry such that the programmes of study are appropriate for the needs of the local and international energy sector.

5.5 The panel noted the desire of the Head of School to better define the constituent disciplines in the School so as both to make each discipline more visible and to foster a respective sense of ownership. The panel supported this initiative and recommended that consideration be given to according each of the engineering disciplines separate prefix codes for its courses by the Registry.

5.6 The panel commended the School on the work undertaken to review provision as a consequence of the implementation of the University’s Curriculum Reform (CRef) project. The panel noted concern over the impact of CRef and the associated question of accreditation. The panel acknowledged these concerns, but recommended the details of such matters were best discussed between the School and the College, the more so since there existed a clear split in student views on CRef, whereby the level 1/2 students gave very positive responses while the Honours students were more reserved.

Section 6: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

6.1 The Panel commended the quality of teaching and learning in the School. The panel commended innovative teaching practices and noted exciting developments. The panel was continually reassured by positive responses from students toward the School.

6.2 The panel commended the School for the provision of workshops, of technology and of computer programmes and it noted a forward-looking attitude which encompassed a vision for future refinements in these areas, such as the further availability to students of software, as well as the launch of new PGT courses. The panel accepted the observation of the Head of School that the development of new programmes brought with it increased demands on all categories of staff. The panel therefore commended and supported all efforts by the School to secure from the College increased additional administrative, technical and academic resource to enable the innovations which the School seeks to implement.

6.3 The panel commended the School’s use of the University’s eLearning environment, MyAberdeen, for instructional design and delivery of teaching and assessment, however, noted that the School’s use of MyAberdeen could be inconsistent. The panel recommended that this be reviewed.

6.4 The panel commended the use of ‘mini-Student Course Evaluation Forms’ (SCEFs) within the School as a means of gauging student feedback, however, the panel noted that levels of feedback to students could be inconsistent. While more advanced students were positive in their comments, it appeared to the panel that feedback at level 1 was frequently minimal and consisted only of the CAS mark. The panel recognised - as indeed the students did - that the large level 1 numbers might preclude the possibility of detailed feedback. The panel, therefore, recommended that the School consider the option of generic feedback at level 1.
6.5 The panel noted that the student perception of feedback suggested that, in the case of laboratory work, there exists some arbitrariness in marking and some inconsistencies between the marking by teaching staff. While the panel was reassured both by the Feedback Guidance (Document T) and by comments from PG teaching staff concerning their level of preparation for teaching and marking, the panel **recommended** that the School examine the validity of the student comments.

6.6 The panel noted the problem, raised in the SED, concerning the demands placed upon students studying mathematics. The panel was encouraged to note that the School was already taking steps to address the problem. The panel recognised the problem of cheating in exams, as raised by the School, and welcomed the opportunity to have been able to discuss this with members of the School. The panel is in agreement with the School that this is a serious problem which might be ameliorated, amongst other things, by a numbered allocation of desks carried out centrally by the Registry. The panel is in complete support of the School in this matter and **recommended** that this be referred to the Registry for consideration and comment.

6.7 The Panel expressed concern over the fairness and transparency of several aspects of assessment, specifically including scrutineering, retrospective standard setting, and the moderation of summative assessments. The panel **recommended** that the assessment systems are reviewed, and the Academic Quality Handbook (AQH) be consulted to increase transparency. This might include seeking expert advice from outwith the School, the creation of standardised operating procedures and a handbook of assessment made available to all staff and students.

6.8 The panel **commended** the use of speakers from industry as well as the collaboration of external practitioners in the delivery of courses. The panel, in response to some of the student comments, **recommended** that the School seek to build up such external links in all its disciplines, as student comments suggested that guest lecturers from industry were mainly to be encountered only at Level 2 and at PGT level.

6.9 Despite a recognition of the value and satisfaction of providing quality teaching, School staff commented on the greater value attached to research than to teaching. Given the School’s commitment to delivering quality programmes, the panel **commended** that the School consider means to highlight and recognise quality teaching.

**Section 7: Course and Programme Monitoring and Review**

7.1 The panel **commended** the reflective and critical attitude adopted by the School towards its own activities at UG and PG level and as demonstrated in its responses to External Examiner’s reports, on its Away Days as well as in the useful dialogue between the panel and both members of staff and the past and current Head of School.

7.2 As noted above, the Panel acknowledged the School’s intention to review and develop various MSc programmes and **commended** the School for reviewing its provision. The Panel expressed concern, however, that several new and inexperienced staff were being made course coordinators for these courses without sufficient support or the requisite pedagogic expertise. The panel noted that new staff were also, on occasion, acting as programme coordinators. The panel **recommended** that the School carefully considers if these new
junior staff are appropriate to act as course/programme coordinators and/or if the support structures are sufficient.

7.3 The panel noted the School’s response to criticisms made by External Examiners and accreditation bodies and commended the School on its action to make changes in response to this feedback.

7.4 The panel commended the School’s use of ‘mini-Student Course Evaluation Forms’ as a means of gathering student feedback on courses and programmes throughout the academic year, other than the University’s SCEF exercise.

Section 8: Academic Standards and the Academic Infrastructure

8.1 The panel commended the fact that the degree programmes offered by the School have been designed in accordance with the academic standards required by the University, as set out by the QAA and the requirements of the engineering accrediting bodies.

8.2 While noting the necessity of close links with Industry, the panel recommended that the School consider whether academic integrity is maintained and not diluted or adversely influenced by external influences.

Section 9: Training and Supervision of Research Students

9.1 The panel commended the School for the support provided to all postgraduate students, including the work undertaken by the Director of Postgraduate Teaching and supervisors. The panel noted the willingness of staff to provide academic and pastoral support and acknowledged that students had frequent, often daily, contact with their supervisors.

9.3 The panel commended the School’s organisation and support for student placements and links with employers.

Section 10: Personal Development and Employability

10.1 The panel noted that following the University wide implementation of Curriculum Reform at undergraduate level, courses had been revalidated and opportunities to achieve the University’s Graduate Attributes (GAs) were now embedded in courses. The panel recommended that GAs should be highlighted as an issue of extreme importance within the School.

10.2 Noting that employment prospects are very good for graduates, the Panel commended the School’s organisation and support for student placements and links with employers.

Section 11: Professional Bodies/Units
11.1 As is noted above, the panel commended the School for its engagement with, thoroughness and responsiveness to the various accreditation bodies that have inspected and validated its programmes of study.

11.2 Noting that the School had not provided the numbers of staff who are members of the HEA, the panel commended the School for committing to support staff wishing to become members of the HEA.

Section 12: Staff Training and Educational Development

12.1 The Panel commended the School for the evident commitment and intelligently reflective attitudes of all staff. The panel commended the School on the annual teaching Away Day.

12.2 The Panel commended both the School’s supportive approach to the induction of new staff, as instanced in the team-teaching with more experienced staff as well as in the collegial and supportive atmosphere in general. It was noted that junior members of staff were supported well both formally by their mentors as well as in general by more senior colleagues. The panel noted, too, that TAs were invited to discipline meetings.

12.3 The panel noted a varying level of commitment to CPD activities, in part due to the perceived quality or usefulness of some University courses. The panel acknowledged particular enthusiasm for courses designed to promote teaching methods. The panel recommended that attendance be encouraged and that the School feed back to the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) on the type of courses that would be beneficial to it.

12.4 The Panel recommended that a training needs analysis be conducted of non-academic staff, such that an appropriate programme of staff development can be undertaken.

Section 13: Student Involvement in Quality Processes

13.1 The Panel commended the commitment of the School in encouraging student feedback through various informal and formal mechanisms. The panel commended School responsiveness to student input, as confirmed by the students themselves.

13.2 As noted in point 4.9 above, the panel recommended the School include student representation on all appropriate School committees.

Section 14: Public Information/Management Information

14.1 The panel made no comment on this section of the SED.

Section 15: Student Support, Retention and Progression

15.1 The panel commended the School’s overall commitment to student support, as clearly demonstrated by the commitment of all staff to pastoral support, and of their efforts to refer students to the appropriate professional support services within the University as appropriate.

15.2 The panel noted a high level of satisfaction expressed by students. The panel commended the engaged, enthusiastic and positive student representatives with whom they met.
15.3 The panel commended the School’s engagement with the Personal Tutor system, which was evident at all levels of seniority of staff and students.

15.4 The panel acknowledged that it was not appropriate for staff to advertise regular office hours, given that over the five years not all students were likely to be able to attend at such hours. The panel recognised that the most efficient means for the School with which to field student problems was via the current email appointments system.

15.5 The Panel expressed concern that the Disability Coordinator and Retention Advisor, while both relatively new in post, had had insufficient training to undertake the full range of duties. The panel recommended that measures are put in place to ensure that a formal handover occurs at the time of transition and that the current post holders undergo appropriate training.

15.6 The panel noted that there was no mechanism in place for the longitudinal confidential sharing of data about individual students with difficulties between Level Coordinators. The Panel recommended that such a process be considered such that students “at risk” could receive more tailored support.

15.7 The Panel noted that the Retention Advisor was unable to comment on several questions relating to student retention on account of a stated lack of data, as was stated. While noting the aspiration of the Retention Advisor to remedy this information deficit, the Panel recommended that the School provide resource to facilitate and accelerate this.

Section 16: Recruitment Access and Widening Participation

16.1 The panel welcomed the positive response from UG, PG and PGT students towards the School, as well as the high graduate employment rates and the popular nature of MSc courses, some of which were fully subscribed some few years in advance. The panel commended these factors as indicators of the successful work of the School.

16.2 The panel noted the commitment to equality and inclusion, as stated in the SED, and welcomed the concrete evidence of this in practice, such as in the case of the attempt to overcome ethnic or religious groupings at PG level by assigning students to new groups and thereby fostering the notion of an academic community. The panel commended the School on turning theory into practice in respect of this point.

Section 17: SFC Quality Enhancement Engagements

17.1 The panel made no comment on this section of the SED.

Section 18: Recent Developments

18.1 The panel noted the satisfactory implementation of many changes undertaken by the School since the last Internal Teaching Review. The panel commended the School on the steps it had taken to act upon the majority of points raised in the previous ITR. The panel recognised the proactive nature of the School and commended it for this.

Section 19: Quality Enhancement and Good Practice
19.1 The panel recognised a commitment to quality enhancement and a number of examples of good practice (noted above), combined with evidence of critical self-reflection as contained in the documentation submitted to the panel.

Section 20: Impediments to Quality Enhancement

20.1 The panel noted those issues raised by the School in this section of the SED and agreed that each issue raised had been considered (see above).

Conclusions

The panel recommended unconditional revalidation.

The panel wished to thank all members of staff within the School of Engineering for the work that had gone into producing the ITR documentation and for their commitment to the review process. The panel also wished to thank all students and staff who participated in the visit; the visit itself went very smoothly and the panel were made to feel very welcome.
Internal Teaching Review - School of Engineering

November 2013


The Paragraph numbers in the following response refer to those paragraph numbers in the Final Report produced by the Panel in January 2014 where a recommendation was made. This document is intended only to be read in conjunction with that Final Report.

3.3 In addition to the existing three Teaching Fellows and a Senior Teaching Fellow, three new Teaching Fellows have been appointed since August 2013, and interviews for a fourth Teaching Fellow have just recently taken place, and an offer of the position made. This latter is in Mechanical Engineering where we have our largest student cohort. The new Teaching Fellow post is in addition to seven Lecturer or Senior Lecturer posts also currently being advertised.

3.5 The recommendation is noted and the workload model will be maintained as recommended.

3.7 The School not only agrees with this recommendation, it had already implemented it prior to the draft report being received. Since the date of the ITR visit, a new introduction has been meetings in each half session between the Head of School (HoS) and all Technical Staff, and also similarly frequent meetings between HoS and all Admin Staff. Already, some new actions are being taken in response to issues discussed at the first meetings taken prior to Christmas 2013. For example, a new £6k training budget for Technicians has been allocated for the current year (aimed at training in various software tools, etc.,). It has also been agreed that there will shortly be a newly introduced Away Half-Day for the Admin Staff to allow wide-ranging discussions of issues of concern.

3.8 Since the ITR visit, there has already been secured an additional 0.5FTE Admin post which is currently being advertised. It has also been agreed with the College that the Business Plan for any new MSc Programme should now be required to embed additional Admin support.

4.6 The School notes the recommendation concerning the Professoriat and representation of the view of non-Professorial staff. However, the “Professoriat” of the School is not a committee but rather a group name for all Professors of the School. This group does not have any formal management role. The HoS regularly consults with the Professoriat as well as with all other members of staff – there are regular group meetings with the technicians, secretaries as well as general staff meetings.

4.9 The School will take this recommendation forward to potentially appropriate committees for consideration forthwith. It should be noted, however, that several years ago a volunteer student representative was included in the membership of the UG Teaching Committee, but this fell by the wayside due to lack of relevance of the deliberations of the Committee to the student rep who, as a result, did not particularly engage with the meetings, and who lost interest in continued attendance. The UGTC, at that time, agreed that where the student membership degenerated into mere
observer status there seemed to be little point in persevering with the concept. This was especially
the case in the context of the Teaching Committee since the Staff Student Liaison Committees are
effectively the Teaching Committee meeting with all the Student Class Reps, where student input
into relevant Teaching Committee matters is the prime focus of the bi-annual meetings.

5.5 This recommendation is currently being actively considered and further discussion,
especially in the light of this ITR recommendation, will be had with both the College and Registry.

5.6 The discussion which is being recommended here is already happening and it is hoped that
the matter considered under 5.5 will offer a way forward.

6.3 This has already happened, with exactly this matter addressed in one of the three sessions
of the January 2014 Teaching Away Day. As well as presentations from two of the Academic-related
and IT support staff on the use of MyAberdeen and other IT, there were presentations from three
School of Engineering Academic colleagues, giving examples of what is considered to be best
practice. These presentations were warmly received, with several potential practical outcomes
discussed by other colleagues.

6.4 This is happening in some cases already, and, since the ITR, has been discussed at a Staff
Meeting where a wider adoption of the practice was urged. It will also be brought up for discussion
at a future Teaching Away Day.

6.5 This recommendation will be circulated to Course Coordinators for attention.

6.6 The discussion with Registry that is recommended herein is already happening.

6.7 This matter will be raised at the next PG and UG Teaching Committees.

6.8 The School heartily agrees with this recommendation and efforts are in hand to comply with
it.

6.9 This matter will be raised at the School Management Group, the Teaching Committees and,
depending on these discussions, at a future Teaching Away Day. A key question in these discussions
will be what is the measure of Quality Teaching.

7.2 The new staff allocated to these roles were appointed specifically for them, and the role was
discussed at their job interviews. The Interviewing Panel were convinced by the successful
candidates that they were suitable for the task. In addition, it is standard practice that all staff may
act as Course Coordinators and probationary staff have mentoring support and a reduced teaching
load.

8.2 All courses taught by external teachers have both Course Coordinators and Scrutineers from
within the School of Engineering. It is already very much the practice of the School to ensure that
this recommendation is met. To date we are satisfied that this is being achieved, although this call
for vigilance is welcome and is agreed with.

9.3 We have now moved towards supervisory teams with at least two supervisors for all new
PhDs.
10.1 Graduate Attributes are embedded in all Course Proposal Procedures (the SENAS forms), and all Academic members of staff are now Personal Tutors. A key aspect of this new role is to highlight Graduate Attributes to students and to foster their development of them. It is absolutely fair comment to suggest that for some members of staff only this face to face encounter with Graduate Attributes in the Personal Tutoring role has embedded in their own thinking what the GAs actually mean, at any rate among those who have not had to prepare a SENAS form since the introduction of GAs a few years ago.

12.3 Attendance will be encouraged, and, indeed, the value of some aspects of the available CPD provision came up in discussion at the most recent Teaching Away Day.

12.4 The recommended analysis was conducted at the newly introduced regular meeting between the HoS and the non-academic staff in December 2013.

13.2 See 4.9

15.5 This recommendation will be taken forward to discuss with the two post holders in order to identify handover needs and any failures in that process.

15.6 Special Needs and Disability difficulties are continuously supported via the Disability Coordinator, and teaching support requirements tailored to each student are issued annually to relevant Course Coordinators. Other types of difficulties are supported in the first instance by the newly instituted Personal Tutor system. Students will have the same Personal Tutor throughout the years of their degree programme.

15.7 It is not just the Retention Adviser who does not have access to this data, as the School has repeatedly asked for it too. However, we welcome that the ITR Panel have raised this recommendation which strengthens our case as we continue to press the University on the matter. It can be mentioned at this stage, however, that, at the last attempt to obtain this information (as part of the preparation of the ITR submission), we were informed that the new “OneSource” IT system, which begins a rolling introduction in 2014-15, should meet this need. Hopefully, that will prove to be the case.

Professor Igor Guz                                               Dr Paul Davidson
Head of School                                                  Director of Undergraduate Teaching
School of Engineering                                           School of Engineering
Date: 13 October 2014

School: School of Engineering, College of Physical Sciences

ATTACHED:
- Final Report
- School Response
- Other please specify: N/A

OUTCOME OF PANEL VISIT:
- Revalidation Recommended
- Revalidation Not Recommended
- Other please specify:

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE RESPONSE:

The Committee would like to extend their thanks to the Head of School, Director of Teaching and the School as a whole for the response provided to the ITR report. The Committee were very grateful for the responses provided.

The Committee specifically noted the following:

The Committee noted that the School has accepted a large number of the recommendations made within the report and, indeed had already swiftly actioned some before the draft report was even received. Other recommendations have also been acted upon in the meantime and it appears that some of the ITR recommendations echoed changes already considered by Engineering. Hence, the ITR, in some respects, appears to have confirmed in Engineering the appropriateness of some changes upon which that School had already been reflecting. A number of measures in response to the ITR recommendations are ongoing, but the document gives the impression that Engineering is committed to bringing about the relevant refinements. Notably, a training budget for technicians has been introduced and additional admin support is planned in the form of the now advertised post.

The Committee noted that the document is marked by a clearly positive attitude to the whole ITR process and is characterised, too, by a sense of constructive dialogue between the School and the ITR panel.

Overall, the Committee were encouraged by the report provided and look forward to the one year follow up report.

Date: 22 October 2014
### School's One-year Follow-up Due: 1 September 2015

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<tr>
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<td>01 May 2014</td>
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<td>22 October 2014</td>
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