**INTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW (IQR) 2013-14**

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AS IDENTIFIED IN IQR REPORTS

Thirteen IQRs were completed in 2013-14. The list below is a summary of the recommendations noted in the reports; it does not include every item listed in the reports, but those which may be of general interest.

Issues concerning research students and/or the Doctoral School have been listed here separately. These are sent to the Head of the Doctoral School and the recommendations are then discussed at the first meeting of the Research Degrees Committee in the following Autumn Term.

| **Recommendation** | **Department** | **Strength** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| ***Management and Organisational Framework*** |  |  |
| Consider adopting acommon format/template across all Departmental committee minutes to promote accuracy and consistency in record-keeping. Some minutes provided by the Department during the review process appeared only in the form of action lists, with some key details omitted (i.e. date, time, location, attendees, apologies received, etc.). If required, the [*Guidance on Servicing UCL Committees*](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/governance-and-committees/committees/Guidance)document is available from Academic Services and training opportunities are provided through the UCL Professional Development Programme for those who are new to committee servicing. | Greek and Latin | Desirable |
| Take action to review the relationship between processes and functions that are required to be undertaken by UCL departments –e.g. Annual Monitoring, core duties and responsibilities described by the terms of reference of Departmental Teaching Committees (DTC) and Staff Student Consultative Committees (SSCC) - and the content of Divisional committee meeting agendas, minutes and associated documentation that relates to and records the Division’s undertaking of these processes and functions. In particular, the Division should ensure that :   1. the core duties and responsibilities identified by DTCs and SSCCs in the UCL Academic Manual are made explicit in the terms of reference of, and then undertaken by, the Divisional Undergraduate Teaching Committee, Postgraduate Teaching Committee and SSCCs as appropriate; 2. the agendas of these committees are structured to undertake these functions and their minutes to more formally detail and record their outcomes. Further advice and guidance is available at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-8/FTC_checklist> as well as from colleagues in Academic Services (contact Sandra Hinton). | Infection and Immunity | Necessary |
| Review its management and organisational structures in order to improve strategic oversight and enable more effective forward planning. It should consider enhancing its formal leadership structures to support the Head of Department, possibly introducing common UCL departmental practices elsewhere such as a Senior Management Team and a Deputy Head of Department role. This should create greater oversight, particularly in pressing issues such as declining student numbers and programme development and encourage sharing of responsibility between senior staff. Re-organisation of the Department’s underlying structures should also help ensure that quality management processes continue unabated if there are changes of Head of Department. | Information Studies | Necessary |
| The Programme Director, in liaison with other Programme Officers and the Heads of Department concerned, should discuss ways to mitigate the effect of increasing student numbers in regard of timetabling; of the allocation of tutors and of project supervisors; and of the capping of Natural Science students in some modules offered by the Faculty of Life Sciences, where the parallel increase of the intake in the Departments offering the modules has led to significant overcrowding. | BSc/MSci Natural Sciences | Necessary |
| Give further consideration to appropriate mechanisms for the discussion and dissemination of good practice, which is frequently identified by external examiners, across the six departments. | SELCS | Advisable |
| ***Curriculum Planning and Design*** |  |  |
| Review its postgraduate programmes to ensure that there is consistency in processes and practices and in the student experience. The students the team met reported some wide variability between the programmes, particularly in information provided to them, assessment of work and in work placements. Differing levels of satisfaction were noted as a result (see also recommendations 3 and 4 above). Reviewing the programmes in the round and considering ways to introduce common practices should help to ensure greater consistency and reduce the compartmentalisation of the Department’s subject areas into “silos”, a risk identified in the SES. | Information Studies | Advisable |
| The Programme Director, in liaison with the Faculties of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Brain Sciences and Engineering Sciences, should give consideration to ways to encourage standardisation in certain procedures across all Departments involved with the Natural Sciences Programme to ensure a coherent student experience. For example, specific areas identified by the Review Team were the time allowed for students to choose their projects, the method for allocating projects and the criteria for assigning project supervisors that varied across the Departments involved with the Programme. | BSc/MSci Natural Sciences | Advisable |
| The School is advised to ensure the aims and objectives of (i) each masters module and (ii) each of the teaching sessions comprising each module prepared by the teaching staff are made available to students. | SELCS | Advisable |
| ***Learning, Teaching and Assessment*** |  |  |
| Ensure that all summative written coursework worth more than 40% of the mark for any given module is assessed on an anonymous basis until the provisional mark is established. | Development Planning Unit | Necessary |
| Ensure that requirements relating to the deadlines for submission of coursework (whether electronically or in hard copy) are clear and consistent. | Development Planning Unit | Advisable |
| Ensure that the schemes of award for its MA programmes are common and consistent across its Masters provision and clearly described as such in programme handbooks and fully consistent with the wording of the relevant UCL regulations. | English | Necessary |
| Satisfy itself that the use of oral examinations on its taught programmes and modules is fully consistent with UCL policy and guidance as set out in the UCL Academic Manual (<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-3/assessment-strategy>) – i.e. that oral presentations are conducted in a professional and open manner; that students are made aware of the purpose, format and assessment criteria, including any prescribed length of time, for an oral examination or presentation in advance of the assessment taking place; that examination/presentation, and, at its outset, outline this to students being assessed. | Infection and Immunity | Necessary |
| Review its processes for feedback on the assessment of students’ work to ensure: (i) that it is within the parameters of the UCL [Service Standards](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-3/feedback-to-students-on-assessed-work) and (ii) that assessment practice is consistent across its programmes. The students the team met reported some wide variability in the promptness and quality of marked work between different modules and programmes. Student concerns included slowness in the return of assessed work, not enough detail given in the feedback to ascertain progress and make improvements, inconsistent use of the grades by different markers and limited information on the criteria for grades. The Department might also consider introducing a shared Board of Examiners to facilitate consistent practice and change assessment practices, extending innovative practice such as peer to peer marking where appropriate. The team noted with concern that this had also been a recommendation in the previous IQR in November 2005, albeit with issues raised on the then six week time-frame for the return of work. | Information Studies | Necessary |
| The Programme Tutor, in liaison with the Stream Representatives and all the academic and teaching staff on the Programme, should ensure that the entire Natural Sciences student cohort are aware of the marking criteria used for providing feedback on their work. | BSc/MSci Natural Sciences | Necessary |
| The School is advised to ensure that all staff and students are aware of the UCL policy on Peer Observation of Teaching (PoT) (and procedures for reporting that PoT has taken place) and that a link to the UCL policy be added to their website(s). | SELCS | Necessary |
| The School should take action to ensure that all assessed student work is returned to students within 4 weeks from the date of submission in line with UCL policy. The Review Team found that, in a few instances, feedback was delayed by up to 6 weeks from the date of submission. The students interviewed reported that this delay meant that the feedback was not received in enough time to allow them to use it to prepare their next piece of work. | SELCS | Necessary |
| The School is advised to supply guidance on essay writing to its MA students to ensure that they are clear about the criteria for judging what makes a ‘good’ piece of writing at PGT level. | SELCS | Advisable |
| The School is advised to consider extending peer marking to PGT level. The Review Team found that this practice was currently undertaken at undergraduate level in the School and felt that it might be extended to its MA students. | SELCS | Advisable |
| ***Student Recruitment, Admission and Reception*** |  |  |
| Owing to pressure of time and numbers, MA interviews are conducted by only one staff member, although a minimum of two members of staff, both of whom have been trained in interviewing and equal opportunity awareness, is specified by UCL policy. The Department is aware of this and agrees to reconsider the way in which interviews are carried out and to ensure that student interviews are conducted by a minimum of two members of staff, both of whom have been trained in interviewing and equal opportunity awareness, in accordance with UCL policy the Department must ensure that student interviews are conducted by a minimum of two members of staff, both of whom have been trained in interviewing and equal opportunity awareness, in accordance with UCL policy. | History of Art | Necessary |
| Review the information on course options provided on its web pages, with a view to ensuring that this is consistent as possible with the actual list of course options provided to students upon their arrival and that any changes to this information are made more apparent to students. | English | Advisable |
| Introduce a system that will enable clear communication of module choices available to students, especially those on PGT programmes, ahead of the start of the academic year/term. This will enable students to make informed choices, alleviating the potential for problems or disappointment arising from particular modules not being offered which is particularly acute for PGT students - see [Student Support and Guidance, Part 5 of the *Academic Manual*](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-5), including [Duties of Departmental Tutors](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-5/departmental-tutors). | Greek and Latin | Necessary |
| Review its [recruitment](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-4/pg-recruitment-admissions) practices to ensure that there is consistency in: (i) the programme information provided to prospective and new students and (ii) use of admissions interviews, for which UCL had given the Department permission to continue. The students the team met reported some variability in the programme and modular information available to them. A unified approach does not appear to be used in presenting this information, with differing levels of detail given on module content, assessment criteria and other information such as work placements, as well as varied layout in presentation in the webpages. Some of the overseas students stated that they had either not had an interview or had expressed dissatisfaction with it. The team noted that it was important to manage student expectations of their programmes and to provide consistency in recruitment practices. | Information Studies | Necessary |
| The Programme Director and Admissions Tutor should give consideration to nominating a member of staff involved with the Programme to visit state schools to give talks about Natural Sciences, rather than relying on the participating Departments involved to do this at their own Open Days. The Review Team considered that this would help to increase widening participation student recruitment to the Programme, and they also supported the proposed idea of running a Sutton Trust Summer School by its Teaching Fellow. | BSc/MSci Natural Sciences | Advisable |
| The review team noted that students had a range of concerns about the provision of adequate information to inform their selection of modules. The School is advised to ensure that students are enabled to make fully informed decisions about their choice of modules, and are aware of the impact of these decisions on their future studies. | SELCS | Advisable |
| Consider ways to improve their level of student recruitment to their MA programmes of study. The Review Team would advise that this should include consideration by the School of (i) producing a marketing strategy for both its MA Language, Culture and History (LCH) programmes of study and its pure language Masters programmes of study for the next three years and (ii) producing a widening participation strategy for student recruitment at PGT level for the next three years. | SELCS | Advisable |
| ***Student Support and Guidance*** |  |  |
| Ensure that students understand the personal tutoring system, particularly when their Personal Tutor is also a programme or course convenor. The review team noted from comments made by some students that they were unaware that they had been allocated an assigned Personal Tutor. | Centre for Multi-Disciplinary and Intercultural Inquiry | Necessary |
| Address the factors affecting the Department’s current graduate unemployment rate of 11% and work closely with UCL Careers to consider: -   1. How the careers education programme could be embedded into the Department’s programmes, as stipulated within UCL guidelines (see point 4 in [UCL Careers, Part 5 of the *Academic Manual*](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-5/careers-service)); 2. How personal tutors could be supported by UCL Careers to give careers advice to students. | Greek and Latin | Necessary |
| Review the support and guidance provided to students on their study year abroad and in particular consider how to: (i) ensure relevant module options are selected prior to their travels and (ii) engage with students and more effectively monitor their performance whilst they are away. | Greek and Latin | Advisable |
| Review it [disability provision](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/equalities/disability/index.php) in liaison with UCL Estates and the Student Disability Services to ensure that there is appropriate signage for assistance and support in the outside lift and clear access within the Department (jncluding the ramp to the Head of Department’s office) for disabled students. | Information Studies | Necessary |
| The Programme Tutor should ensure that both students and those staff that act as Personal Tutors on the Natural Sciences Programme are aware of the personal and professional development aspects of this Personal Tutor role. | BSc/MSci Natural Sciences | Necessary |
| Ensure that personal tutoring is carried out in accordance with UCL policy. Attendance should be monitored and non-attendance addressed appropriately. The School is further advised to seek to ensure that the purpose and value of personal tutorials is understood by students and staff. | SELCS | Necessary |
| ***Staff Support and Development*** |  |  |
| Ensure that Peer Observation of Teaching is carried out and recorded for all teaching staff. | Development Planning Unit | Necessary |
| Organise more formal and structured guidance for junior research staff who are involved in teaching activities. This might involve CALT and be offered locally or at Faculty–level as a stand-alone training session or it might be something that the Division may wish to address as part of its staff mentoring scheme. | Infection and Immunity | Advisable |
| ***Academic Quality Review, Monitoring and Feedback*** |  |  |
| Ensure that there is UG and PGT student representation on its Departmental Teaching Committee (DTC) and that the minutes of the Departmental Staff Student Consultative Committee (DSSCC) are received by the DTC, as per the policy in the UCL Academic Manual. | History of Art | Necessary |
| Ensure that analysis of module evaluation questionnaires is discussed by both the DSSCC and the DTC. | History of Art | Necessary |
| Explore ways of working closely with the Office of the Vice-Provost (Education) to address concerns relating to the Department’s low response rate to the National Student Survey (NSS) and seek methods for improvement. | Greek and Latin | Advisable |
| Ensure that its Annual Monitoring reports examine key issues at module level in greater detail. The Division is also encouraged to consider using the Annual Monitoring process more as a tool for forward planning and for highlighting good practice within its taught programme provision – and in fact the review team would wish to recommend that further consideration be given within UCL to developing the Annual Monitoring process for this purpose. | Infection and Immunity | Necessary |
| Ensure that UCL policy is followed for the [Annual Monitoring](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-7/annual-monitoring) process and that: (i) that Annual Monitoring reports are produced each year; (ii) that Augmented Annual Monitoring takes place the year before the IQR and (iii) that the missing Augmented Annual Monitoring report is produced and completed within the current session. The team noted that Annual Monitoring reports were not produced in 2009-10 and 2008-09 and that the Augmented Annual Monitoring was not produced in the previous session, although extensions to the submission time-table had been accommodated by the Faculty and the Chair of QMEC. Annual Monitoring is a crucial component of UCL quality management and enhancement provision and in enabling departments to review their provision, both in the short and long terms. | Information Studies | Necessary |
| Ensure that formal UCL quality assurance processes such as [Annual Monitoring](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-7/annual-monitoring) are utilised more effectively as developmental tools for academic provision, rather than just perceived as necessary compliance activity. The team supports the new Head of Department’s determination to ensure that Annual Monitoring and other key strategic and quality assurance processes are fully engaged with by the Department in future. | Information Studies | Necessary |
| Review the terms of reference of the DTC and the [Staff Student Consultative Committee](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/part-7/sscc) to clarify the role of each committee and to ensure that their discrete roles and areas of business are clear to staff and students. The SSCC should also receive for consideration: (i) the Head of Department’s overview of the Annual Monitoring reports; (ii) the summary of main matters arising from student evaluation questionnaires and (iii) the IQR self-evaluative statement and report. | Information Studies | Necessary |
| Review its information to students on the [Student Academic Representative (StARs) scheme](http://uclu.org/representation/student-academic-representatives-stars) and to take action to correct the apparent misconception amongst students and staff that this is not intended for postgraduate students. The StARs scheme, managed in partnership between UCL Union and UCL, is applicable for all students and offers training and other opportunities which students should have the opportunity to engage in. | Information Studies | Necessary |
| Ensure that student representation is included on all the various Natural Sciences committees, especially its Steering Committee and Stream Representatives Committee. The Review Team understands that student representation is included on both the Natural Sciences Staff Student Committee and the Review Committee but considers that students should also have membership of these other two groupings that play an important part in the running of the Programme. | BSc/MSci Natural Sciences | Necessary |
| Ensure that first- and second-year students are aware of the role of the Staff-Student Consultative Committee, and the identity of their student representatives. | SELCS | Advisable |
| ***Doctoral School/Research Students*** |  |  |
| Review the arrangements for the MPhil/PhD upgrade seminar to ensure that the Principal Supervisor is not present when the Upgrade Panel considers its decision on approval of the upgrade. Whilst it is permissible for the Principal Supervisor to be present during the student’s oral presentation, they should not be present during the Panel’s discussions on approval (see the [Guidelines for Upgrade from MPhil to PhD Status](http://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/resources/UpgradeGuidelines_Jun2013.pdf)). | Institute of Archaeology | Necessary |
| Assess the research supervision workload for senior academic staff and check whether individual workloads are in line with the UCL guidance (see section 4.3 of the [*Academic Regulations for Research Degrees*](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-regulations/docs/RD_Section_1_2013-2014_-_FINAL.pdf)) provided on the number of students per supervisor. The Department should then address any issues highlighted from the analysis. | Greek and Latin | Necessary |
| Some students still feel that the Research Log should be removed altogether. However, others maintain that the Log could be re-framed in order to be made more relevant and to feel more useful and that they would prefer more free form, discursive commentary. To this end therefore, the Team recommends that the Department must ensure that all research students complete the online research student log which is a mandatory component of UCL research degree programmes but it will also invite the Graduate School to consider how the Online Research Student Log might be further tailored to the Department’s particular requirements. | History of Art | Necessary |
| The Team raised the issue of PGTA pay and conditions with the Head of Department and he recognises this as an important issue and has resolved to raise the discussion to Faculty level as soon as this is appropriate. The Team commended the Department’s evident commitment to and support of its PGTAs and recommended that it follow through on its declared intention to review the pay and conditions of its PGTAs, with a view to raising this discussion to Faculty level. | History of Art | Advisable |
| Ensure that there is greater clarity among postgraduate research students and staff regarding the role of the secondary supervisor. | Infection and Immunity | Necessary |
| Organise more formal training and guidance, including around health and safety protocols, for postgraduate research students who are involved in giving laboratory demonstrations. | Infection and Immunity | Advisable |
| Consider how the UCL Research Log may be used more consistently and to the best effect by research students and their supervisors across the Division in accordance with the guidance issued by the UCL Doctoral School. | Infection and Immunity | Desirable |
| Explore possibilities for increasing opportunities for its postgraduate research students to teach within the Division. | Infection and Immunity | Desirable |
| Ensure that use of the [UCL Research Student Log](http://www.grad.ucl.ac.uk/codes/CoP_Research_1314.pdf) as a mandatory component of its research programmes is observed by all postgraduate research students and their supervisors. The team noted that there was sporadic completion of the Log amongst some of the students, who also expressed doubts to its usefulness. The team noted with concern that this had also been a recommendation in the previous IQR. The Department should, specifically: (i) ensure that students realise the importance of the Log, both as a record of their progress and in helping to meet milestones, (ii) review monitoring arrangements by the Graduate Tutor and supervisors, (iii) consider ways to promote a more positive attitude among students regarding its use and (iv) consult with the Faculty Graduate Tutor on best practice in other departments from which the Department can learn. | Information Studies | Necessary |
| The School is advised to review and monitor the level of support and guidance provided to Postgraduate Teaching Assistants, particularly in the areas of careers planning and UCL contractual arrangements. | SELCS | Advisable |

SELCS = School of European Languages, Culture and Society (Note two IQRs were held for UG and PG provision).

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