



**Senate**

<b>Paper Title</b>	Periodic Review Report: School of Law 2014
<b>Outcome requested</b>	Senate is asked to <b>consider</b> the periodic review report for the review of the School of Law.
<b>Points for Senate members to note and further information</b>	<p>The report sets out the formal commendations and recommendations made by the panel for the Periodic Review of the School of Law, and summarises the Panel's discussion.</p> <p>Progress on the recommendations specific to the School will be monitored through an interim action plan and twelve month progress report.</p>
<b>Questions for Senate to consider</b>	<p>Senate is asked <b>to consider</b> the commendations and recommendations summarised in paragraphs 119 to 127 of the report. The recommendations concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing opportunities for students to engage with research and to develop research skills before undertaking an assessed research project or dissertation;</li> <li>• reviewing assessment policies and practices at undergraduate level, including assessment methods, formative assessments, marking criteria and the requirement that UG students must take and pass all examinations in one sitting;</li> <li>• reducing the number of Subject Examination Boards at postgraduate level;</li> <li>• introducing a programme of training and professional development opportunities for Teaching Associates;</li> <li>• ensuring that College policy is uniformly followed in both parts of the School in relation to staff appraisal, supervision of research students, peer review of teaching and student advising;</li> <li>• reviewing the mechanisms for research student progression, including the introduction of additional progression points following the formal first year progression review and the involvement of at least one independent person in key progression decisions.</li> </ul>
<b>Regulatory/statutory reference points</b>	The Periodic Review of teaching and learning in academic schools and institutes occurs on a six year cycle. It forms part of the QMUL's Quality Framework for the assurance of academic standards and quality. Periodic Review provides the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the quality management

	processes in place for teaching and learning.
<b>Strategy and risk</b>	Periodic Review supports the QMUL's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. The Quality Assurance Agency expects all providers of higher education to conduct some form of Periodic Review, and will look for evidence of this in its Institutional Review processes.
<b>Reporting/ consideration route for the paper</b>	Senate <b>to approve</b> .
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<b>Sponsor</b>	Professor Susan Dilly, Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning)

## SENATE

### REPORT OF THE PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL OF LAW

19 March 2014

#### SCOPE OF REVIEW

1. The Periodic Review encompassed the undergraduate, postgraduate and research degree provision provided by the School of Law.

#### OBJECTIVES

2. The objective of the Review was to assess the effectiveness of the quality management processes in place within the School of Law (hereafter 'the School').
3. The aims of Periodic Review are set out in the QMUL Quality Handbook as follows:
  - to assess the effectiveness of the School or Institute's processes for managing academic quality and standards, and that QMUL's agreed policies and procedures are operating as intended to assure and enhance the standard of provision;
  - to consider how the School is developing and implementing its Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy, and how QMUL's Statement of Graduate Attributes is reflected in the curriculum;
  - to evaluate the currency of the School or Institute's programmes in the context of developments in the discipline, and its success in achieving its aims, and to consider its future plans;
  - to commend and disseminate good practice;
  - to provide public information on the quality and standards of the School or Institute.

#### THE REVIEW PROCESS

##### Panel members

4. The following members of the Review Panel (appointed by the Vice-Principal, Teaching and Learning on behalf of Senate) conducted the review over one day on 19 March 2014, with a pre-meeting on the afternoon of 18 March 2014 to discuss the evidence submitted for the review and to determine lines of enquiry:

Professor Susan Dilly	Vice-Principal Teaching and Learning (Chair)
Dr Madeleine Davis	Deputy Dean for Taught Programmes, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences [9-11am only]
Professor Omar Garcia	Dean for Taught Programmes, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr Theo Kreouzis	Director of Taught Programmes, School of Physics and Astronomy, Faculty of Science and Engineering
Gaby Dale Leal	Vice-President Education, Queen Mary Students' Union
Professor Mike Watkinson	Deputy Dean for Research, Faculty of Science and Engineering, and member of the QMUL Doctoral College Management Team

The two external members of the Panel were:

Professor Rosa Greaves	Professor of European Commercial Law, School of Law, University of Glasgow
Professor Bernard Ryan	Professor of Migration Law, School of Law, University of Leicester

The Secretary to the review was Sian Marshall, Academic Registry and Council Secretariat. Mary Childs, Assistant Academic Registrar (Academic Standards and Quality) was also in attendance.

### **Review material**

5. The Review Panel received a copy of the School's Self-Evaluation Document (SED), which had been produced by the School in accordance with the QMUL guidance informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's guidelines. A list of the additional briefing material provided to support the SED is provided in annexe A to the report.
6. Students on the LLM Paris and distance learning programmes were invited to complete an online questionnaire to gather student views on a number of issues relating to teaching and learning in advance of the review. A summary of the data and comments from the anonymous questionnaires was made available to the Panel.

### **Meetings with staff and students**

7. During the review the Panel met in discussion with the following members of the School's staff:

#### *Department of Law*

- Prof Valsamis Mitsilegas, Head of the Department of Law
- Ms Merris Amos, Director of Taught Programmes
- Professor Lizzie Barmes, Professor of Labour Law, mentor, Chair of Department Equality and Diversity Committee
- Mr Nick Bernard, Senior Lecturer in EU Law, responsible for GTAs
- Ms Margaret Cunningham, Teaching Fellow, Deputy Chair of the SEB, responsible for Extenuating Circumstances
- Dr Maks Del Mar, Senior Lecturer in Law and Philosophy
- Dr Angelos Dimopoulos, Lecturer in Law, new member of staff
- Ms Nerys Evans, Department Manager
- Professor Malgosia Fitzmaurice, Professor of Public International Law, mentor
- Dr Ruth Fletcher, Senior Lecturer in Medical Law, new member of staff
- Mr Jonathan Griffiths, LLM Co-Director
- Aleksandra Jordanoska, Teaching Assistant
- Ms Amber Marks, Lecturer in Criminal Law and Evidence, Chair of the SEB

- Dr Violeta Moreno-Lax, Lecturer in Law, responsible for BA Law and Politics
- Professor Richard Nobles, Professor of Law, Director of Graduate Studies
- Ms Christina Perry, Teaching Fellow, responsible for Careers
- Miss Julie Pinborough, Director of the Legal Advice Centre
- Mr Rupert Seal, Senior Tutor, Teaching Fellow
- Ms Victoria Wells, UG Exams & Quality Assurance Administrator
- Professor William Wilson, Professor of Criminal Law, Dean for the External LLM Programme

*Centre for Commercial Law Studies*

- Professor Spyros Maniatis, Head of CCLS
- Dr Debbie De Girolamo, Director, PGDips in International Mediation and International Dispute Resolution (Mediation)
- Ms Anna Denby, Deputy Centre Manager, probation adviser
- Dr Gail Evans, IP Programmes
- Anne Flanagan, LLM Co-Director
- Professor Julia Hornle, Director of Taught Programmes
- Dr Tina Loverdou, new member of staff
- Professor Duncan Matthews, Professor of Intellectual Property Law
- Professor Loukas Mistelis, mentor
- Ms Swee Ng, Centre Manager
- Professor Philip Rawlings, Professor of Commercial Law, PGR students
- Professor Rodrigo Olivares-Caminal, Co-Director, LLM Law & Economics and MSc in Law & Finance (joint appointment with School of Economics and Finance)
- Professor Chris Reed, mentor
- Dr Costanza Russo, Director, LLM in International Banking and Finance in Paris, new member of staff
- Dr Noam Shemtov, Leverhulme Lecturer in Computer and Communications Law, IP Programmes and Trademark Law
- Mr Gareth Skehan, PhD Assistant Administrator
- Ms Sue Sullivan, LLM Programme Co-ordinator
- Dr Leon Vinokur, Co-Director, LLM Law & Economics and MSc in Law & Finance (joint appointment with School of Economics and Finance)
- Ms Samantha Webb, LLM Paris Administrator

8. The Panel also met with a number of undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research students, in an informal meeting over lunch, and in formal sessions.

## **THE SCHOOL CONTEXT**

9. The School of Law comprises the Department of Law and the Centre for Commercial Law Studies (CCLS). They are separate budget centres and each has its own Head. The Department of Law is based on the Mile End campus and CCLS at Lincoln's Inn Fields.
10. A list of the programmes offered by the School in 2013-14 is shown in annexe B to the report. The School offered six undergraduate programmes, including one joint programme for which the School was the lead, and eight postgraduate programmes, including two joint programmes for which the School was the lead and an MA by Research. The School also offered a doctoral degree programme and was the lead College for the University of London External LLM Programme taught in collaboration with the University of London International Programmes and UCL.
11. The student body had expanded across all levels since the last review in 2008. At the time of the review there were 284 undergraduate, 857 postgraduate taught and 20 research

students.

12. Since the last Periodic Review of the School in 2008, the School had reviewed and implemented changes to its governance structures in order to ensure cohesion and collaborative working. At undergraduate level, the School had increased its entry requirements, its student numbers and its standing in various league tables. At postgraduate level, there had been significant growth in the size of the London LLM programme and a range of new programmes had been introduced, including the Paris LLM, interdisciplinary programmes in Law and Finance and Law and Economics, and new LLM specialisations.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL PROVISION**

13. The Panel discussed with the Head of the Department of Law and the Head of CCLS and other staff the School's structures for providing leadership and management for its taught and research degree programmes, and its committee and reporting structures.
14. The management and delivery of the undergraduate programmes in the School and the MA by Research was the responsibility of the Department of Law. The management and delivery of postgraduate taught programmes, with the exception of the London LLM programme and the MA by Research, was the responsibility of CCLS. The Department of Law and CCLS shared responsibility for the management and delivery of the London LLM and the PhD programme.
15. Joint appointments with the Department of Law and CCLS were held by a small number of Professional Services and Support staff in the School, including staff responsible for the LLM and PhD programmes. Academic staff were employed by the Department of Law or CCLS depending on the location of their subject specialism within School Research Centres or Institutes. Joint academic staff appointments were used only occasionally.
16. The Department of Law and CCLS each convened a Teaching and Learning Committee to oversee the programmes for which they were responsible. The School of Law Teaching and Learning Committee had oversight of the jointly-delivered London LLM programme. The School of Law Graduate Studies Board was responsible for all matters related to PGR study and was co-chaired by the Directors of Graduate Studies for the Department of Law and CCLS.
17. The Department of Law and CCLS each convened a Management Board, which reported to the School of Law Steering Committee. The Steering Committee had overall oversight of all matters related to teaching and research and had a particular remit in ensuring effective communication across the School, coordination of joint activities and consideration of important cross-School issues.
18. The Head of the Department of Law and the Head of CCLS acknowledged that the School governance structure was more complex than in other Schools but, in practice, it operated effectively and ensured appropriate joint-working by staff holding management roles in the two parts of the School. The Panel was content with the School's organisational structures for the oversight and management of educational provision at all levels.

## **ADMISSIONS**

19. At undergraduate level, the Department of Law had successfully met or exceeded admissions targets set by QMUL in recent years. This has been achieved in the context of increasing A-level entry requirements to A\*AA for the LLB programme and AAA for the BA Law and Politics. The Head of the Department of Law acknowledged that it had been, and

would remain, a key challenge for the Department to maintain the quality of both the student cohort and the student experience whilst increasing student numbers.

20. The recruitment of associate students was largely limited to semester 1 in the Department of Law due to the predominance of year long undergraduate modules. It was not possible at present for associate students to join modules in semester 2 due to the requirement for pre-requisite knowledge. The Department acknowledged the need to consider changes to teaching delivery, module structure and timing to recruit additional associate students.
21. The School of Law had expanded its taught postgraduate student numbers considerably since the last review through existing programmes and the introduction of a range of new programmes. There were currently 851 taught postgraduate students, of which 652 were registered on the LLM programme. The process for admission to the London LLM programme had recently been revised to require applicants to apply for individual LLM specialisations to better manage demand and enable the School to select the best students within particular specialisms.
22. The Department of Law offered twelve bursaries to undergraduate students per year of around £1000 per student; the amount was tailored to the specific needs of the student. The School of Law offered twelve fee waiver scholarships to students on the LLM programme. CCLS offered two or three scholarships or bursaries to students on each of the LLM and MSc programmes in CCLS. Some of the scholarships were offered through links with universities in developing countries and aimed to support the development of legal skills and knowledge in those countries.
23. The Department of Law undertook a range of outreach activities including taster days and talks for secondary school pupils. It was also working with Education Liaison to develop innovative secondary school engagement activities such as the Young Jurors pilot project, which aimed to provide local children and young people with a greater understanding of the law, whilst also demystifying access to higher education. The Department also planned to apply to participate in the Pathways to Law programme, run by the Sutton Trust, which aimed to encourage state school students with no previous family experience of higher education into a career in law.

## **AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

24. Aims and learning outcomes were published in student handbooks, on QMplus and in information provided to students at induction. Staff were encouraged to outline the aims and objectives of teaching at the beginning of each class. The School acknowledged that further work was needed to ensure learning outcomes were clearly and consistently presented to students on QMplus and at the start of teaching.
25. Programme and module learning outcomes were aligned to the core learning aims of the School, outlined in the Learning and Teaching Strategy and the College Statement of Graduate Attributes, and to the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Law and the requirements of the professional bodies for a qualifying law degree and other accreditation providers. The appropriateness of learning outcomes was considered by the relevant Teaching and Learning Committees.

## **CURRICULA AND ASSESSMENT**

### **Management of Curricula**

26. The Department of Law was in the process of reviewing the first year undergraduate curriculum with a view to restructuring the programme to include a new introductory

module. The module would provide a foundation in legal skills and a focus on national, international and global law that would enable students to study a range of elective modules in the second and third years. It was also intended that the Department would increase its offering of 15 credit, single semester modules that would be offered to all students but particularly associate students.

27. Since the last Periodic Review the School had reviewed and developed its portfolio of postgraduate taught programmes. New LLM specialisations had been introduced in Energy and Natural Resources Law, Insurance Law, Shipping Law, Environmental Law and Immigration Law, which meant that the School now offered 21 LLM specialisations. CCLS had introduced new interdisciplinary programmes, jointly delivered with the School of Economics and Finance; the LLM in Law and Economics and the MSc in Law and Finance. The LLM delivered in Paris had also been introduced. To accommodate this growth at taught postgraduate level, CCLS has expanded its facilities at the Lincoln's Inn Fields location. The Head of CCLS acknowledged the need to increase the number of academic and administrative staff to support the expansion of student numbers and to ensure a positive student experience.
28. The London LLM programme was delivered jointly by the Department of Law and CCLS; modules were taught by staff according to their subject areas and teaching could take place at the Mile End, Charterhouse Square or Lincoln's Inn Fields campus depending on where staff were based and the availability of teaching rooms. The programme was branded as a School of Law programme and it was perceived that students were unaware of the difference between the Department of Law and CCLS.
29. The Panel explored the mechanisms for managing fluctuating demand for modules. The London LLM programme offered students the choice of 130 specialist law modules. Student numbers varied significantly across modules, with over 100 students on some modules and as little as three on others. In the main, modules tended to have fewer than 30 students. The School did not guarantee that all modules would run unless there was sufficient demand but gave a commitment to running all advertised modules, where possible.
30. The Panel **commended** the breadth of programmes and modules offered at postgraduate level and the School's willingness to offer modules with small numbers, if necessary to a programme.

### **Joint Programmes**

31. The School recognised the importance of collaboration with other disciplines. The undergraduate programme delivered jointly with the School of Politics and International Relations was coordinated by the programme lead from the Department of Law to ensure appropriate organisation, timetabling and management of the programme. The joint postgraduate taught programmes with the School of Economics and Finance were coordinated by the joint programme leads who held joint appointments with CCLS and the School of Economics and Finance.

### **Partnership Provision**

32. A key priority for the School was the internationalisation of the curriculum at all levels, which included the development of partnerships with high quality academic institutions. At undergraduate level, the Department of Law offered students the opportunity to study abroad as part of the LLB English and European Law. In 2014-15, the Department would launch the LLB with a Year in Hong Kong, where two students would spend a year studying at Hong Kong University. The Department of Law would also be exploring opportunities for further programmes involving study in Canada and China.



33. A challenge for CCLS and the School, identified by the Head of CCLS, was maintaining a competitive edge over other University of London Law Schools. This would be achieved in part by positioning CCLS as a global provider of legal education. The Paris LLM programme was based at the University of London Institute in Paris and entirely taught by Queen Mary staff. The delivery of the programme was through block teaching to enable staff to teach on both the London and Paris LLMs. The Paris LLM currently offered a limited number of specialisations, which CCLS intended to increase in future. CCLS also intended to expand student numbers in Paris to 150, primarily through the part time mode of study.
34. CCLS was exploring a wide range of opportunities for international collaboration. This included the development of a dual degree programme with Singapore Management University, an LLM in International Shipping Law to be delivered in Greece, and collaboration with a number of Chinese universities.
35. QMUL was the lead College for the University of London Postgraduate Laws programme delivered through distance learning by the University of London International Programmes, the Department of Law at QMUL and UCL. The programme was overseen by a Management Committee co-chaired by the Head of the Department of Law at QMUL and the Dean of UCL Laws, which reported to the School of Law Steering Committee. QMUL was responsible for the quality assurance of the programme. A recent change to the governance of the programme had resulted in the appointment of a Dean for the programme who would be responsible for having oversight of the programme and managing the Programme Director. The post would be held by Professor William Wilson at QMUL in the first instance.
36. The Panel **commended** the School for its approach to curriculum development and enhancement. In particular the Panel **commended** the School's clear vision for internationalisation of its programme portfolio and strategies for the development of future partnerships.

## Assessment and Feedback

### Undergraduate

37. The Department of Law acknowledged that there was a demonstrable need for undergraduate assessment and feedback mechanisms to be reviewed and diversified. NSS results had highlighted this as an ongoing issue with the assessment and feedback question consistently receiving lower scores (around 66 to 69 per cent satisfaction between 2010 and 2013).
38. All compulsory undergraduate modules were assessed by 100 per cent closed book examination. There was more variation in assessment methods for elective modules, with some assessed entirely by coursework. A requirement for new modules to include alternative assessment methods had been introduced by the Department Teaching and Learning Committee. The Department had held an away day in September where assessment methods were extensively discussed. There was limited support from module leads to introduce different assessments due to the burden of marking and the perceived lack of recognition for the additional time that marking involved.
39. In the Panel's meetings, UG students were dissatisfied with the use of examinations as the primary method of assessment, noting that they were under a great deal of pressure to perform well and due to the volume of examination. Students also expressed concern that examinations did not reflect their whole academic year's performance or allow them to demonstrate their skills and knowledge that would be used in the workplace.
40. The Panel **recommended** that the School should diversify assessment methods at undergraduate level to reduce the reliance on closed book exams.

41. The Panel explored the mechanisms for providing feedback to undergraduate students, noting that the Department of Law received module evaluation scores lower than the HSS Faculty average for the statements on feedback and marking criteria in 2011-12 and 2012-13. The Department of Law had a policy of returning feedback within two weeks and provided students with at least two opportunities for formative assessment and feedback for every module. First year students also sat mid-sessional examinations for which feedback was provided. The Department's focus was on providing feedback on formative assessment as a learning opportunity whereas examinations were considered a mechanism for assessing learning.
42. The Department perceived that students did not take seriously or utilise effectively the opportunities for formative feedback and that students did not always read the written comments provided to them using the Data Management System (DMS). The Department endeavoured to signpost opportunities for feed forward, in addition to feedback, and had introduced scheduled feedback weeks in the timetable. Marking criteria were published in student handbooks and was applicable to both formative and summative assessment.
43. In the Panel's meetings, UG students commented that the quality and amount of feedback on formative assessments was variable and they did not always feel able to approach staff for additional or more detailed feedback. Students expressed concern that the feedback received was not always useful or did not enable them to better prepare for examinations. Students felt that feedback on examinations should be provided.
44. The Panel **recommended** that the School should review the nature, timing and amount of formative assessment.
45. The Panel explored the use of the full range of marks in assessing students. The Department of Law acknowledged that the full range of marks was not currently used with the top marks awarded in the low 70s. The Department Teaching and Learning Committee had approved new guidance, which encouraged the use of differentiated criteria for marks above 70, and the Head of Department would be writing to all staff to ensure implementation.
46. The Panel noted that using a limited range of marks would impact negatively on student employability and eligibility for further study. The Panel therefore **recommended** that the School should review marking criteria at undergraduate level and guidance to staff to ensure the full range of marks is used. This should include the development of clearly differentiated marking criteria at the top end of the scale. The new marking scheme should be submitted at the same time as the 12 month progress report.
47. The Panel explored the requirement in the QMUL Academic Regulations that all modules assessed wholly or partly by means of examinations taken in a given developmental year must be passed in one sitting (subject to the provisions relating to referrals and first sits). It was acknowledged that the regulation had previously been included in the University of London regulations, which no longer applied, and it had been argued that Law students should be capable of passing all examinations in one sitting if they were to practise as a lawyer. The regulation was not a requirement of the qualifying law degree or professional body.
48. In the Panel's meetings, UG students had expressed dissatisfaction that they could be required to resit all modules at an additional cost of £9,000 if they failed only one module.
49. The Panel **recommended** that the School should review the requirement that students must take and pass all examinations in one sitting at undergraduate level.

## Postgraduate

50. At postgraduate level, assessment methods varied across the different programmes with more variation in assessment for programmes with smaller student cohorts. The London LLM was primarily assessed by examination and feedback was given on formative assessment, including examination style questions and mock examination papers. Whilst it was a priority for CCLS to review the delivery and assessment of the London LLM to ensure greater flexibility for students, it was noted that students often did not opt for the single semester modules that were typically assessed by coursework. It was also acknowledged that, for a large cohort, examinations were the most effective way to ensure robust assessment.
51. In the Panel's meetings, PGT students commented that there were limited opportunities for feedback during the programme, which meant they could be uncertain that their learning mechanisms were effective.
52. The Panel explored the rationale for convening a separate Subject Examination Board (SEB) for each programme, which meant there were ten different SEBs reporting to the PG Law Degree Examination Board. The Head of CCLS acknowledged that the different programmes had been developed in parallel and there was no longer a clear rationale for maintaining the current SEB structure.
53. The Panel noted that the operation of a large number of SEBs was not an efficient use of resources and meant that it was not possible to take an overview of assessment processes in operation and the comparative academic standards across the different programmes. The Panel therefore **recommended** that the School should reduce the number of Subject Examination Boards at postgraduate level.

## QUALITY OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### Teaching

54. In the Department of Law, undergraduate teaching was undertaken by staff at all levels. First year core modules were taught by professors, teaching fellows and junior academic staff. Optional modules in the second and third years were taught by academic staff within their research areas and made use of journal papers and books published by Department academic staff. Tutorials were taught by academic staff, Teaching Associates (TAs) and Graduate Teaching Associates.
55. In the Panel's meetings, UG students commented on the excellent teaching provided by academic staff and TAs who were approachable and enthusiastic.
56. In CCLS, the involvement of senior legal practitioners brought relevant experience of legal practice and the wider context of law to the curriculum and teaching provided. Their involvement ranged from occasional guest lectures to the provision of the large majority of teaching for a given module. All modules were overseen by a full time member of academic staff as module lead with responsibility for the syllabus and assessment. The module lead, or a TA on their behalf, attended every teaching session provided by practitioners to bring coherence and continuity to the module. For the LLM programme, where this practice was most common, the Co-Director acted as a mentor to practitioners providing significant amounts of teaching to ensure awareness of QMUL policies and practices.
57. In the Panel's meetings, PGT students praised the involvement of practitioners and guest lecturers in their modules and the excellent real-world teaching provided.

58. The Panel **commended** the School for the clear evidence of teaching excellence at all levels.
59. The team teaching model used in CCLS meant that all staff were observed and provided with feedback on their teaching on a regular basis. It was felt that this system was effective and enabled close-knit relationships to form between staff, which had a positive impact on teaching.
60. The Panel **commended** the effective opportunities for informal peer review and feedback for staff that the team teaching model provided in the Centre for Commercial Law Studies.

### **Engagement with Research**

61. In the Panel's meetings, UG and PGT students commented that they had few opportunities for involvement in research apart from undertaking a dissertation or project.
62. The Panel **recommended** that the School should increase the opportunities for UG and PGT students to engage with the excellent research that takes place in the School, for example through the Q Researcher scheme, in order to develop some research skills before undertaking an assessed research project or dissertation.

### **Student support arrangements**

63. The following arrangements for student support were noted during the review:
  - UG and P G induction programmes, including one-to-one telephone inductions for distance learning students;
  - the Academic Adviser scheme for all UG students;
  - the UG student buddy scheme;
  - the Department of Law Disability Coordinator;
  - the CCLS Critical Thinking and Writing programme.
64. A highlight of the student support mechanisms within CCLS was the two week LLM induction programme that provided students with a range of information about the different specialisms offered, teaching and assessment methods, social and academic events, Library resources and QMUL facilities and services. The induction programme also included the opportunity for students to attend a free residential stay at Cumberland Lodge where they met other students, staff and students from the previous LLM cohort.
65. Maintaining and enhancing student support was a key priority for the Department of Law. Student progress and attendance at tutorials was monitored using the Student Data Management System, which flagged up persistent non-attendance or poor performance to the Academic Adviser and administrative staff. Students could then be contacted and referred to other QMUL support services as necessary.
66. The Panel **commended** the School's holistic approach to supporting students on taught programmes. In particular the Panel **commended**:
  - the comprehensive two week LLM induction programme involving students from the previous cohort;
  - the mechanisms for monitoring student progress, and identifying and addressing student disengagement using the Student Data Management System.
67. The Department operated an Academic Adviser scheme. Also, each undergraduate programme was assigned a member of academic staff who was responsible for the programme and who students could approach with any issues in addition to their Academic Adviser. The Department acknowledged that the NSS score for the question on academic

support had dropped from 80 per cent in 2012 to 76 per cent in 2013. This was attributed to student dissatisfaction with their assessment results.

68. In the Panel's meetings, UG students commented that they had only infrequently or never met with their Academic Advisers. Students were reluctant to contact advisers unless for a reference given that they had not got to know or developed a relationship with them. On a number of occasions students reported receiving no response when they had contacted their Academic Advisers. Students also commented on the availability and usefulness of published office hours if they had taken up the opportunity.
69. CCLS no longer operated a Personal Tutor system as take up from PGT students of appointments with Personal Tutors had been very low. Students could speak to administrative staff as the first point of contact regarding academic and pastoral issues but also module leads, programme directors and lecturers and this was publicised during induction. For distance learning programmes, academic and pastoral support was the responsibility of the programme director who would discuss any issues with students both online or by telephone. The distance learning programmes included many interactive sessions, which meant that engagement could be monitored.
70. The Panel **recommended** that the School should ensure that College policy is uniformly followed in both parts of the School in relation to student advising. The Academic Advisor system for undergraduate students should be reviewed, and contact time with students should be formalised. The Panel observed that all new students should meet with their Academic Adviser in week 1 of their first semester.
71. In the Panel's meetings, PGT students commented that the Critical Thinking and Writing programme did not meet their expectations as the focus was very general and did not provide opportunities for feedback on their academic writing.

### **Student Societies**

72. The Department of Law had a number of student societies including the Student Law Society and the Student Bar Society. The Department met regularly with student societies to discuss timetabling of activities and room bookings and to coordinate contacting law firms. The Department provided financial support for certain projects, such as projects that promoted student employability.
73. CCLS had a Postgraduate Law Society, which organised social, sporting and charitable events that students could attend as a cohort and a student newsletter that enabled students to improve their employability skills. The society was supported by the LLM Co-Director in CCLS who coordinated the handover of the society at the start of each academic year and provided continuity between different student cohorts.
74. The Panel **commended** the support provided by the School for student societies, which ensures that they are successfully run and provide students with opportunities to develop employability skills and a cohort identity.

### **Careers and Employability**

75. Promoting and developing skills and employability amongst students was a key priority for the School of Law; this was taken forward via the School Careers and Employability Strategy and action plan. The School provided financial support for a dedicated Careers Consultant post.
76. The Department of Law had piloted and embedded careers lectures in welcome week for first and second year students, senior status students and international students, which were well attended and received positive feedback from students. During the academic

year, students were offered a programme of activities including mock interviews with external partners, CV, interview and online test workshops, and information about the Graduate Diploma in Law and the Legal Practice Course, in addition to careers talks. There were specific programmes and events aimed at supporting black and minority ethnic student employability. Guidance on alternative careers was also provided to students through a speed meet event and the Department would be introducing an alternative careers lecture for third year students in 2014-15.

77. CCLS provided students with a wide range of careers and employability activities including weekly seminars and events, and essay competitions sponsored by law firms. Internships were offered to students at the end of their programme; previous students had undertaken internships in France and Hong Kong, in addition to the UK. Due to the large international student cohort, careers guidance took account of whether students would be eligible to work in the UK and their plans to return to their home country following graduation.
78. In the Panel's meetings, UG and PGT students praised the range of careers and employability activities, advice and events provided by the School of Law, which were communicated to students in weekly emails.
79. The School's Legal Advice Centre offered UG students the opportunity to work alongside solicitors from the City to provide free legal advice to the local community. Students gained experience of applying their legal knowledge in a practical context, including interviewing clients and researching cases. Students were overseen by a solicitor who reviewed letters to clients before they were sent out. The Head of the Department of Law acknowledged that current resources did not allow the work of the Legal Advice Centre to be embedded in the UG curriculum but this was a future priority.
80. Postgraduate students also had the opportunity to work with the Legal Advice Centre, providing free legal advice, workshops and resources to tech start-up companies and entrepreneurs through qLegal.
81. The Panel **commended** the wealth of opportunities provided for careers advice and developing employability skills. In particular the Panel **commended**:
  - the weekly emails sent to UG and PGT students with details of careers advice and activities;
  - the work of the Legal Advice Centre, the opportunities it offers students to gain practical experience and to enhance legal skills, and its work with the local community;
  - the internships organised for PGT students at the end of their programme.

### **Doctoral training**

82. The School of Law Graduate Studies Board (GSB), co-chaired by the Directors of Graduate Studies for the Department of Law and CCLS, had responsibility for the oversight of research student admissions, doctoral training, and monitoring progression and completion. The School of Law Funding Committee had responsibility for the allocation of studentship funding.

### **Admissions**

83. The School of Law received a large number of applications for PhD study but, in recent years, had taken the strategic decision to slightly reduce PhD student numbers to improve quality through higher entry requirements in order to address historic progression issues. The Deputy Directors of Graduate Studies had specific responsibility for the PhD admissions process.

### **Student Funding**

84. The School of Law was able to offer a range of internally and externally funded studentships each year. The School also offered a number of Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs), which required PhD students to undertake four hours of UG teaching in the second and third year of the PhD. All GTAs were required to attend a mandatory training course with the Centre for Academic and Professional Development. They were also allocated a mentor who would be responsible for teaching observations.

### **Supervision, training and events**

85. All research students were required to attend two mandatory research methods training courses in their first year of study, one run by the School of Law and one by the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. Students were also required to attend a further School of Law mandatory research methods training course in their third year of study.
86. The School offered a regular PhD seminar series where students had the opportunity to present their research topic to other students and staff in the School and receive feedback. The aim was to enable research students to improve their presentation skills and to develop a strong research community within the School.
87. In the Panel's meetings, research students praised the enthusiasm of both academic and administrative staff within the School. They commented that the seminar series provided a valuable opportunity for gentle and safe peer review outside the supervisory system and fostered a strong sense of community and a support network amongst research students.
88. The Panel **commended** the School for developing a vibrant community of scholars. In particular the Panel **commended** the development of a supportive research environment for research students.
89. School policy required that supervisor meetings took place once per month during the first year and a minimum of three times per term in the second year and onwards. Students were expected to produce a record of meetings that was sent to the supervisor and the PhD Administrator. The Graduate Studies Board monitored the frequency of supervisor meetings and it was the responsibility of Directors of Graduate Studies to contact supervisors not achieving the required level of supervision. Academic staff were required to attend School supervisor training, which took place three times during 2013-14, in order for them to continue to be eligible to supervise new research students.
90. In the Panel's meetings, research students commented that supervisor meetings normally took place on a regular basis but that the quality and frequency of supervision could vary depending on the supervisor.
91. The Panel **recommended** that the School should ensure that College policy is uniformly followed in both parts of the School in relation to the supervision of research students. The Panel noted that this specifically related to the arrangements for first and second supervisors, and the frequency of supervision.

### **Monitoring progression and completion**

92. All PhD students were subject to a progression review at six months and were required to submit a minimum of 3000 words of writing. The supervisor was responsible for preparing a short report on the standard of the student's writing and their engagement and progress thus far. The report was considered by the Director of Graduate Studies who would then either confirm progression or set new targets for the student to meet within a three month period. Due to the early stage of the review it was considered to be unnecessary to involve external review. The School acknowledged that the progression review was not as robust as the previous mechanism that had permitted research students to upgrade from MPhil to

PhD. Until 2009-10, all research students were admitted as MPhil candidates and were upgraded to PhD following an upgrade examination.

93. The Graduate Studies Board had recently discussed the introduction of a mini-viva at eighteen months. The viva would be based on one or two thesis chapters and would be conducted by the supervisors and one other member of academic staff, with a written report provided to students. The Graduate Studies Board had also decided to introduce a mock viva for students who had or were about to submit their thesis.
94. In the Panel's meetings, research students commented that the six month progression review was not substantial and the opportunity to have a more rigorous review and viva would be welcomed.
95. The Panel **recommended** that the School should review the mechanisms for research student progression. In particular the Panel **recommended** that:
  - the School should introduce additional progression points following the formal progression review in the first year of the doctoral programme;
  - the School should ensure that at least one independent person is involved in the key progression decisions.

## **MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF STANDARDS AND QUALITY**

### **Student feedback**

96. The Panel discussed with staff the mechanisms for gathering student feedback on teaching and the learning environment. Student feedback mechanisms included:
  - the Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs), including the Law UG SSLC and SSLCs for each PGT programme;
  - the student course representative system;
  - module evaluation questionnaires;
  - analysis of the results of the National Student Survey and other student surveys;
  - informal student focus groups held every semester in CCLS;
  - informal contact between students and programme or module leads.
97. In the Department of Law, results of module evaluation questionnaires were considered by the Director of Taught Programmes, the Department Manager and the Head of Department and a report on the survey results is provided to students via the UG Law SSLC, which included a response from the Department and details of any actions to be taken. The Director of Taught Programmes was responsible for discussing any issues with the module leads and agreeing an appropriate course of action.
98. In CCLS, results of module evaluation questionnaires were considered by module leads, the Director of Taught Programmes, the Head of CCLS and the Directors of relevant specialist groups and actions were taken in response as appropriate.

### **Staff development**

#### **Induction**

99. As part of the induction process, all new academic staff met with the Head of Department of Law or CCLS, the Department or Centre Manager and a member of staff allocated as a mentor. The induction meetings were used to provide information to new staff on teaching, assessment and marking policies and practices and IT provision, including QMplus. Staff were also invited to attend the QMUL induction session.



## **Appraisal**

100. The School conducted annual staff appraisal at which the individual's workload and contribution to teaching, research and school administration were considered. The Department of Law and CCLS each took a different approach to appraisal. The School did not operate a workload model.
101. In CCLS, staff first met with their line manager(s) to discuss teaching and research activity prior to the appraisal meeting. Appraisal was conducted by the Head of CCLS and another member of staff. The line manager was not necessarily involved in appraisal given the need to share the appraisal workload amongst senior staff.
102. In the Department of Law, an informal approach to appraisal had been taken prior to the introduction of the new QMUL appraisal process in 2012-13, and appraisal had been viewed as a useful developmental tool. The new process was perceived to be much more managerial in nature and less supportive of the development needs of staff given the requirement for part of the appraisal form to be shared with Faculty Vice-Principal.
103. The Panel **recommended** that the School should ensure that College policy is uniformly followed in both parts of the School in relation to staff appraisal.

## **Peer Review**

104. The Department of Law operated a formal peer review system that required all members of academic staff to undergo peer observation of teaching on an annual basis. This included observation of a lecture, seminar or tutorial. A form was completed by the observing member of staff and a copy provided to the member of staff being reviewed. Probationary staff were also asked to write an in-depth review of their teaching.
105. CCLS did not operate a formal peer review system but instead relied on the informal opportunities for peer review and feedback provided by the team teaching model [see paragraph 59].
106. The Panel **recommended** that the School should ensure that College policy is uniformly followed in both parts of the School in relation to peer review of teaching.

## **Continuing Professional Development**

107. In line with Queen Mary policy, all new members of academic staff were required to undertake the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) offered by the Learning Institute. Staff with other teaching qualifications or sufficient previous teaching experience at other institutions would be exempted from this requirement. Attendance at PGCAP sessions could be problematic for staff due to clashes with scheduled teaching activities and the need to travel between campuses. Staff felt that they should be allocated more time to undertake the PGCAP during the first year of teaching.
108. The new points-based Continuing Professional Development scheme was praised by the School for the range of activities and sessions offered. However, it was desirable for more School activities to be included in the scheme.

## **Teaching Associates**

109. Teaching Associates were required to attend an induction session at the start of the year and received module evaluation feedback at the end of the year but had limited other opportunities for training. Teaching Associates were given feedback on their teaching as part of the team teaching model in CCLS.

110. The Panel **recommended** that the School should work with the Centre for Academic and Professional Development to introduce a programme of training and professional development opportunities for Teaching Associates.

## **LEARNING RESOURCES**

### **Space**

111. The School recent expansion of the facilities at the Lincoln's Inn Fields campus had improved the teaching and staff facilities but there was still limited space for student common areas. Large group teaching and lectures normally took place at Charterhouse Square due to the limit availability of large teaching rooms at Lincoln's Inn Fields.

### **Library Provision**

112. The School provided students with access to a wide range of Library print and online resources. Since the last review, the School had expanded access to online journals and print materials including monographs. PGT students were encouraged to make use of the Library at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies in addition to QMUL Library facilities.
113. The School had built strong relationships with the Library. Library staff spent time at Lincoln's Inn Fields to assist students with access to online resources and a representative attended SSLC meetings to discuss any issues with student representatives. For distance learning programmes that offered a residential weekend, a Library representative attended to provide information and support with access to Library resources.
114. In the Panel's meetings, PGT students were satisfied with the availability of learning resources to ensure success in their studies but commented that they had expected longer Library opening hours based on their experiences at other institutions. Students would like Mile End Library to open before 1pm on the weekend or 24 hour opening.

### **Electronic Learning Resources**

115. The School used QMplus for all modules but acknowledged there was some variability in its use and the need to standardise usage and share good practice amongst staff. CCLS had appointed a team of PhD students to review all QMplus pages to ensure consistent use.
116. Q Review was used to record some lectures in the School. Uptake was dependent on the location of teaching, size of classes and whether staff were prepared to be recorded. CCLS would be working with colleagues to increase uptake as a result of feedback from the SSLCs.

## **ACTION**

117. The School is asked to provide to ARCS an action plan addressing the Panel's recommendations three months after receipt of the report, and a twelve month Progress Report in May 2015. The Progress Report is submitted to Senate.

## COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

118. The Panel's commendations and recommendations are summarised below.

### Commendations

#### Supporting Students

119. The Panel commends the School's holistic approach to supporting students on taught programmes. In particular the Panel commends:
- the comprehensive two week LLM induction programme involving students from the previous cohort;
  - the support provided by the School for student societies, which ensures that they are successfully run and provide students with opportunities to develop employability skills and a cohort identity;
  - the mechanisms for monitoring student progress, and identifying and addressing student disengagement using the Student Data Management System.

#### Curriculum Development

120. The Panel commends the School for its approach to curriculum development and enhancement. In particular the Panel commends:
- the clear evidence of teaching excellence at all levels;
  - the breadth of programmes and modules offered at postgraduate level and the School's willingness to offer modules with small numbers, if necessary to a programme;
  - the School's clear vision for internationalisation of its programme portfolio and strategies for the development of future partnerships.

#### Employability

121. The Panel commends the wealth of opportunities provided for careers advice and developing employability skills. In particular the Panel commends:
- the weekly emails sent to UG and PGT students with details of careers advice and activities;
  - the work of the Legal Advice Centre, the opportunities it offers students to gain practical experience and to enhance legal skills, and its work with the local community;
  - the internships organised for PGT students at the end of their programme.

#### School Community

122. The Panel commends the School for developing a vibrant community of scholars. In particular the Panel commends:
- the development of a supportive research environment for research students;
  - the effective opportunities for informal peer review and feedback for staff that the team teaching model provides in the Centre for Commercial Law Studies.

## Recommendations

### Engagement with Research

123. The Panel recommends that the School should increase the opportunities for UG and PGT students to engage with the excellent research that takes place in the School, for example through the Q Researcher scheme, in order to develop some research skills before undertaking an assessed research project or dissertation.

### Assessment

124. The Panel recommends that the School review the following assessment policies and practices at undergraduate level:
- the School should diversify assessment methods at undergraduate level to reduce the reliance on closed book exams;
  - the School should review the nature, timing and amount of formative assessment;
  - the School should review marking criteria at undergraduate level and guidance to staff to ensure the full range of marks is used. This should include the development of clearly differentiated marking criteria at the top end of the scale;
  - the School should review the requirement that students must take and pass all examinations in one sitting at undergraduate level;
  - the School should reduce the number of Subject Examination Boards at postgraduate level.

### TA Training

125. The Panel recommends that the School should work with the Centre for Academic and Professional Development to introduce a programme of training and professional development opportunities for Teaching Associates.

### College Policy

126. The Panel recommends that the School should ensure that College policy is uniformly followed in both parts of the School in relation to staff appraisal, supervision of research students, peer review of teaching and student advising. The Academic Advisor system for undergraduate students should be reviewed, and contact time with students should be formalised.

### PhD Progression

127. The Panel recommends that the School should review the mechanisms for research student progression. In particular the Panel recommends that:
- the School should introduce additional progression points following the formal progression review in the first year of the doctoral programme;
  - the School should ensure that at least one independent person is involved in the key progression decisions.

### Briefing material provided for the review of the School of Law

The Review Panel received a copy of the School's Self-Evaluation Document (SED), produced by the School in accordance with QMUL guidance informed by the Quality Assurance Agency's guidelines. The briefing material to support the SED comprised the following information:

Appendix	Title
Appendix 1: Governance	1.0 Overview School of Law Programmes (Undergraduate and Postgraduate) 1.1 College Strategic Plan 2010-2015 1.2 UG Teaching and Learning Committee 1.3 Department of Law Committee Structure 1.4 CCLS Committees and Staff List 1.5 CCLS Learning Teaching Assessment Strategy 2012-2015 1.6 Module Developer Guideline/Procedure Flow/Assessment Models 1.7 CCLS Teaching and Learning Committees 2011 to 2013 1.8 School of Law Teaching and Learning Committees 2011 to 2013 1.9 Research Centre
Appendix 2: UG	2.1 UG Staff Student Liaison Committee 2.2 Board of Examiners meetings 2.3 Department Staff meeting minutes 2.4 Equality and Diversity Committee 2.5 External Relations Committee 2.6 Academic Regulations 2013-14 2.7 Current External Examiners 2.8 UG External Examiners Report 2.9 Staff Handbook 2013-14 2.10 TA Handbook 2013-14 2.11 First Year Student Handbook 2013-14 2.12 Returning Student Handbook 2013-14 2.13 Module Directory 2013-14 2.14 Year Abroad Information for Law Students 2012-13 2.15 UG Programme Specifications 2.16 LLB Module Development Procedural Flow Chart 2.17 Welcome Week Timetable 2.18 NSS Reports 2012-13 2.19 Department Student Survey Overview 2012-13 2.20 Department Student Survey Questions 2.21 Sample of results of department student survey (2012/13) 2.22 The Sunday Times University Guide 2014 2.23 The Guardian University Guide 2014 2.24 Key Academic Roles 2.25 Staff List 2.26 Staff Seminar 2013/14 2.27 Additional Staff Seminar 2014 2.28 Staff Induction 2.29 Careers and Employability plan to 2015
Appendix 3: PGT	3.1 CCLS Centre Management Board 3.2 Law Steering Group 3.3 Development, Intellectual Property and IT (DIPIT) 3.4 European Banking and Finance (EBF) 3.5 External Relations and Marketing (ERMARC) 3.6 International Commercial Law and Tax (ICLAT) 3.7 CCLS Staff meeting

	<p>3.8 Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PGTE)  3.9 Module Evaluation 2012-13  3.10 Programme Specifications  3.11 Sample of Programme Amendments/Module Proposals/Amendments  3.12 Staff Students Liaison Committee (SSLC) Minutes  3.13 Student Handbooks and Module Descriptions  3.14 LLM Dissertation Supervisory Guidance Outline  3.15 LLM Induction Materials  3.16 LLM External Examiners Reports  3.17 LLM Paris Programme Specification  3.18 LLM Paris SSLC Minutes 2013  3.19 LLM Paris Handbook and Module Descriptions  3.20 LLM Paris Induction Materials  3.21 External Examiners Report  3.22 Programme Specifications  3.23 SSLC Minutes  3.24 Student Handbooks and Module Descriptions  3.25 Induction Materials  3.26 Joint External Examiners Reports  3.27 Diploma in International Commercial Arbitration  3.28 Diploma in International Mediation  3.29 DL Arbitration and Mediation Shared Module Outline  3.30 DL Computer and Communications Law  3.31 Programme Related documents  3.32 SSLC Minutes  3.33 Module Information  3.34 External Examiners Reports  3.35 Programme Specifications  3.36 Staff Student Liaison Committee Minutes</p>
Appendix 4: PHD	<p>4.1 One/Two/Three Year Research Methods Seminars 2010 - 2013  4.2 PhD Conference  4.3 PhD Handbook  4.4 PhD induction agenda  4.5 Library Induction  4.6 PhD Seminar Series  4.7 PhD Taught Element Lists  4.8 Research Methodology Course – IALS  4.9 Supervisors training  4.10 Example Department of Law supervision status report  4.11 Graduate Studies Board</p>
Review Documents	<p>Report of the QMUL Internal Review of the School of Law 2008  School Action Plan in response to the 2008 internal review</p>
Research Student Data	<p>PGR Student Data  PRES 2013 School Response</p>
Taught Programmes Data	<p>NSS Results 2011-12 to 2013-14  PTES Results 2012-13  UG Final Award Statistics 2010-11 to 2012-13  UG and PGT Enrolment Data 2010-11 to 2012-13  First Degree Completions 2011-12 to 2012-13  PGT Completions 2010-11 to 2012-13  UG Progression Statistics 2007-08 to 2012-13  First Degree Classifications by HEFCE Widening Participation Indicators 2010-11 to 2012-13</p>
UG and PGT programmes	<p>External Examiners' Reports  Module Evaluation results 2011-12 and 2012-13</p>
UG programmes	<p>Key Information Set data</p>

UG and PGT programmes	Programme specifications
Collaborative Documents	Joint PG Laws Periodic Programme Review report 2010 Joint PG Laws Periodic Programme Review response 2010 Joint PG Laws PPR Follow Up Review Report 2012 Joint PG Laws PPR Follow Up Review Report Response 2012 Memorandum of Agreement with Beijing Foreign Studies University Memorandum of Agreement with Hong Kong University Memorandum of Agreement with the University of London Memorandum of Understanding with Universidad Gabriela Mistral

## Programmes of study offered by the School of Law in 2013-14

### Taught Programmes

#### Taught undergraduate programmes

- LLB FT Law
- LLB FT Law Senior Status
- LLB FT English and European Law

#### Taught undergraduate joint programmes<sup>1</sup>

- BA FT Law and Politics (non-qualifying law degree)

#### Taught postgraduate programmes

- London LLM Programme (with the Department of Law)
- Paris LLM Programme
- Distance Learning in Computer & Communications Law
- MSc in the Management of Intellectual Property Programme
- PG Certificate in Intellectual Property Programme
- PG Certificate in Trade Mark Law Programme
- LLM in Law & Economics (joint with the School of Economics and Finance)
- MSc in Law & Finance (joint with the School of Economics and Finance)
- PG Diploma in International Dispute Resolution (Mediation and Arbitration)

#### Taught postgraduate joint programmes<sup>2</sup>

- LLM in Law & Economics (joint with the School of Economics and Finance)
- MSc in Law & Finance (joint with the School of Economics and Finance)

#### Collaborative postgraduate programmes<sup>3</sup>

- University of London External LLM Programme

### Research Degree Programmes

Ph.D. (3-4 years)

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<sup>1</sup> The School of Law is the lead School for the joint UG taught programme.

<sup>2</sup> The School of Law is the lead School for the joint PGT programmes.

<sup>3</sup> The School of Law is the lead College for the programme.