



Senate

Paper Title	Periodic Review Report: School of History (2014)
Outcome requested	Senate is asked to consider the report of the periodic review of the School of History held on 19 February 2014.
Points for Senate members to note and further information	<p>The report sets out the formal commendations and recommendations made by the panel for the Periodic Review of the School of History, 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>
Questions for Senate to consider	<p>Senate is asked to consider the commendations and recommendations summarised at the end of the report (para. 147).</p> <p>The recommendations to the School mainly concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to review educational governance structures (para. 25);• for UG programmes, to review intellectual progression through the curriculum and learning outcomes (para. 39), to provide training in research skills for all second year students (para. 33), and to continue efforts to encourage use of the full range of marks in assessment (para. 52);• for joint programmes to provide a guide to each joint programme (para. 92);• enhancement of employability initiatives (para. 68);• library provision - more key texts should be placed on restricted loan arrangements to enable more students to access them, and overall book budget to be reviewed (para. 140). Since the review the School has doubled its library budget, and has made special provision for new modules;• to continue to enhance doctoral training and to ensure that training and mentoring is provided to all research students who teach (para. 135) <p>There is also one recommendation to HSS to introduce a question to module evaluation about student views on the value of lecture capture (para. 79), and one recommendation to QMUL concerning a central service to scan and upload material to QMplus and to manage copyright compliance (para. 144).</p>

Regulatory/statutory reference points	The Periodic Review of teaching and learning in academic schools and institutes occurs on a six year cycle. It forms part of QMUL's Quality Framework for the assurance of academic standards and quality. Periodic Review provides the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance and enhancement processes in place for the organisation and management of teaching and learning provision.
Strategy and risk	Periodic Review supports 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 Higher Education Review processes.
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Senate to approve.
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Sponsor	Professor Susan Dilly Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning)

Report of the Periodic Review of the School of History
19 February 2014

Scope

1. The periodic review encompassed the undergraduate, postgraduate, and research degree provision offered by the School of History (hereafter referred to as 'the School').

Objectives

2. The purpose of the review was to assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance and enhancement processes in place for the organisation and management of the School's teaching and learning provision.
3. The aims of the periodic review process are detailed in QMUL's 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 in 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 & Learning)) conducted the review over one day on 19 February 2014, with a pre-meeting on the afternoon of 18 February 2014 to discuss the evidence submitted for the review and to determine lines of enquiry:
 - Professor Susan Dilly, Vice-Principal (Teaching & Learning) (Chair)
 - Gaby Dale Leal, Vice-President Education (Students' Union)
 - Dr Madeleine Davis, Deputy Dean for Taught Programmes (Humanities & Social Sciences)
 - Dr Henri Huijberts, Director of Taught Programmes, School of Engineering & Materials Science, Faculty of Science & Engineering
 - Dr Alastair Owens, Deputy Dean for Taught Programmes (Humanities & Social Sciences)
 - Dr Caroline Walker, Senior Education Adviser (Curriculum Development, Assessment and Feedback)

The external members of the Panel were:

- Professor Simon Dixon, School of Slavonic & East European Studies, University College London
- Dr Ian Wei, Department of History, University of Bristol

The Secretaries to the review were:

- Mary Childs, Assistant Academic Registrar (Academic Standards & Quality)
- Simon Hayter, Assistant Academic Registrar (Assessment Governance) (report)

Review material

5. The 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. The Panel thanked the School for the thorough and informative SED, which had provided a useful overview of the School's education provision and its management and assurance structures as a basis for the Panel's discussions.

Meetings with staff and students

6. During the review, the Panel met in discussion with the following members of the School's staff:
 - Professor Miri Rubin, Head of School
 - Dr Jo Cohen, Senior Tutor, new staff member
 - Dr Peter Denley, Library Liaison, Mentor for Teaching Assistants, and Director of Teaching and Learning 2009/10 to 2010/11
 - Dr James Ellison, Research Director
 - Dr Thomas Dixon, Director of Teaching and Learning 2011/12
 - Dr Martyn Frampton, Director of Undergraduate Admissions
 - Dr Mark Glancy, Head Senior Tutor
 - Dr Rhodri Hayward, Co-Director of Graduate Studies
 - Mr Matt Jacobsen, Student Experience Manager
 - Ms Katherine Kemp, Postgraduate Taught and Research Programmes Assessment Manager
 - Dr Reuben Loffman, new staff member
 - Dr Helen McCarthy, Programme Director
 - Dr Yossef Rapoport, Director of Teaching and Learning 2012/13 & 2013/14
 - Dr Chris Sparks, E-Learning Manager
 - Dr Iain Stewart, Writing Tutor and Deputy Chair UG SEB
 - Dr Georgios Varouxakis, Programme Director
 - Dr Kim Wagner, Programmes Co-Director
 - Professor Mark White, Professor of History
 - Dr Daniel Wildmann, Director of the Leo Baeck Institute, and Programme Director
 - Ms Emma Yates, Director of Administration
7. The Panel also met with a number of undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research students, both in an informal meeting over lunch and in formal sessions.

Introduction

8. The School of History is part of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and is located on QMUL's Mile End campus. The School has a strong reputation in the UK and internationally for the quality of its teaching and research, and takes pride in its collegial approach to all aspects of teaching and learning.
9. Since the previous periodic review in 2008, the School had moved into the new ArtsTwo building, and undertaken a major restructuring of administrative support. This work had resulted in a clearer administrative structure, with notable features including the new roles of Student Experience Manager and E-Learning Manager, which provided clear points of contact for students and staff in the respective areas. Arrangements for all postgraduate affairs were now managed by the Postgraduate Taught and Research Programmes Assessment Manager, and a new Director of Administration had been appointed. Throughout the review, the Panel heard evidence of the success of this restructuring, and its positive impact on the student experience and staff workloads and organisation.
10. *The Panel **commended** the implementation of the new administrative structure, which was coherent, substantial, and ensured that academic staff could carry out their roles to the fullest extent.*
11. The School had undertaken a major review of its curricula, focusing in particular upon instilling key skills, managing the transition to university level study, embedding the employability agenda, and widening its portfolio to include a more diverse range of specialisms.
12. The School had also reviewed its recruitment strategies to address recent changes in the wider HE environment, resulting in a notable increase in applications since 2011. The School was now much more active in its outreach work, holding increased numbers of taster days, and meeting with teachers to forge links with Queen Mary and to inform changes to the first year curriculum in managing the transition to university level study.
13. *The Panel **commended** the School's outreach work in recruitment with secondary schools and colleges, and in particular the ways in which contact with teachers had been used to support the transition from school to university.*
14. The Panel noted that the School was in something of a transitional phase, having only very recently concluded the administrative and curriculum reviews, and that the School was continuing to closely monitor the results of those developments.
15. *The Panel **commended** the energy, enthusiasm, creativity and collegial approach that the School brought to all of its activities, and in particular to the process of redeveloping the School's educational provision and administrative structure. This had been undertaken and delivered in a holistic and coordinated manner.*

Staff and students

16. The student body totalled 557 FTE students, comprising 419 undergraduates, 66 at postgraduate taught level, and 72 postgraduate research students.
17. The FTE staff body comprised 15 professors, four readers, 8.7 senior lecturers, 5 lecturers, one teaching fellow, and ten professional services staff.

Taught programmes

18. A list of the programmes offered by the School in 2013/14 is shown in Annexe B to the report. The School offered three single honours undergraduate programmes, and led or contributed to six joint honours programmes. At postgraduate taught level there were five programmes, including one collaborative programme with UCL. The School also offered a doctoral degree programme.

Research

19. The School had a strong research profile in the UK and internationally, with expertise in all periods from the Middle Ages to the present day. The School revised its Research Strategy after the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise, with great success. The School had appointed 29 new historians including six professors and seven early career researchers, increased research expenditure from £966,000 to £5,900,000, and appointed 13 postdoctoral research fellows, all of whom held competitive awards. The number of postgraduate research students had doubled, and these now completed within four years.

School management and committee structure

20. The Panel discussed the School committee structure for the oversight of teaching and learning with the Head of School and other staff. The School operated the committees listed below. Unless otherwise stated, these reported to the School Meeting. Each committee met twice per semester, with the School Meeting as the final meeting in each round to receive reports and set work for the other committees in the following cycle.
 - Research Committee;
 - Graduate Studies Committee;
 - MA Committee;
 - Undergraduate Teaching Committee (UGTC);
 - E-Learning Committee (reported to the UGTC);
 - Module Approval Committee (reported to the UGTC);
 - Subject Examination Boards (reported to QMUL's Degree Examination Boards)
 - Student-Staff Liaison Committees (UG and PGT);
21. The School Meeting had oversight of all matters related to teaching and research, and received reports from the other School committees. The School Meeting was chaired by the Head of School, and the membership included all members of academic and professional services staff.
22. The School Management Committee considered policy matters and provided advice to the Head of School. The membership comprised the Head of School and all directors and heads of section, including the Director of Administration. Other colleagues, particularly professional services staff, often attended these meetings to comment on specific projects. Electronic meetings, or meetings of a subset of the Management Committee, were held to address issues that required immediate responses or that concerned only certain members of the Committee.
23. *The Panel **commended** the School's team approach to leadership and management, which was clearly highly effective.*

24. The Panel noted that the distribution of business between the committees was slightly unclear in one or two cases. Notably, it was not clear where PGT modules were considered given that the Module Approval Committee reported to the UGTC (it was clarified that the MA Committee considered these issues). It was also noted that the Director of Taught Programmes was not a full member of the MA Committee; the Director often joined the meeting 'in attendance', but the Panel recommended that the appointment should be made more substantive to ensure clear and consistent oversight of all taught programme matters across the School.
25. *The Panel **recommended** that the organisation of the educational governance structures should be reviewed and clarified, and that the Director of Taught Programmes should be made a full member of the MA Committee.*

Aims

26. The School's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2012-15) set out ten broad aims, including the following four core aims. These are expanded upon in the relevant sections later in this report:
- To promote the integration of the learning and teaching that takes place within the School with the other core activities of academic staff, especially their historical research and projects linking that research to outreach, policy, and the wider culture.
 - To provide a coherent syllabus of historical studies, at both UG and MA levels, combining a comprehensive foundation in necessary knowledge and skills, with flexibility, choice, and a clear sense of progression.
 - To expose students to a diverse set of approaches to the study of history and to a number of specialisms, including interdisciplinary collaboration with other arts, humanities and social science subjects.
 - To encourage students at all levels to take responsibility for their own learning and progress and to develop qualities of self-discipline and self-direction.
27. The School's research aims are as follows:
- To maximise the School's research power through reinforcement and expansion across chronological periods and historical approaches through appointments, increased research funding, and the recruitment and fostering of doctoral, postdoctoral and early career researchers.
 - To extend the School's research and teaching into African, Asian and American history.
 - To consolidate and expand collaborative research links, in the UK and abroad, both within History and in interaction with other disciplines.
 - To increase research impact not only within, but also beyond the academic world, through public history and a variety of forms of public engagement.

Evaluation of programmes

Learning outcomes

28. In developing learning outcomes for programmes and modules, the school considered QMUL's graduate attributes, the History Graduate Attributes defined in the 2007 QAA benchmarks, and the core aims of the School as outlined in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. Examples of these learning outcomes and the ways in which they are embedded are explored in the sections on curriculum, below.

Curricula

Undergraduate

29. The School offered nine undergraduate programmes, including six joint honours programmes. These are detailed in Annexe B.
30. The School undertook a major review of the curriculum in 2010/11 and 2011/12, involving all members of the School. Sessions of the School Meeting and Away Days were dedicated to this review. The new curriculum was first taught to the 2012/13 cohort, and was being rolled out year-by-year. In 2013/14 the new second year was delivered for the first time, and the new final year would first be delivered in 2014/15.
31. The new first year curriculum was designed to instil core disciplinary skills and knowledge in students, paying due regard to the research, thought, and communication threads in the QMUL Statement of Graduate Attributes. Notably, this included a compulsory and credit-bearing historiography and skills module – ‘History in Practice’. The School had developed the module over a number of years. The previous iteration had been non-credit bearing. History in Practice was delivered in small seminar groups, and gave students a practical introduction to the study of history, and training in key skills such as the identification of good practice in historical writing. The new first year also included two other compulsory modules (on modern European and modern British history) and a range of electives to provide a grasp of historical chronology and context.
32. The new second year offered a wide range of elective modules. These included History Workshop, a skills module giving students hands-on preparation for independent research (especially the Special Subject dissertation module) in the final year. The module included fortnightly lectures based on staff research projects, in a clear example of the School’s research-led teaching. The Panel praised the module and its function in embedding and developing graduate attributes, but queried its status as an elective and asked how the School could ensure that all second year students received preparatory training for the Special Subject. The School noted that 2013/14 was the first year in which the module had run and accepted the Panel’s comments, adding that the first intake had primarily been formed of the most able students, seeking to further develop their skills; the module was already under scrutiny and review.
33. *The Panel **recommended** that the School should consider approaches to encourage independent learning and training in research skills for all second year students in preparation for the final year Special Subject module and the associated dissertation.*
34. The revised curriculum for the final year required students to take 60 credits of elective modules, and a 60 credit Special Subject. The Special Subject comprised a taught module with a dissertation on an associated topic. Previously, students had had the option of taking a special subject or a standalone 30 credit dissertation and an additional elective. The change would substantially increase contact time between students and supervisors.
35. A small number of the students whom the Panel met expressed disquiet over the move away from standalone dissertations, and were concerned that this would restrict their choice of research specialism. The School noted that a communication explaining the details of the change (to be implemented in 2014/15) was due to go out shortly after the review meeting, and it was felt by the School and the Panel that this would ease those fears. At least ten different Special Subjects were available for 2014/15, and essay subjects could be linked very loosely to the taught component if students so desired.

The School also planned for all members of teaching staff to develop a Special Subject in the future, which would bring more choice and another example of research-lead teaching to the curriculum.

36. In all stages of the new curriculum the School had expanded the scope of its teaching to offer a much wider range of modules in global history, especially in the histories of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. At the same time a School language strategy had been developed, offering in-house modules in Latin and Arabic for historians, and encouraging students to take up elective and extra-curricular modules in modern languages through the Language Centre. From 2014/15 the School would offer scholarships to aid its students in taking non-credited language training, and it was also considering a study-abroad pathway for its undergraduate programmes. It was noted that all of these initiatives substantially addressed the QMUL Graduate Attributes on global perspectives and internationalism.
37. *The Panel **commended** the School's comprehensive and holistic approach to curriculum development, and in particular its engagement with the new QMUL Language Strategy.*
38. The School sought to allow students to benefit from the widest possible range of teaching and learning. In addition to the language options discussed above, students could take up to 30 credits of electives per year from other schools at QMUL, and had access to the University of London's intercollegiate modules. The School also allowed students in different developmental years to take modules at the same academic level in some circumstances. The Panel noted that while this increased student choice, it raised questions of intellectual progression, and suggested that the School might review this area, perhaps creating modules with shared teaching but separate assessments to test different learning outcomes.
39. *The Panel **recommended** that the School should review intellectual progression through the curriculum and review learning outcomes at undergraduate level. This should include the policy of allowing students in different developmental years to study on the same modules at the same academic level (particularly first and second year students).*

Postgraduate

40. The School offered five postgraduate programmes including the MA in History, which from 2013/14 had four specialist pathways reflecting the research expertise of staff. The MA in the History of Political Thought and Intellectual History was a collaborative programme with University College London. The full programme listing is given in Annexe B.
41. The School reviewed the provision of postgraduate programmes annually, to ensure that this remained appropriate in the changing educational and financial landscape. The School was attempting to recruit larger numbers of PGT students, and its approach was to focus on research-led teaching on specialised programmes to attract applicants, rather than delivering more generic programmes. These were closely monitored, and a different strategy was used for each programme. The pathways on the MA History offered both flexibility and specialisation in the delivery of postgraduate education. The MA in Islam and the West had recently been withdrawn in favour of a Middle Eastern pathway on the MA History due to declining numbers, while others such as the MA in the History of Political Thought and Intellectual History attracted significant numbers each year.

42. The annual review process extended beyond admissions, to include all aspects of postgraduate programmes. The management of PGT provision had been centralised since the last review; previously, each MA had made its own arrangements. The creation of the new roles of Postgraduate Taught and Research Programmes Assessment Manager, Student Experience Manager, and Marketing and Communications Officer (the latter two covering both UG and PGT) had significantly increased and improved support and administration for PGT students. The Director of PGT Programmes had oversight of the area, and chaired the School's MA Committee and the PG History Subject Examination Board.
43. The MAs in History, Modern and Contemporary British History, and European Jewish History shared a common core skills module: History in Action. This non-credit bearing module developed the frameworks for analytical thinking, and had been designed to introduce students to an advanced understanding of research, writing and presentation, with a particular focus on developing skills for the MA dissertation. The MA in the History of Political Thought and Intellectual History had a slightly different provision, including a language module. All programmes included a research dissertation valued at 60 credits.
44. *The Panel **commended** the restructuring of the management of PGT provision, and in particular the efforts taken to build the expertise and research interests of all staff into MA programmes.*

Assessment and feedback

45. The undergraduate curriculum review had diversified the assessment types used in the School, and also the relative weightings of assessments within modules. This was especially notable in relation to coursework; many undergraduate modules were now assessed on a 50 per cent examination, 50 per cent coursework model, whereas examinations had previously accounted for the majority of available marks.
46. At undergraduate level, the Module Approval Committee was responsible for considering assessment patterns in detail, and approving them. At postgraduate level the MA committee performed the same role. Both committees aimed to support the development of skills in research, thought, and communication with these assessments, in line with the QMUL Statement of Graduate Attributes.
47. The School had moved to a more diverse assessment strategy in order to equip students with a broad range of skills in preparation for employment or further study, as well as acknowledging to some extent a student preference for coursework-based assessments. The School also noted that new developments in plagiarism detection technology allowed greater confidence in coursework submissions than had previously been the case.
48. A great deal of thought had gone into the new assessment strategy. A coursework-focused scheme tested writing and composition skills to a greater extent than an examination-focused scheme, and at the same time as the introduction of the new assessment schemes the School had also introduced a new strategy around writing skills. The QMUL-run Thinking Writing scheme was valued by the School, and coursework gave students more opportunities to use and to practice the skills learned there. The School also had its own Writing Tutor and a range of initiatives to support written communication skills. It was noted that writing support was also important for examinations, and that coursework had always been a key training ground for these and was now a more effective one.

49. The new coursework assignments took a wide range of forms, and trained students to write in a range of registers, from blog posts to formal reports; this supported QMUL's employability agenda, and benefitted students in the workplace as well as in academia. There was a clear sense of progression between developmental years on the expectations and support given to students in their writing. Feedback from students had been very positive, though the new curriculum had been introduced too recently for there to be a measurable effect on assessment results at the time of the review.
50. *The Panel **commended** the School's comprehensive and holistic approach to assessment, and in particular:*
- *the coordinated approach in introducing a new writing skills programme at the same time as increasing the importance of coursework in its assessment strategy, simultaneously giving students more opportunities to develop their skills and supporting them through the assessment changes;*
 - *the use of a varied array of assessment methods at undergraduate level.*
51. The Panel and the School discussed the usage of the full range of available marks in marking processes, and in particular the need to encourage markers to use those above 70 for first class work. The issue had (in common with many schools) been raised by the School's external examiners. The School noted that there had been improvement and that it reinforced the importance of using the full range at the Subject Examination Board each year.
52. *The Panel **recommended** that the School should ensure that progress is made in using the full range of marks in assessment.*

Feedback on assessment

53. The School's policy was to provide feedback within four weeks, or at least one week before the submission date for the following assignment (whichever was sooner). When the Panel met with students it found that they were all aware of this policy, and that they were largely satisfied with it. In the students' experiences the deadline had generally been adhered to, though there had been exceptions where it had been exceeded.
54. *The Panel **recommended** that the School should continue to monitor the appropriateness of a four-week turnaround time (or one week before the next submission date) on the delivery of assessment feedback on taught programmes.*
55. All assignments were submitted electronically, and QMplus was used as the primary means of returning feedback to students (the School made clear to students that this was not a replacement for speaking with tutors). Students had mixed views on this approach. While appreciating the clarity of feedback and the simplicity of approach, some students commented that the provision of a single block of text on a cover sheet rather than annotations throughout an essay could be less helpful, and that the level of detail in the block text could vary substantially between lecturers. However, all students recognised that the electronic feedback system was well intentioned, and knew that lecturers provided additional forms of feedback, including generic group feedback in-class, and that office hours could be used to discuss an individual script in detail.
56. The School provided examination feedback on request from individual students. It was reviewing the best means for the communication of that feedback.
57. The School had adopted minimum standards for feedback, and required that each student should receive individual feedback at least once per semester to indicate their

progress and their learning in a given module. The module organiser was able to use the School's student progress database, e-clio, to build up a rounded sense of all aspects of a student's studies. Recent results from the National Student Survey and module evaluation had shown a notable upturn in student satisfaction with the quality of feedback received. The School scored 4.13 (out of 5) on this issue in the autumn 2014 module evaluations, well ahead of the faculty and QMUL averages.

Quality of learning opportunities

Contact hours and delivery

58. Students had at least two timetabled contact hours per week per module. Undergraduate students were expected to undertake ten hours of independent study per module per week, while for postgraduates this figure was 18 hours. Undergraduate students took 120 credits per year, split into 60 credits or four modules per semester. Full-time postgraduate taught students took 120 credits of taught modules – two 30 credit modules per semester – and a 60 credit dissertation. Part-time postgraduates generally took one 30 credit module per semester over two years.
59. The majority of modules were delivered through a combination of lectures and small group seminars, though where numbers permitted and where the curriculum demanded it the School ran sessions in a workshop format; examples included the skills modules History in Practice, History Workshop, and History in Action. Certain other modules were also taught in this fashion, generally as a three-hour block rather than a separate seminar and lecture; students praised this format, which tended to be reserved for advanced final year modules, noting that it allowed them to engage deeply with the subject matter.
60. The School gave discretion to module convenors on how to run sessions, and methods varied according to the specific needs of a module. These could include open discussion, individual or group presentations, prepared debates, and role-play tasks. Seminar sessions at all levels of study included the discussion of primary sources.
61. A number of modules at academic level four were team-taught. The School had formal arrangements in place for managing these modules, in which the lectures were delivered by academic staff while seminars were often led by teaching assistants. Each module convenor (always a member of academic staff) led regular meetings of their teaching teams, attended every lecture, and ensured continuity between lectures delivered by different academics. The role of module convenor was recognised in the School's workload allocation scheme.

Skills training and employability

62. The School had addressed the recommendations of the 2008 Internal Review by prioritising the development of students' writing skills. The School had dedicated additional resources to this matter, and had appointed Writing Tutors who acted as the point of contact for all student and staff queries on resources within the School and QMUL. Writing Tutors also organised additional sessions for students that targeted specific skills and problems in writing as part of their 'Writing for a First' scheme. Writing retreats were also offered for third year students.
63. Together with the E-Learning Manager, the Writing Tutors managed Writing Matters, a public blog that included video interviews with members of staff about their writing

processes. Submissions were encouraged, and the blog had proved both popular and effective in engaging students with good writing practices.

64. While providing many additional tools to support good writing skills, the School had also considered the issue in the round by moving to a more coursework-based assessment strategy as part of its curriculum reform, giving students additional opportunities to practice their new skills (see also *Assessment*, above).
65. The School had greatly increased the number of learning opportunities delivered outside of the classroom during its curriculum review. The diverse resources available in London were regularly exploited, with many guided visits to museums and historical sites. These served the dual purpose of situating learning within a wider context and, in many cases, showing how the study of history can be used in employment; a notable example was the module Exhibiting the First World War, run in collaboration with the Imperial War Museum.
66. The Panel welcomed the School's considerable efforts to build skills training and graduate attributes into its delivery, though noted that these had so far been directed primarily at undergraduate students. It was noted that these were recent developments, and that the School was still reviewing its provision at all levels. It was also noted that there was a desire for further skills training in quantitative methods at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
67. Feedback from students indicated that they felt generally well supported in terms of employability. Undergraduate students made use of QMUL's Careers Service, and were well informed on possible graduate destinations. Taught postgraduate students noted that while the School provided excellent information and guidance on preparing for a career in academia, there was somewhat less information for students considering other fields of employment.
68. *The Panel recognised that the School had made great efforts in embedding employability skills into the undergraduate curriculum, and **recommended** that positive initiatives including the writing skills programme be extended to the postgraduate MA curriculum, and that consideration should be given as to how to embed quantitative skills into the curriculum at all levels. Consideration should also be given as to further supporting UG and (especially) PGT students considering non-academic careers.*

Extracurricular opportunities

69. Throughout the review, the Panel was impressed with the School's efforts to foster a sense of community among students through the provision of a rich and varied array of extracurricular activities. These included field trips, film screenings, discussion sessions and visits from guest speakers. Events were always well attended, aided students' engagement with their studies, and encouraged them to consider a wider range of topics and questions than could be covered in their core studies. The School noted that it would be further increasing its efforts to draw as many students as possible into engagement with these activities.
70. The Panel made particular note of the student-run Undergraduate Journal, in which students regularly published examples of high quality essays to share good practice. The School engaged fully with this student-led scheme, and worked with the journal committee to facilitate a number of social events for students including the delivery of short talks and the recruitment of external speakers.

71. *The Panel **commended** the School's engagement with and direct support of enriching extracurricular activities such as the History Society and the student journal, which has encouraged a strong sense of community between staff and students.*

E-learning

72. In 2012/13, the School had introduced an e-learning strategy, centred on utility, stability, clarity, innovation, and relevance. It set out minimum standards and expectations for module organisers in the use of the QMplus virtual learning environment, and had been well received. The School's successful implementation of QMplus had resulted in increased student satisfaction through module evaluation reports, and while new developments were still in progress the School had already won a nomination for a QMUL Teaching Innovation award for its work in this area.
73. *The Panel **commended** the introduction of minimum standards for QMplus module pages, and the School's efforts to ensure compliance with these standards.*
74. A new E-Learning Manager post had been created to develop and support the e-learning strategy. The role of E-Learning Manager supported staff in their use of QMplus and the student progress-focused e-clio, while a team of 'e-apprentices', often PhD students, aided module organisers in uploading materials to the various module sites. The E-Learning Manager post received praise throughout the review as a major positive development that had allowed for significant changes in the delivery of the School's curriculum.
75. *The Panel **commended** the School's implementation of the new E-Learning Manager role, enabling the effective use of new IT systems such as e-clio and QMplus to increase efficiency and student support while simultaneously retaining a clear sense of community and personal interaction.*
76. The School had moved to an entirely electronic submission and feedback process in 2012/13. Students commented that they had welcomed this development and the implementation of QMplus, noting that these had allowed them to fully engage with the material and all on-site facilities while also granting them increased flexibility in other areas (e.g. not having to travel to campus purely to hand in an assignment).
77. Lecture capture using the QReview software had been introduced in the School on an opt-out basis for convenors of first year modules and an opt-in basis for other modules. The majority of staff had not opted out of first year modules, though the Panel noted a range of views on the value of recorded lectures (noting that it was still a new technology), and concerns of a potential impact on attendance if it was introduced widely. It was noted that the Faculty was moving to an opt-out system from 2014/15.
78. The School was closely monitoring the usage of QReview by students, and anecdotal evidence indicated that it was used primarily for revision and to pick out technical terms or new words that had been missed during the original lecture; there was no reported impact on attendance. It was noted that there was facility in QReview for module organisers to see exactly which part of a recording most students were viewing, which it was felt could be useful in the ongoing development of modules (by dedicating a greater focus to such areas in teaching, where appropriate).
79. *The Panel **recommended to the H&SS Faculty** that consideration be given to introducing a new question to the module evaluation form concerning the value of lecture capture (in light of the HSS opt-out policy on lecture capture to be introduced across all HSS schools in 2014-15).*

Staff support and development for pedagogy

Induction and training

80. All new members of academic staff underwent induction upon joining the School. This included an introduction to life within the School, led by the Head of School. A mentor was then appointed to manage probation (for early career researchers) or settling in (for senior appointments). The induction for senior staff was noted as a feature of good practice.
81. The School also inducted all new members of staff into its administrative processes, led by the Director of Administration. Training in QMplus and in module design was also offered.
82. Early Career Researchers were required to undertake QMUL's Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP), though exemptions were available for those with prior equivalent qualifications or experience. When the Panel met with new staff, it learned that the PGCAP sessions were valued, especially for gaining experience on practical matters (such as curriculum design), and for meeting colleagues from other disciplines. The School had an expectation for new academic staff to join the Higher Education Academy, and supported applications for Fellowships.
83. Formal assessment of a lecture and a seminar was part of the probation process. Early career staff commented that this, and the ensuing feedback, was very constructive.
84. The School had a workload model that was regularly updated and visible to all staff. A number of examples of sensitive interpretation of the model were given throughout the review, including the reduction of teaching load to facilitate a research focus and flexibility in appraisal dates to accommodate overseas travel. Early Career Researchers' workloads were alleviated by a probation 'bonus' of 44 hours built into the workload model. This had led to staff feeling well supported and with sufficient time to dedicate to their research.
85. *The Panel commended the School for its open and transparent approach towards staff workload management, and the opportunities it provided for new academic staff to develop experience of school roles and research student supervision.*
86. The School supported staff in developing innovative approaches to teaching and informal learning; staff, in turn, were highly engaged and keen to make use of this support. Examples included funding for a trip to view a film with direct links to a taught module, which enhanced students' understanding of the material, and the willingness of staff to give up time to prepare video segments for the Writing Matters blog.

Teaching assistants

87. The School had considerably developed its processes around the appointment and training of Teaching Assistants (TAs) since the previous review. The majority of appointments were made from within the School's PGR student body. The School had a formal timetable for appointments, making offers by May each year to commence teaching in September.
88. In addition to the institutional training run by the Centre for Academic and Professional Development, the School also provided in-house training on a range of topics. All new TAs underwent a teaching observation during their first half-semester, the feedback

from which was shared with the TA, the module organiser, and the Teaching Assistant Mentor. This both supported the development of TAs and ensured that teaching quality was maintained. The students whom the Panel met had had positive experiences of teaching by TAs.

89. A Teaching Assistant Mentor had been appointed with responsibility for all non-module specific queries for TAs. The School had set up a TA Zone within QMplus; this, and the School's Staff Zone provided areas for the sharing of good teaching practice and practical advice. Current TA's also commented that they had learned a great deal from speaking with students who had taught in previous years.

Student progression

Undergraduate

90. The School had seen a sustained increase in the proportion of 'good honours' (Firsts and Upper Seconds) awarded since the previous review, and was now issuing these at a level in line with that of comparable institutions.
91. The Panel noted that students on the joint History and Politics programme did not perform quite so well at the higher end of achievement as those on other programmes (though this was not reflected in the other joint honours programmes). The School noted that it had recently changed its induction processes for History and Politics. These students now had a dedicated session to bring them all together and create a sense of community, rather than being halfway between two Schools, and to manage cross-school issues and explain differences in process. This had been well received, though students did still note occasional confusion over differences in approach (for example, differing late work penalties) and other difficulties such as timetable clashes.
92. *The Panel noted the School's efforts to ensure consistency of treatment for undergraduate students on joint honours programmes, and **recommended** that the initiatives used for BA History and Politics students be extended to all joint honours programmes. The Panel also **recommended** that the School should consider approaches for highlighting differences in policies between the two schools (for example, annotated handbooks) and to provide a guide to each joint programme to bridge the two disciplines.*
93. The School's practices in relation to progression and retention had changed markedly since the appointment of the Student Experience Manager, a new post, in 2012. This role acted as the coordinator of all student support systems and as the point of contact for all students needing advice and support throughout the year, including cases of extenuating circumstances. The Student Experience Manager had responsibility for both undergraduate and postgraduate taught student support. Throughout the review, the Panel heard positive comments for the role from staff and students; students now had a clear point of contact that could be reached at any time, rather than only through the office hours system.
94. In addition to the Student Experience Manager, student support processes were led by three senior tutors (one for each year, and of whom at least one was always a woman).
95. The School's retention processes had been greatly aided by the in-house development of the e-clio database, which monitored students' progress in a holistic fashion. The system drew information from a number of sources, including QMplus, to record all aspects of a student's progress, including assessment feedback, notes of meetings with staff, details of absences, and extenuating circumstances. Bringing all of this

information together allowed advisors to prepare thoroughly for meetings with students and to advise them in the best manner possible, as well as permitting the identification and monitoring of students who needed additional support.

96. Since 2012/13 the School had run a system of appraisal meetings with students in place of the more traditional advisor meetings. Once per semester each student met with their advisor to discuss their progress in detail, using the information available through e-clio. This permitted advisors to offer much more tailored advice, and to use the advisor sessions to directly support progression and retention rather than as a more general catch-up and query session. In this way, all students were reached through the student support processes rather than there being a focus primarily on the top-achieving and weakest students, who otherwise tended to be the most likely to seek out these services.
97. *The Panel **commended** the School's comprehensive and holistic approach to student support, and in particular:*
- *the implementation of the new role of Student Experience Manager;*
 - *the communication of clear expectations to students in respect of meetings and appraisals;*
 - *the approaches to student development enabled by the e-clio online monitoring system, and the systematic approach to regular appraisals.*
98. The School noted its commitment to improving the consistency and regularity of communications with students, especially in relation to procedural matters. A great deal of progress had been made, notably with the appointment of the Student Experience Manager as a central point of communication, and the developments in e-learning to allow messaging through QMplus. The Panel noted these improvements, but also heard of isolated incidences of students with incorrect or unclear information (often through students' failure to check the official record rather than the provision of incorrect details).
99. *The Panel **recommended** that the School should pay ongoing attention to its communications with students, especially in ensuring that they fully understood details of assessment methods, marking criteria and career advice opportunities.*
100. The Panel noted the School's work in monitoring student performance by gender and ethnic background, which had shown a disparity in performance between students from white and non-white backgrounds, with the latter achieving significantly fewer First Class classifications, and more Third Class/Pass classifications between 2010/11 and 2012/13. The School's Undergraduate Teaching Committee had reviewed this data in 2013/14, and had agreed that the recent and substantive changes to the student support system and to the curriculum (including the compulsory first year skills module History in Action) should potentially remedy the disparity. The Committee had agreed to continue to closely monitor data including that for the 2013/14 and 2014/15 academic years before taking specific action (2014/15 would be the first year in which students graduated having completed the new curriculum).
101. The Panel noted that the School's overall progression figures were satisfactory, but that there was scope for improvement. It was noted that the new support arrangements and the new curriculum were likely to have a positive impact.
102. *The Panel **recommended** that the School should continue to monitor data on progression and retention with a view to ensuring that the most appropriate support mechanisms are always in place, to increase these rates.*

Postgraduate taught

103. Students at postgraduate taught level performed well in the School of History, with a high proportion of students achieving classifications of Distinction or Merit.
104. Postgraduate students were able to access support services through the Student Experience Manager in the same manner as undergraduates. They were also able to seek advice specific to their programmes of study from the Postgraduate Taught and Research Programmes Assessment Manager. The Director of MA Programmes acted as Senior Tutor, while the programme directors acted as personal tutors for students on their own programmes.
105. An induction programme was run for new postgraduate taught students to introduce them to the policies and facilities at QMUL, and to set expectations for their studies. This included meeting the Director of MA Programmes and the programme directors, the Student Experience Manager and Postgraduate Taught and Research Programmes Assessment Manager. The Library, the Careers Service, and the Language Centre also gave presentations.
106. There was relatively little direct progression from MA to PhD study at QMUL, and the majority of research students came to the School from other institutions. Postgraduate taught numbers were relatively small overall, and the School noted that many of these students had remained at QMUL following undergraduate study. The School aimed to increase recruitment at PGT level and hoped that this would bring a higher rate of conversion to PGR study. In order to minimise risk in the possible event of a year of poor PGT recruitment, the School had engaged in a number of collaborative projects and given consideration to strategic partnerships. These included the new MA in Global and Imperial History, which would access modules from several schools at QMUL, ensuring that there would always be sufficient students for each module to run.
107. *The Panel **recommended** that the School continued to develop its thinking on how postgraduate taught programmes can respond to changes in the HE environment, and to increase the numbers that go on to study on research programmes. This may include consideration of research pathways at PGT level.*

Maintenance and enhancement of standards and quality

General

108. The School followed all standard QMUL procedures for the maintenance and enhancement of standards and quality. These included Annual Programme Review, scrutiny of assessment processes and external examiner comments through the Subject Examination Boards, and the consideration of policy matters through the Undergraduate Teaching Committee, the MA Committee, and the Graduate Studies Committee. The School also operated Student-Staff Liaison Committees, and engaged with a number of national and local surveys to canvas student opinion.
109. Following comments at the 2012/13 Annual Programme Review, the School developed and implemented an Employability Strategy. Targets included the reduction of the graduate 'unemployment' rate from 15.5 per cent to eight per cent for the cohort graduating in 2015, and to increase students' engagement with QMUL's Careers Service, which seemed to be slightly below that of other schools.

110. The School was closely monitoring the relative performances of student groups from different backgrounds, particularly noting a disparity in performance between students of white and black and minority ethnic backgrounds (see above).
111. The Director of Taught Programmes sat on the Dean for Taught Programmes' Advisory Group, which met twice per semester to share good practice across the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and highlight areas for improvement.
112. The School had instituted minimum standards for module pages in QMplus, and support and training was available to all staff through the E-Learning Manager.

Acting on staff feedback

113. Staff were able to bring forward new ideas in teaching. These could be discussed at the Undergraduate Teaching Committee, the MA Committee, the School Meeting, or directly with individuals within the School. The Panel met with staff who praised the willingness of the School to allow innovation in teaching while closely monitoring the success of each module.
114. The School held an annual Away Day, which was generally dedicated entirely to teaching and learning. Recent sessions had focused on the curriculum review, while the 2014/15 session would focus on areas of growth in the School, and admissions activities.

Student feedback

115. The Panel discussed with staff the mechanisms for gathering student feedback on teaching and the learning environment. These included:
 - Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) at UG and PGT level;
 - PGR representation on the Graduate Studies Committee;
 - the student course representative system;
 - module evaluation questionnaires;
 - analysis of the National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), and other student surveys;
 - the student appraisal system;
 - informal contact between students and programme and module leads.
116. Each module convenor was required to produce a short report reflecting on each set of module evaluations, commenting on what had worked well and what could be improved. These were submitted to the Director of Teaching and Learning. Modules with poor or very good results were reviewed by the School and targeted to bring about improvements or share good practice.
117. Staff were encouraged to keep diaries of what happened week by week in a module. Individual members of staff had also chosen to ask students for feedback mid-teaching on new modules.
118. *The Panel **commended** the detail in which module evaluation reports were reviewed and acted upon to develop and improve the teaching provision.*

119. The Panel met with a number of students, who commented that they felt well represented within the School and that their comments were taken seriously and addressed, where appropriate.
120. Following repeated low scores for timetabling from students, the School had developed a bespoke module selection tool that included elements such as reserve choices, rationales, and details of previous selections, which were not available in the standard MySIS registration tool.
121. In 2010/11 and 2011/12 the School experienced a noticeable drop in overall student satisfaction, especially in relation to organisation and management. Since the completion of the School's administrative restructure, this decline had been reversed, and ratings continued to rise.
122. The School had in the past received relatively low scores for other areas, including assessment and feedback. The School had addressed this through the introduction of electronic feedback, the provision of at least one formal feedback point per semester, and a clear policy on the return of work (within four weeks, or one week before submission of the next assignment). The 2012/13 NSS results showed a marked improvement in this area. The School continued to work to identify and act upon other areas highlighted through the NSS and other surveys, including library provision (139, below).

Postgraduate research

123. The Graduate Studies Committee had responsibility for the oversight of postgraduate research student issues. The Director of Graduate Studies role had recently (2013) been split into two parts, to better manage the workload and specialisms: the Director of Graduate Studies for Admission and Training, and the Director of Graduate Studies for Policy and Progression.
124. The Director of Research, who had overall responsibility for research student provision, sat on the Dean for Research's Advisory Group. This group met to share good practice across the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and highlight areas for improvement.

Admissions

125. The Director of Graduate Studies for Admission and Training oversaw all admissions issues and the annual studentship competition.
126. The School had refocused its admissions policy since the previous review, focusing on the quality of applicants at - where necessary - the expense of greater overall numbers. This had yielded very positive results in the reduction of the tail of students completing beyond the four year submission period, and the calibre of students' postdoctoral destinations had noticeably increased.
127. The School acknowledged that PGR admissions were very competitive, and that the lack of funding available was a limiting factor. The loss of an AHRC BG2 bid had been a setback for the School, but it was pursuing other avenues and had met with success in CDD and CDA bids, including a recent project with the British Library. The CDAs had been particularly successful, and History had one of the best CDA success rates at QMUL. Due to the relatively small student numbers and the limited funds, staff were highly engaged in supporting applicants in bids, and keen to ensure their success.

Induction and mentoring

128. Each PGR student was assigned a supervisor and a mentor upon registration. The mentor offered pastoral support, and monitored the progress of research and training through annual review meetings and the first year transfer meeting. New staff often joined supervision teams as part of their school training, which could allow them to act as primary supervisors in subsequent years.
129. In addition to the supervisor and the mentor, the School asked a third, independent member of staff to act as an internal reader of the draft thesis. This collegial approach had been well received, and had yielded demonstrably positive results; the numbers of submissions requiring major amendments were very small.
130. Research students had a representative on the Graduate Studies Committee, and also used the History Research Forum as a means of representing their views.
131. *The Panel **commended** the support and training given to postgraduate research students, and the provision of a rich research culture, in particular:*
- *the use of the 'mentor' position to provide support for postgraduate research students as part of the supervisory team, allowing new staff to gain experience of supervision in order to act as primary supervisors in the future;*
 - *the efforts made to offer internal readings of draft theses.*

Training

132. The School managed PGR student training through its Graduate Training Forum, led by the Director of Graduate Studies for Policy and Progression. Fortnightly forums were held on a wide variety of topics, including how to publish an article, how to run a conference, and presentations from guest speakers. Some sessions were targeted at specific groups of students, for example digital note taking, and preparing for vivas.
133. Students were able to attend sessions run by the Centre for Academic and Professional Development and the University of London's Institute of Historical Research. The School also had a number of research centres – many of them instituted since the previous periodic review – that provided guidance specific to a student's research area.
134. Students were responsible for keeping records of their doctoral training through the points-based framework run through the CAPD, with support from their mentors. The points-based system had met with some resistance from students, who perhaps saw this as rather generic, and insufficiently tailored to a research programme in history. It was noted that the School was working to further embed that scheme. The training provided in the School and by the Institute of Historical Research was highly valued by students, and had shown positive results; students had established long-lived journals and conferences as a result of the training.
135. *The Panel **recommended** that the School should continue to work to embed the points-based PGR training system, to encourage students to participate in QMUL Doctoral College training events, and to ensure that training and mentoring was provided to all PhD students involved in teaching.*

Progression

136. The School followed the standard QMUL progression policy, with a progression review or transfer eight or nine months after registration. Each review was conducted with one of the Directors of Graduate Studies or the Head of School. In the small number of cases where students were referred they were given detailed feedback on the remedial work required, and worked closely with their mentors to resolve the issues. Since the introduction of the progression review, 100 per cent of postgraduate research students had successfully passed. The School gave students a firm expectation that the PhD should be completed to a high standard within three years from registration.
137. Ongoing monitoring of students' progression was carried out by supervisors and mentors, who reported back to the Director of Graduate Studies for Policy and Progression and to the Graduate Studies Committee. Supervision sessions took place at least once every six weeks, after which students produced notes and agreed action plans. The mentor conducted an annual review based upon reports from the student and the supervisor, and their own meetings with the student.

Learning resources

Library provision

138. The School's annual book purchasing budget had remained more or less static since 2010/11, at around £32,000. This was in line with the Russell Group average, though the School noted that the figure might need to increase to accommodate higher student numbers. Where necessary, the School had diverted additional funds for one-off purchases to cover new areas of specialisation, notably for new modules in African history. The School had already agreed to conduct an annual review of the book budget to maintain parity with the rest of the Russell Group, and to issue guidance on purchasing to staff based on those figures.
139. Student feedback through the NSS placed satisfaction with library resources somewhat behind other areas of satisfaction. The students whom the Panel met indicated general satisfaction with the range of books on offer, but limited numbers of required texts could create difficulties for some modules as full texts could not be made available online. Students noted that the library was always very receptive to their comments and requests, and that the short-loan system was valuable for accessing key texts.
140. *The Panel **recommended** that more key texts should be placed on restricted loan arrangements in the Library to enable more students to access them, and that a review of the overall book budget and its distribution across modules should be considered.*

Space for postgraduate research students

141. There had been difficulties in providing sufficient space for research students. A postgraduate research room in ArtsTwo had recently been made available exclusively to history students as a trial, with locker space provided. The new graduate building would further alleviate these space issues, once complete.

Electronic learning resources

142. Students and staff indicated satisfaction with the e-learning resources that were available, but suggested that a wider range of material could be made available in this way to allow access to the greatest possible number of students. This included texts

from the 'wider reading' sections of module reading lists, of which there were generally only a very small number of hard copies held by QMUL.

143. Staff also noted the heavy resource load required to scan and upload reading materials to QMplus. There had also been recent discussions across the Faculty concerning the difficulties in ensuring copyright compliance with such a devolved model for uploading.

144. *The Panel recommended to QMUL that consideration be given to introducing a central service to scan and upload readings and other documents to QMplus, and to ensure copyright compliance.*

Availability of computers on campus

145. Student representatives reported occasional difficulties in finding available computer workstations on campus. While acknowledging that there was a generous provision and that it would be difficult to provide large numbers of additional machines, the students did note an occasional problem concerning 'locked' machines. It was reportedly quite common for students to leave a workstation with the machine locked for protracted periods, leaving it out of use and inaccessible to other students.

Post meeting note: Library Services noted that a system had been introduced under which locked computers automatically shut down after being unattended for 45 minutes. The Library also drew attention to a tool, available in the QMUL app and online, that allowed students to see in real time exactly where machines were available. An additional computer suite in the new Canalside venue had also added to the number of available machines.

Action

146. The School is asked to provide ARCS with 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

147. The Panel's commendations and recommendations are summarised below:

Commendations

School organisation

- The Panel commended the energy, enthusiasm, creativity and collegial approach that the School brings to all of its activities, and in particular to the process of redeveloping the School's educational provision and administrative structure. This was undertaken and delivered in a holistic and coordinated manner (¶15).
- The Panel commended the School's team approach to leadership and management, which is clearly highly effective (¶23).
- The Panel commended the implementation of the new administrative structure, which is coherent, substantial, and ensures that academic staff can carry out their roles to the fullest extent (¶10).

Admissions and outreach

- The Panel commended the School's outreach work in recruitment with secondary schools and colleges, and in particular the ways in which contact with teachers has been used to support the transition from school to university (¶13).

Support and assessment of students on taught programmes

- The Panel commended the School's comprehensive and holistic approach to student support, curriculum development, and assessment, and in particular:
 - the implementation of the new role of Student Experience Manager (¶97);
 - the communication of clear expectations to students in respect of meetings and appraisals (¶97);
 - the approaches to student development enabled by the e-clio online monitoring system, and the systematic approach to regular appraisals (¶97);
 - its engagement with the new QMUL Language Strategy (¶37);
 - its engagement with and direct support of enriching extracurricular activities such as the History Society and the student journal, which has encouraged a strong sense of community between staff and students (¶71);
 - the detail in which module evaluation reports are reviewed and acted upon to develop and improve the teaching provision (¶118);
 - the coordinated approach in introducing a new writing skills programme at the same time as increasing the importance of coursework in its assessment strategy, simultaneously giving students more opportunities to develop their skills and supporting them through the assessment changes (¶50);
 - the use of a varied array of assessment methods at undergraduate level (¶50).
- The Panel commended the restructuring of the management of PGT provision, and in particular the efforts taken to build the expertise and research interests of all staff into MA programmes (¶44).

Postgraduate research students

- The Panel commended the support and training given to postgraduate research students, and the provision of a rich research culture, in particular:
 - the use of the 'mentor' position to provide support for postgraduate research students as part of the supervisory team, allowing new staff to gain experience of supervision in order to act as primary supervisors in the future (¶131);
 - the efforts made to offer internal readings of draft theses (¶131).

Staff support

- The Panel commended the School for its open and transparent approach towards staff workload management, and the opportunities it provides for new academic staff to develop experience of school roles and research student supervision (¶85).

Learning support resources

- The Panel commended the introduction of minimum standards for QMplus module pages, and the School's efforts to ensure compliance with these standards (¶73).
- The Panel commended the School's implementation of the new E-Learning Manager role, enabling the effective use of new IT systems such as e-clio and QMplus to

increase efficiency and student support while simultaneously retaining a clear sense of community and personal interaction (¶75).

Recommendations

Educational governance

- The Panel recommended that the organisation of the educational governance structures should be reviewed and clarified, and that the Director of Taught Programmes should be made a full member of the MA Committee (¶25).

Undergraduate programmes

- The Panel recommended that the School should review intellectual progression through the curriculum and review learning outcomes at undergraduate level. This should include the policy of allowing students in different developmental years to study on the same modules at the same academic level (particularly first and second year students) (¶39).
- The Panel recommended that the School should consider approaches to encourage independent learning and training in research skills for all second year students in preparation for the final year special subject module and the associated dissertation (¶33).
- The Panel recommended that the School should ensure that progress is made in using the full range of marks in assessment (¶52).
- The Panel recommended that the School should continue to monitor data on progression and retention with a view to ensuring that the most appropriate support mechanisms are always in place, to increase these rates (¶54).

Joint programmes

- The Panel noted the School's efforts to ensure consistency of treatment for undergraduate students on joint honours programmes, and recommended that the initiatives used for BA History and Politics students be extended to all joint honours programmes. The Panel also recommended that the School should consider approaches for highlighting differences in policies between the two schools (for example, annotated handbooks) and to provide a guide to each joint programme to bridge the two disciplines (¶92).

Postgraduate taught programmes

- The Panel recommended that the School continues to develop its thinking on how postgraduate taught programmes can respond to changes in the HE environment, and to increase the numbers that go on to study on research programmes. This may include consideration of research pathways at PGT level (¶107).

All taught programmes

- The Panel recognised that the School has made great efforts in embedding employability skills into the undergraduate curriculum, and recommended that positive initiatives including the writing skills programme be extended to the postgraduate MA curriculum, and that consideration should be given as to how to embed quantitative

skills into the curriculum at all levels. Consideration should also be given as to further supporting UG and (especially) PGT students considering non-academic careers (¶68).

- The Panel recommended that more key texts should be placed on restricted loan arrangements in the Library to enable more students to access them, and that a review of the overall book budget and its distribution across modules should be considered (¶140).
- The Panel recommended that the School should continue to monitor the appropriateness of a four-week turnaround time (or one week before the next submission date) on the delivery of assessment feedback on taught programmes (¶102).
- The Panel recommended that the School should pay ongoing attention to its communications with students, especially in ensuring that they fully understand details of assessment methods, marking criteria and career advice opportunities (¶99).

Postgraduate research students

- The Panel recommended that the School should continue to work to embed the points-based PGR training system, to encourage students to participate in QMUL Doctoral College training events, and to ensure that training and mentoring is provided to all PhD students involved in teaching (¶135).

Recommendation to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

- The Panel recommended that consideration be given to introducing a new question to the module evaluation form concerning the value of lecture capture (in light of the HSS opt-out policy on lecture capture to be introduced across all HSS schools in 2014-15) (¶79).

Recommendations to QMUL

- The Panel recommended that consideration be given to introducing a central service to scan and upload readings and other documents to QMplus, and to ensure copyright compliance (¶144).

Briefing material provided for the review of the School of History

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

1. General
 - a. Planning & Accountability Review Narrative 2013-14
2. UG & PGT programme specifications
 - a. BA English and History (QV31)
 - b. BA History (V101)
 - c. BA History (V101)
 - d. BA History and Film Studies (VW16)
 - e. BA History and German (VR12)
 - f. BA History and Politics (LV21)
 - g. BA Medieval History (V130)
 - h. BA Modern and Contemporary History (V140)
 - i. MA European Jewish History (V1Q7, V1Q8)
 - j. MA History (V1Q5, V1Q6)
 - k. MA Islam and the West (V1Q9, V1Q0)
 - l. MA History of Political Thought & Intellectual History (V1Q3 V1Q4)
3. Strategy documents
 - a. Employability Action Plan
 - b. History E-Learning Strategy
 - c. School of History Language Strategy
 - d. Student Advising 2013
4. Handbooks for students
 - a. MA European Jewish History Handbook 2013/14
 - b. History PGR Handbook 2013/14
 - c. MA History of Political Thought and Intellectual History Handbook 2013/14
 - d. MA Islam and the West Handbook 2013/14
 - e. MA History handbook 2013/14
 - f. MA Module Handbook 2013/14
 - g. BA Module Handbook 2013/14
 - h. Study Skills and Essay Writing 2013/14
5. Examinations: Undergraduate
 - a. Selected external examiners' reports 2009/10, 2011/12, 2012/13
 - b. SEB minutes 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13
 - c. Handbook for Examiners 2013
6. Examinations: Postgraduate
 - a. PG History SEB minutes 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13
 - b. MA History of Political Thought and Intellectual History SEB minutes 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13
7. Staff Meeting minutes
8. E-Learning Committee minutes
9. MA Committee minutes 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14
10. Postgraduate Research Committee minutes
11. Research Committee minutes 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14
12. Student-Staff Liaison Committee minutes 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14
13. Undergraduate Teaching Committee minutes 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14
14. Management Committee minutes
15. University of London Special Subject Panel Minutes
16. Taster Day Programmes
17. NSS and PTES 2013 results

Programmes of study offered by the School of History in 2013/14

Taught undergraduate programmes

- BA History
- BA Medieval History
- BA Modern and Contemporary History

Taught undergraduate joint programmes

- BA English and History
- BA French and History
- BA German and History
- BA History and Comparative Literature
- BA History and Film Studies*
- BA History and Politics*

** The School of History is the lead school for these programmes.*

Taught postgraduate programmes

- MA in European Jewish History (offered by the Leo Baeck Institute)
- MA in History (specialist pathways available: Medieval and Renaissance History, American History, Cultural History, Middle Eastern Studies)
- MA in Islam and the West (running for the final year in 2013/14)
- MA in Modern and Contemporary British History
- MA in the History of Political Thought and Intellectual History (with UCL)