



Senate

<p>Paper Title</p>	<p>Periodic Review of the School of Economics and Finance (20 February 2013)</p> <p>Response to the Periodic Review from the School of Economics and Finance</p>
<p>Outcome requested</p>	<p>Senate is asked to consider and approve the report from the School of Economics and Finance (SEF) in response to the commendations and recommendations of the Review Panel.</p>
<p>Points for Senate members to note and further information</p>	<p>Background information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic Review is an evaluation of a school or institute's systems and procedures for managing, maintaining and enhancing the academic quality and standards of teaching and learning. It is a key component of QMUL's quality assurance framework. • It is College policy to review academic schools and institutes approximately once every six years. • The report of the SEF review was presented to Senate at its meeting on 20 June 2013 (paper SE2012.68b). The attached paper is SEF's twelve month response to the review. <p>The School's response</p> <p>The School has considered all the recommendations in the review report and has described its action on each. The review recommendations were also discussed at the School's Annual Programme Review meeting with the HSS Dean for Taught Programmes. Action on most recommendations is well advanced or complete.</p> <p>In three cases the School has considered a recommendation and, in the light of reflection on their practices and discussion within the faculty as appropriate, taken action along a slightly different route to that proposed by the Review Panel. This refers to recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1 (concerning the role of Director of Taught Programmes); • 2.7 (concerning creating a new role of Senior Tutor for Postgraduate Studies); and • 2.8 (on PGR student representation). <p>The relevant text from the review report has been included in</p>

	annexe A to provide the context for these recommendations.
Questions for Senate to consider	Senate is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note the response from SEF; • consider whether it is satisfied that these responses address the recommendations of the review panel.
Regulatory/statutory reference points	The QMUL quality assurance framework is key to the maintenance of academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience.
Strategy and risk	QMUL's quality assurance framework is key to all aspects of the Strategic Plan and the Learning and Teaching Strategy. Periodic Review is an essential component of the QA framework.
Reporting/consideration route for the paper	Senate to approve .
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SENATE

School of Economics and Finance

Response to the Periodic Review held on 20 February 2013

The School of Economics and Finance has taken the following actions in response to the commendations and recommendations of the Periodic Review held on 20 February 2013.

1. Commendations

Improvements since the review in 2007

- 1.1 The Panel commends the School for the significant improvements since the previous Internal Review in 2007. In particular it commends the School for:
- the improvements in the undergraduate student experience since 2007 and its management of the quality of the student experience given the recent increase in student numbers;
 - the friendly and supportive culture within the School;
 - the informal but effective methods of communication between staff and with students, noting that this may need to be formalised as staff numbers increase.

Module evaluation

- 1.2 The Panel commends the systematic administration, analysis and utilisation of module evaluation for taught programmes. In particular it commends:
- the dedicated high quality support for staff around issues arising from the module evaluation results, the organisation of meetings with new staff to discuss module evaluation results, and the dissemination of good practice identified from the results;
 - the supplementation of the College-run module evaluation scheme with its own evaluation in week 4 in order to identify issues needing early action, and for holding extra SSLC meetings in week 4 on PGT programmes;

Support for undergraduate studies

- 1.3 The Panel commends the significant contribution made by the Senior Tutor for Undergraduate Studies to the support for undergraduate students, and for providing systematic support to staff in all aspects of their teaching.

Employment-related initiatives

- 1.4 The Panel commends the embedding of the Graduate Attributes into the UG curriculum, module material and student meetings with their Academic Advisor, and the School's employment-related initiatives, such as the Careers Database, the dedicated School Careers Officer, the developing work with alumni and external mentors, and overseas links.

The Economics Society

- 1.5 The Panel commends the strong links between the School and the student-led Economics Society.

Research students

- 1.6 The Panel commends the School's provision for research students, including dedicated desk and office space, a budget for research needs and conferences, and notes that students feel well engaged with School staff.
- 1.7 The Panel commends the taught component of the first year of the doctoral degree, noting the positive comments from PhD students on its value in preparing them for research in the discipline.

2. Recommendations

Educational oversight

- 2.1 *The Panel recommends that the School review the roles of the Director of Taught Programmes and the Director of Research in the light of College practice. In particular the Panel recommends that:*

- *the Director of Taught Programmes role should be held by one senior person in the School who has a strategic overview of UGT and PGT programmes, and should be more clearly integrated within School management structures, especially as a member of the Senior Management Group;*

This has been discussed with the Faculty Vice-Principal, and reflecting on practices in other schools in HSS, and it has been agreed that SEF's current structure retains its validity.

[Para. 51 from the review report provides the background to this recommendation – set out in Annexe A.]

- *the role of Director of Graduate Studies should be separated from that of the Director for Research, in line with College practice in other schools, and a dedicated Director of Graduate Studies appointed reporting to the Director for Research.*

This has been implemented with Professor Xavier Mateos-Planas as Director for Research and Professor Marci Manacorda as Director of Graduate Studies.

Management of Joint Degrees

- 2.2 *The Panel recommends that the School ensure that there are formal annual meetings with all partner schools to discuss and review Joint Degrees, and that all Joint Degrees are underpinned by written agreements between all partner schools.*

Dr Rachel Male has been appointed the Joint Programmes Coordinator and as such is implementing formal annual meetings with partner Schools and written agreements alongside administrative support from Mr Nick Owen (Research and Joint Programmes Manager). Dr Male is the SEF representative on the Faculty's new Joint Honours Programmes Co-ordinators Group. This Group aims to facilitate better links between Schools involved in joint programmes, improve the student experience for joint programme students and coordinate and harmonise procedures to remove obstacles to interdisciplinary learning.

Monitoring taught student performance

- 2.3 *The Panel recommends that the School ensure that processes are in place to review data on UGT and PGT student performance, progression, and retention, in addition to the work of examination boards, and any other information that might provide an indication of issues or problems for further investigation.*

UG and PG Teaching and Curriculum Committees are currently reviewing data on UGT and PGT student performance, progression, and retention, in addition to the work of examination boards for this academic year.

Module information and learning outcomes

- 2.4 *The Panel recommends that:*

- *there should be greater consistency in the communication of information across School QMPlus UGT and PGT module areas, in particular regarding learning outcomes and assessment;*
- *UGT and PGT programmes should have separate learning outcomes.*

UG and PG Teaching and Curriculum Committees are utilising QMUL guidance and advice from CAPD to ensure that there is greater consistency in the communication of information across School QMPlus and UGT and PGT module areas particularly relating to learning outcomes and assessment.

Feedback and assessment

- 2.5 *The Panel recommends that the School consider enhancing the level of feedback to students on coursework and examinations, including mid-term assessment, across all modules, using a broader range of teaching styles and assessment.*

Teaching and Curriculum committees are currently considering enhancing the level of feedback to students on coursework and examinations, including mid-term assessment, across all modules, using a broader range of teaching styles and assessment, with conclusions expected to be implemented in next academic year.

Student support

- 2.6 *The Panel notes that the staff “open door” policy is additional to the role of Academic Advisors and recommends that the School provide more opportunities to strengthen the links between Academic Advisors and first year undergraduate students.*

The UG Teaching and Curriculum Committee keeps this matter under review. It is aware of the need to maintain a balance between steering students to meet with their Academic Advisor regularly and fostering a culture that encourages undergraduate students to feel welcome to engage in discussion with other members of academic staff.

- 2.7 *Concerning PGT students the Panel recommends that:*

- *peer observation of teaching is applied consistently to include those who teach only on PGT modules;*

This academic year, SEF has endeavoured to have consistent peer observation of teaching to include those who teach only on PGT modules.

- *the School should consider providing a Senior Tutor for Postgraduate Studies to support PGT students and staff in a similar way to the support provided to UGT students and staff.*

Each postgraduate taught programme has its own dedicated programme director, namely: Dr Andrea Carriero, Dr Alfonsina Iona, Dr Leone Leonida, Dr Leon Vinokur, Mr Yioryos Makedonis, Professor Francis Breedon, Dr Daniela Tavasci and Dr Renato Faccini. SEF has not created an additional role of Senior Tutor for Postgraduate Studies, as proposed by the Review Panel, but continues to consider if this role is needed and will keep this suggestion under review.

[Para. 38 from the review report provides the background to this recommendation – set out in Annexe A.]

Research students

2.8 *The Panel recommends that the School's processes for monitoring research student progression and training should be formalised in line with College requirements and good practice. In particular the Panel recommends that the School:*

- *introduce formal monitoring requirements for students in the second and third years of the PhD;*

A newly revamped PhD Committee is in place for the formal monitoring of research student progression and training, and is responsible for determining and implementing progression monitoring in the second and third years of the PhD .

- *participate in the discussions on research student training within the HSS Faculty to ensure that the School is offering an appropriate range of opportunities, and encourage students to participate in QMUL Doctoral College training events;*

SEF participates in the discussions on research student training within the HSS Faculty to ensure that it is offering an appropriate range of opportunities, and encourages students to participate in QMUL Doctoral College training events.

- *establish a mechanism for staff and students to meet to discuss matters of relevance to all research students, such as a Research Student:Staff Liaison Committee or forum, with an action note from each meeting;*

The PhD Committee regularly engages and invites comments from all research students which are then discussed and acted upon. The PhD Committee includes research student representation.

[Para. 32 from the review report provides the background to this recommendation – set out in Annexe A.]

Staff appraisal

2.9 *The Panel recommends that the School ensure that the annual staff appraisal process adequately covers both teaching and research.*

It is now standard practice within the School for the annual staff appraisal process to adequately cover both teaching and research.

Periodic Review of the School of Economics and Finance

Extracts from Review Report referred to in the main paper

Recommendation 2.1

- 2.1 The Panel recommends that the School review the role of the Director of Taught Programmes. It recommends that the Director of Taught Programmes role should be held by one senior person in the School who has a strategic overview of UGT and PGT programmes, and should be more clearly integrated within School management structures, especially as a member of the Senior Management Group.

Para. 51 from the review report

The School did not have a single person undertaking the role of Director of Taught Programmes with specific responsibility for UG and PGT programmes, the model followed in other schools and institutes under the College's academic governance structures. In the School's view the breadth and scale of operation in delivering UG and PGT programmes warranted a separation of the role of Director of Taught Programmes into co-leads for UG studies, reporting to the relevant Deputy Head of School (UG), and a lead for PGT studies (the Deputy Head of School (PGT)). There were two Co-Directors of UG Studies, one of whom was the main contact outside the School, for example representing the School at the Faculty Dean for Taught Programmes Advisory Group. The Senior Tutor also played a key role in supporting UG students and staff. These roles reported to the UG Studies Co-ordinator who was the Deputy Head of School (UG) and a member of the School Senior Management Committee. The Panel considered that the School's assignment of lead responsibilities for UG studies was unusual within the QM delegation framework, and was concerned that the full overview of taught programme matters was not fully integrated into the School senior management structures.

Recommendation 2.7

- 2.7 The Panel recommends that the School should consider providing a Senior Tutor for Postgraduate Studies to support PGT students and staff in a similar way to the support provided to UGT students and staff.

Para. 38 from the review report

Noting the beneficial impact of the role of the UG Senior Tutor for both staff and students, the Panel observed that the support for PGT programmes would be enhanced by a similar role. The Panel therefore recommended that the School should consider providing a Senior Tutor for Postgraduate Studies to support PGT students and staff in a similar way to the support provided to UGT students and staff.

Recommendation 2.8

- 2.8 The Panel recommends that the School's processes for monitoring research student progression and training should be formalised in line with College requirements and good practice. In particular the Panel recommends that the School:

- introduce formal monitoring requirements for students in the second and third years of the PhD;
- participate in the discussions on research student training within the HSS Faculty to ensure that the School is offering an appropriate range of opportunities, and encourage students to participate in QM Doctoral College training events;
- establish a mechanism for staff and students to meet to discuss matters of relevance to all research students, such as a Research Student:Staff Liaison Committee or forum, with an action note from each meeting.

Para. 32 from the review report

The Panel noted that the School's arrangements for monitoring progress and obtaining feedback from research students had been satisfactory to date due to the small student community, although they were rather informal, and relied on the supervisor identifying problems. After the first year progression hurdle, the research progression of every research student was documented in an annual progress report and assessed by the Research Committee on the basis of a presentation at a PhD conference or the School reading group. However, the Panel was concerned that these arrangements might not provide an adequate structure to manage a problem case or to monitor increased numbers of research students, and considered that more formal arrangements should be put in place, such as more formalised hurdles for monitoring student progress, particularly in the latter years of the PhD. Also, the School did not have a SSLC or PGR forum for its postgraduate research students, although the School explained that the culture in the department was to regard research students as junior members of staff who were welcome to discuss any issues or concerns with any member of staff. The PhD students who met the Panel confirmed that this worked well and they appreciated the friendly working environment in the School.