UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 26 May 2006

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Report of the Review of the School of Business and Management held on Friday 3 March 2006

Ms Helen Clegg, Senate Office

June 2006

Review Panel

Professor Mike French (Convener)	Senate Assessor on University Court (Acting Convener in the absence of Professor Chris Morris, Vice-Principal (Arts-side))
Professor Alan McKinlay	External Subject Specialist, University of St Andrews
Dr Alberto Paloni	Member of Cognate Department (Economics)
Dr Sarah Mann	Learning and Teaching Centre Representative
Ms Helen Clegg	Administrator, Senate Office

Introduction

1. *Background*

   The School of Business & Management was last reviewed internally during Session 2000-2001. A Teaching Quality Assessment of Business & Management was undertaken by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) in December 1994, which resulted in a 'Highly Satisfactory' rating. The School received a rating of 4 in the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise.

2. *Documentation*

   The School had provided a Self Evaluation Report and supporting documentation in accordance with the University's requirements for the Review of Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. The Convener thanked the School for the fullness and clarity of the documentation.

3. *Participants in the Review*

   The Review Panel met with Professor Noreen Burrows, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Business & Social Sciences, and Professor Angus Laing, Head of the School of Management. They also met with Professor Robbie Paton, the former Head of School and currently Associate Dean (Business School) and Dr Martin Beirne, the School's Director of Quality Assurance. During the course of the event, the Panel also met with twelve key members of staff, five probationary members of staff including four University Teachers, five Graduate Teaching Assistants, ten postgraduate students and eighteen undergraduate students.

4.   Range of Provision

The Review Panel considered the following range of provision offered by the School of Business & Management:

- MA (Hons) Business & Management

- MSc Management

- MSc Management Research

- MSc Local Economic Development

- MBA

5.   Overall Aims of the School's Provision

The overall aims of the School's provision were stated in the Self Evaluation Report and were communicated to all students via course handbooks. The Panel considered the School's aims to be appropriate, and consistent with the aims of the University.

5.1   Service Teaching

It was noted that service teaching was provided for students in the Department of Accounting & Finance, and in the Faculties of Medicine and Engineering.

5.2   MBA Review

It was reported in the Self Evaluation Report that a reappraisal of the MBA provision had determined that a number of key changes were required in order to retain attractiveness and relevance. A number of changes had already been implemented and the Head of School advised that a comprehensive review of the MBA was underway.

5.3   MA Review

A review of the MA Business & Management was also taking place to strengthen the articulation between intended learning outcomes and teaching. A number of changes had already been made, including the introduction of tutorials in essay writing and communication skills, a redesign of Level 2 and the introduction of a compulsory Strategy course in Junior Honours.

5.4   Benchmark Statement

The Benchmark Statement for General Business and Management had been welcomed by the School, and it was confirmed that the School's aims were in line with this statement.

5.5   Distinctiveness

The Panel wished to know how the School distinguished its offerings from those of comparable institutions. The Head of School believed that the specialist streams of the Masters programme, together with the revamped MBA and the traditionally strong MA degree, put the School in a strong position, delivering research-led teaching in distinctive ways.

Students emphasised the attractive nature of the programmes and provision generally. Postgraduate students appeared less clear about their expectations on joining the School, or about what made them choose Glasgow above other universities.

The Panel **recommended** that the School gather student views on entry and exit, in the most appropriate manner, in order to ascertain student expectations, reasons for applying, and whether expectations had been met.

6. *Intended Learning Outcomes*

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for each programme were included in the Programme Specifications. There were also specific ILOs for each component course which were included in course documentation and communicated to students at the first meetings of classes.

7. *Assessment*

The School's assessment methods were varied and included class tests, coursework assignments and oral presentations, in addition to formal examinations.

7.1 *Code of Assessment*

Comments made by some External Examiners indicated earlier concerns over the very small number of First Class honours degrees awarded, and suggested this might be due to the application of the University Code of Assessment. The Head of School acknowledged that the Code of Assessment could perhaps inhibit staff from awarding the highest marks. The staff groups were unsure of any effect of the Code of Assessment but noted that marks had been verified by External Examiners as appropriate.

7.2 *Feedback*

The undergraduate student group stated that the amount and quality of feedback they received was generally good. However, the exception to this was at Level 2, where assessment practices meant that little feedback was available *(see Paragraph 7.3 below).*

At postgraduate level, students feedback was provided relatively late in the courses and they felt that, especially at Masters level, feedback was required sooner. They confirmed they had raised the issue with the School and had been told the delay was unavoidable due to the large number of students. Students were concerned that they might repeat the same mistakes throughout the year due to the limited guidance. They stated that, when they did receive feedback, it tended to be insufficiently critical.

Staff stated that formative assessment had been built into the MBA and that this had worked well. However, as regards feedback from assignments, this was sometimes delayed due to extensions being requested by students, as staff could not give feedback to the class until all students had submitted their work.

The Panel **recommended** that the School give further thought to ways in which timeous feedback, particularly during the Level 2 course, in the initial transition to Level 3 and for Masters level students, could be provided. This should involve a full review of the assessment scheme for Level 2 in order to ensure that the assessment scheme facilitates and tests student learning effectively.

7.3 *Balance Between Examinations and Continuous Assessment*

It was noted from the Self Evaluation Report that formal examinations were the main form of assessment. The Head of School explained that the balance had been considered, but that examinations could not be replaced with other forms of assessment due to the provisions of the accrediting body. However, it was stated that some Honours subjects did not have final examinations.

In Level 2 of the MA, assessment was entirely exam-based. The undergraduate student group's main concern regarding this was the lack of feedback. As there was no feedback on the examination, students relied on feedback from tutorials only. In addition, as there was no essay writing in Level 2, students felt the gap between Levels 1 and 3 was very great, as the standard expected of them in Level 3 would be significantly higher. It was noted that there had previously been essay requirements in Level 2, but that this had made the workload too heavy. Staff agreed that Level 2 presented a challenge but strongly felt that to have an essay assignment as well as examination would be excessive. It was intended to redesign Level 2 over the coming year to try and address the issue and students had already been consulted on this.

7.4 Dissertations

The postgraduate students raised some concerns about the timing of the dissertation proposal. They stated that this had to be started in January, which they found difficult as they had not completed a significant portion of the programme by that stage. However, they recognised that if their proposal was not submitted on time they would have difficulty in securing a supervisor.

There had been discussion within the School as regards replacing the MA dissertation, due to both the growing proportion of students who have difficulty with the dissertation and the proportion of credits (45) accounted for by the dissertation and the required Managerial Research Methods course. As it comprised one third of the programme, a great deal of support was required. For the present time, however, it had been agreed to retain the dissertation. It was noted that independent work in Honours was a requirement approved by Senate, and this would have to be borne in mind should further consideration be given to discontinuing the Dissertation.

7.5 Plagiarism

The Panel explored the School's approach to instances of plagiarism. The Head of School stated he was not aware of any major problems in this area.

8. Curriculum Design and Content

It was stated in the Self Evaluation Report that the School followed well-documented and systematic Faculty processes to develop, monitor, evaluate and revise all degree curricula.

8.1 Change and Sustainability

The Panel noted that there had been significant revisions to programmes since the School restructuring in 2003, coupled with a considerable increase in student numbers at MSc level. The Panel explored the issues raised by these developments and the School's strategic approach. The Head of School stated that it had been a planned strategy of growth borne out of necessity. The ascendance of the MSc in the marketplace, ahead of the MBA, was recognised, and in order to distinguish the GU offering, the various MSc streams were created. Undergraduate provision had always been considered strong and so this was built upon in order to further secure the School's future without reliance on the taught postgraduate provision. The Head of School felt that a plateau had now been reached and that further growth should not be pursued for the time being as a period of consolidation was appropriate. The Panel felt strongly that a period of consolidation was in fact essential, in order to give the School time to reflect on the issues of teaching quality and resource management, to ensure teaching quality was not compromised due to unmanageable student numbers. The Panel firmly believed there should be no increase in MSc numbers for the time being.

8.2   Post-Experience Qualifications

There was interest in the possibility of developing post-experience qualifications, such as highly structured CPD provision or a PhD programme. However, the Head of School took the view that limitations on physical infrastructure precluded further growth at present.

8.3   Review of Provision

The School followed a programme of five-yearly review of all its core programmes and dedicated 'away days' were often organised for this purpose. This ensured continuous monitoring and improvement.

8.4   Research-Led Teaching

The Panel noted from the Self Evaluation Report that the School was committed to ensuring that teaching was research-led, and required new members of staff to offer elective courses within their area of research. Project work could also be drawn from staff expertise.

The Graduate Teaching Assistants and Hourly Paid Staff agreed that the ethos of research-led teaching was particularly strong within the School. They stated that there had been emphasis on research from Level 1 onwards, which encouraged a critical approach and engagement with the relevant literature. This was thought to be particularly effective where the member of staff leading the course had been involved in the research directly.

The undergraduate students were also impressed with the School's commitment to research, and stated that it gave them reassurance that staff fully understood, and were passionate about, their subject. They suggested that the research interests and publications of each member of staff could be better publicised.

9.   Student Recruitment, Support and Progression

9.1   Recruitment

9.1.1   Expansion in Student Numbers

It was evident that student numbers, in particular for postgraduate programmes, had increased significantly. The Panel heard the School's unanimous concern that teaching accommodation was not sufficiently flexible or adapted to its specific needs and that this reduced the effectiveness of learning and teaching, particularly at postgraduate level. It was suggested by the Head of School that entry requirements perhaps required to be revisited, now that the School had acquired a favourable reputation and the number of applications was increasing. There were some concerns amongst all the staff groups that numbers were becoming unmanageable and this was having a detrimental effect on the quality of teaching and feedback.

9.1.2   Faculty Entry System

Entry to the School at undergraduate level was via the Faculty entry system.

9.1.3   Recruitment Activities

It was stated in the Self Evaluation Report that, as demand had consistently exceeded the number of places available on the MA programme, there had been no need to actively recruit to it. However, time and resources were being

devoted to working with school pupils in order to attract applicants likely to benefit most from the programme.

At postgraduate level, the postgraduate Management Team collaborated with administrative departments such as the International & Postgraduate Service, to profile and actively recruit appropriate populations of students. There was also dedicated website support. Involvement of academics in the marketing of programmes, and the resources required for them to do this, was being increased.

9.1.4 Overseas Recruitment

The Head of School stated that overseas links were being strengthened by staff visiting countries and cultivating ties in areas which were considered consistent with GU standards. In doing so, not only were links created, but a better knowledge of the overseas markets could be gained. A Faculty International Officer had been recruited and a group of Heads of Department from cognate departments, coordinated by the Associate Dean (Business School) had been formed who took on the role of overseas marketing. The Head of School stated that over the last year there had been a great focus on thinking more strategically about the markets the School wished to enter.

Amongst the taught postgraduate students, one of the reasons given for coming to the School was the government's 'Fresh Talent' initiative.

Opinions were voiced by the various staff groups that perhaps the current language requirement needed to be raised for postgraduate applicants (currently a score of 6.5 on the IELTS test was required). It was recognised that many of the students coming to the University had a very poor knowledge of English despite their IELTS score. Staff stated that voluntary 'learning sessions' had been offered to the overseas Masters students, but these had not been well attended.

9.1.5 Reputation

The Head of School explained that, in the past, the GU Business School had not enjoyed a high profile, but that it now had a higher degree of visibility in certain key markets. This was known by examining where students were coming from, and the increasing willingness of institutions to work with GU in developing shared programmes.

9.2 Student Support

9.2.1 Convener of Postgraduate Student Affairs

The Panel noted from the Self Evaluation Report that a Convener of Postgraduate Student Affairs had been appointed. Postgraduate students seemed unaware of this post's existence. The Head of School advised that this was a new post and its role had not been fully defined yet. The Panel **commended** the initiative as a one to be developed actively.

9.2.2 Student Attendance

The Panel heard that attendance at tutorials was high. As the groups were small, non-attendance was more likely to be noticed. Attendance sheets were collected for each tutorial and passed to the School Office. These also showed how well prepared each student was for the class, which was considered to be very useful information should a problem arise at a later date. Participation in tutorials was also considered to be highly satisfactory in most cases.

9.2.3   Communication

The undergraduate students stated that on some occasions there did not seem to be sufficient communication between the lecturer for a course and the tutor. As a result, the tutorials did not always appear directly relevant to the topics being taught in lectures.

At postgraduate level, the part time students stated there were sometimes problems with classes being cancelled and groups not being informed in advance. They believed there needed to be better communication between the teaching staff and the School Office in order to relay information to students.

The postgraduate students also stated that they received a large number of emails, including some class notes, but requested that these be sent further in advance of class to better support preparation and learning.

The Panel **recommended** that steps be taken to improve communication channels between academic staff, the School Office and students in order that information on class content, timetable changes and so on could be received timeously.

9.3   Progression

9.3.1   Progression from Year 1 to Honours

- It was noted from the Self Evaluation Report that only around 25% of students entering Level 1 of the MA continued to Honours, with this reflecting the nature of Faculty entry and the MA degree programme structure. The School suggested that this was possibly due to strains being created by teaching students committed to attaining a management degree, as well as students with only a passing interest in the subject. Further investigations were underway within the School and initial results suggested that progression from Level 1 and 2 into honours is significantly less problematic than initially perceived by staff.

Staff confirmed that a large number of Year 1 students did not progress further, particularly overseas students. They stated that the Faculty was taking steps to address this, for example through additional support mechanisms for overseas students, but the students it was aimed towards were not taking advantage of it and were not progressing in other subjects either.

10.   The Effectiveness of Provision

The School offered evidence of the effectiveness of its provision, by means of External Examiners' comments, accreditation documents and student feedback.

10.1   Learning & Teaching

10.1.1   Local Economic Development

Students on this programme, which was run on a part time basis in the evening, stated there was little opportunity for students to bond, and due to time pressures there had been limited induction. They considered that this was not particularly helpful to the learning process. They also thought they were not as involved with the School as students on other programmes.

The Panel **recommended** that the School consider ways of integrating the students on the Local Economic Development programme into the School and enhancing their overall student experience.

10.1.2   Web-based Lecture Notes

The undergraduate students stated that some lecturers did not post their notes on the web as it was thought that this would discourage attendance. However, the students did not think this would be the case, as they recognised that the lecture notes gave only a foundation which was supplemented by the lecture itself.

10.2   Learning Resources and their Deployment

10.2.1   Teaching Accommodation

The Head of School stated that, due to the increased numbers of students, teaching accommodation was under great strain. It was considered that postgraduate teaching in particular suffered due to this, as there was a lack of lecturing accommodation with small 'break-out' rooms available for the type of group work common to postgraduate teaching. The staff group echoed this opinion, stating that some MSc lectures were for around 250 students, but an effective break out group would ideally contain less than 30 students, and no space was available for such a large number of groups. The student groups and probationary staff agreed that the teaching accommodation was not always ideal and did not lend itself well to group teaching. It was suggested that, if it were possible to use this space, the Hunterian Museum would be ideal for this type of activity.

Given that the School was pursuing AASBC accreditation in the coming year, the need for appropriate space was a particularly high priority. There was concern that the efforts made by staff for the pre-accreditation visit would be undermined by the available physical resources.

The Panel **recommended** that the issues surrounding the lack of appropriate teaching accommodation be forwarded to the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching, the Territorial Vice-Principal and the Head of Estates and Buildings for consideration, as matters requiring urgent attention.

The Panel **recommended** that Faculty and Senate Office consider the effectiveness of existing systems, notably ACMRs and new course approval procedures, for highlighting accommodation requirements and any problems.

10.2.2   Teaching Facilities

Throughout the Self Evaluation Report, and in the meeting with the Head of School, a number of issues were raised regarding the limited physical infrastructure. A lack of suitable teaching space had meant that some courses had been subject to 'double teaching' in the current session. Considerable problems with teaching technology had also been reported.

There were long standing difficulties with the technological resources to support lecture classes and many staff found they had to take, and set up, their own laptops in order to use Powerpoint. The available technology was considered to lag well behind that of comparable institutions.

The Panel **recommended** that the issues surrounding the lack of appropriate teaching technology be forwarded to the Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching), the Dean of LBSS and the Head of Estates and Buildings for consideration as matters requiring urgent attention.

10.2.3   Reliance on Key Staff

The Panel was concerned that responsibility for the large amount of change and growth within the School rested with a small number of key staff. The Head of School stated that he was conscious of this and that steps were being taken to involve other members of staff and also to manage succession. Deputies were being appointed as well as additional secretarial support. He stated that these key staff brought a great deal of drive and ambition to the School, which was particularly valuable in times of rapid change. He also stated that these staff, who had particularly heavy management/leadership roles, did receive a much reduced teaching load to compensate. This small amount of teaching allowed them to stay in touch with the programmes they dealt with.

The Key Staff group commented that teaching was highly documented, in order to make it document-focused rather than person-focused. This, it was hoped, would lessen reliance on certain individuals. They also stated that, during the initial stages of the development activity within the School, responsibility had lain largely with one person. However, a clear team structure was now in place. Open decision making and collectivity had, they believed, formed the basis of the team spirit evident within the School.

The Key Staff group advised that the School coped with change, and planned for the future, through a system of teamwork and division of labour. They recognised that such pressure was not unique to the School and that, although they did feel student numbers were now at the stage where they could not be increased further, the School was still committed to its underlying ethos. They stated that the staff would always find a way to cope, but that problems relating to teaching accommodation and facilities would always make this more difficult than necessary.

The Panel **commended** the School for retaining such a high level of commitment in times of extremely rapid change.

10.2.4   University Teachers

The School had appointed a number of University Teachers and Senior University teachers. The Head of School believed these staff should be used as leaders in pedagogical practice, rather than simply as teachers. He hoped they would become involved in teaching innovations and reflective practices, but acknowledged that high student numbers and the resultant assessment load were likely to create an obstacle to such activity.

There was a feeling amongst the University Teachers that their workload was excessive, with many working evenings and weekends, and that they were not considered as highly as their colleagues in more traditional lecturing posts. There had also been problems related to timetabling, with these not being supplied until several days before teaching was due to start. In some cases University Teachers were being asked to lecture on topics with which they were unfamiliar.

The University Teachers and the Panel wished to stress the importance of University Teachers being given scope for sustaining own scholarship in support of their roles.

10.2.5   Teaching Assistants/Hourly Paid Staff

The Teaching Assistants and Hourly Paid Staff led tutorials and, in certain cases, gave lectures. The Panel heard that they had been provided with a one-day training course, and that they received pastoral support within the School. They

were also encouraged to take the 'Approaches to Teaching & Learning' GTA Module course, leading to associate membership of the Higher Education Academy. The Teaching Assistants stated that they were pleased to be offered this training, as they felt better prepared. They also stated they were offered staff development courses and received emails from the Learning & Teaching Centre regarding training. They were also able to call upon colleagues within the School for help at any time.

The Teaching Assistants felt that, in terms of career development, their experience had been invaluable. Without this, moving into a teaching career would be a difficult transition. They stated that they were largely able to select the teaching times that best suited them, and these were known well in advance.

The Hourly Paid Staff stated that, although the School was supportive of them, they did feel rather less involved in School business than those members of staff employed full time, and it was slightly more difficult for students to contact them if they encountered problems. However, they acknowledged that this was inevitable and that the high level of goodwill within the School helped reduce difficulties.

Hourly Paid Staff were involved in assessment. The Panel heard that they set questions and these were double marked to ensure standards were maintained. Detailed marking guidelines were also provided and the Hourly Paid Staff were able to attend Examination Boards to see how their marking compared to that of other markers.

The Teaching Assistants stated they received feedback on their performance, including from students. However, Hourly Paid Staff did not receive this, and the only feedback they received came from the student feedback forms at the end of the course. They felt guidance and support at an earlier stage was important, particularly as they were less well integrated into the School.

10.2.6   Administrative & Secretarial Staff

Both student groups commented that the School Office staff were exceptional and did an excellent job of administering a very complex programme. They stated that the Office staff knew the students by name, gave helpful and friendly advice, and knew the courses and lecturers well. The students saw this as invaluable. The staff groups also praised the office staff and commented that they were highly professional and significantly reduced the administrative burden on teaching staff.

The Panel praised the role of School administrative staff in their support and coordination of masters classes in particular.

10.2.7   New Lecturer Teacher Programme

The Probationary Staff group stated that they were required to take part in the New Lecturer Teacher programme. There were mixed feelings on the usefulness of this and staff reported that their workloads prevented them from being able to attend and thus being fully committed to the programme. However, the School's mentoring scheme had been found to be very helpful and valuable feedback had resulted.

Probationary staff stated that their workloads were excessive and that in some cases they found it impossible to achieve their objectives, or pursue research interests, due to teaching and marking commitments.

10.2.8 Books & Journals

The postgraduate students stated that it was often problematic to borrow books from the short term loan collection. They also voiced a wish to be given reading lists well in advance of commencing study. In addition, they complained about the amount of money they were required to spend on printing, and enquired whether there was any possibility of free printing facilities being made available by the School.

10.2.9 Staff Commitment

The Panel praised the commitment of all staff and their involvement in the development and delivery of new programmes and for meeting the demands presented by the recent expansion of enrolments. They suggested that Head of School be encouraged to ensure effective operation of workload models and support for staff, such as mentoring.

11. The Maintenance and Enhancement of Standards and Awards

The Self Evaluation Report indicated that standards were maintained using a number of methods – including moderation of examination papers and marks by External Examiners and the application of the various University codes of practice. External Examiners also played a key role in ensuring comparability with standards and practice in other institutions. The Annual Course Monitoring process also provided an opportunity to identify relevant issues and act upon them. Finally, the accreditation of the MBA programme by AMBA ensured that national standards were met.

The Panel praised the draft Teaching Quality handbook, as showing concern for sustaining quality across School's programmes. It was also noted that staff and students were clearly committed to 'reflective' learning and teaching and this was apparent throughout the various meetings.

12. The Maintenance and Assurance of Quality

The School of Business and Management was last reviewed internally during Session 2000-2001. A Teaching Quality Assessment of Business & Management was undertaken by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) in December 1994, which resulted in a 'Highly Satisfactory' rating.

12.1 Quality Assurance Methods

A variety of measures were in place with regard to quality assurance – these included the New Lecturer Teacher Programme, student feedback questionnaires, various School and Faculty committees, and the regular review of courses and programmes.

12.2 Mechanisms for Student Input

The main method by which students could offer their input was through feedback questionnaires distributed at the end of each course. Class representatives could also take any matters of concern to the Staff Student Liaison Committee. The student groups stated that they received feedback on action being taken as a result of their comments. They also stated that, particularly over the last year or so, their opinions had been sought on a frequent basis. They felt able to give constructive criticism and suggestions, and stated that staff never reacted defensively but were always welcoming of their input.

13.   Enhancing the Student Learning Experience

13.1 Diversity of the Student Group

The Panel noted that the student group was diverse, comprising a large number of overseas postgraduates as well as home students and mature students. The Head of School believed that diversity, particularly of the various nationalities, enriched the student experience. It was acknowledged that there was a very large number of Chinese students on the MSc programmes, so a good deal of language support was required. The postgraduate students agreed that diversity brought richness, although some of the Chinese students felt that, as some of the groups were almost entirely made up of Chinese students, they did not really experience other cultures as much as they would have liked. Staff stated that, when assigning groups, efforts were made to ensure a good mix, but this was not always possible. The overseas students also mentioned that language did cause problems as the pace of work was already high.

As the part time MBA was largely made up of practicing managers, there could be a tendency towards domination of groups. Staff were aware of this and gave guidance to students on what was expected of them, whilst identifying and addressing any problems arising amongst groups. However, some of the MBA students stated that one of the most valuable aspects of the programme was the calibre of students and the knowledge and different perspectives gained from the variety of professions represented.

13.2 Combination of Theory and Practice

The undergraduate student group stated that one of the strengths of their programme was the amount of 'real life' experience included, such as work placements, live case studies and the invitation of guest speakers. This gave a good mix of theoretical and practical knowledge. The students believed this gave them a critical perspective and encouraged them to give opinions and develop a sense of identity.

The postgraduate students also stated that guest speakers were extremely helpful and they were keen that more speakers be invited.

13.3 Postgraduate Induction

The taught postgraduate group stated they had found the induction session very useful, and that additional seminars were given to recap on certain aspects. In comparison with other institutions the students had attended, it was felt to have been favourable. The students thought the staff had a clear understanding of the problems the students faced and dealt with these well. They also stated that staff were extremely approachable.

14.   Summary of Key Strengths and Areas to be Improved or Enhanced in Relation to Learning and Teaching

Key Strengths

The School demonstrated a cohesive, consultative approach and all staff showed an extremely strong commitment to the success of the School and its students, despite the rapid and far-reaching change it had experienced

- The undergraduate student group were considered to be a credit to the School and their progression through their degree was clearly discernible

- The combination of theoretical and practical work showed a clear commitment to ensuring students were prepared for entering work

- Effectiveness of School Office staff in coordinating programmes and student experiences

- Reflective approach to learning demonstrated by the School's staff

Areas to be Improved or Enhanced

- Communication channels needed to be improved between various staff

- groups and students, particularly across the postgraduate programmes involving the broader School

- Extent and effectiveness of use of IT in support of administration and coordination across programmes and in support of learning and teaching, with the aim of providing a smooth and integrated experience for all students

- Alignment of University corporate communications and marketing with School aims and faculties to ensure development of appropriate resources in a strategically important and highly competitive area

- Consideration needed to be given to further enhancing the feedback process, particularly for postgraduate students

- The School should give consideration to the tension between the objective that dissertations should be driven by the students' interest, and the provision of a very small number of supervisors with a limited range of topics

- Emphasis needed to be placed on the need for staff (including University Teachers) to be allowed a certain amount of time for scholarship

- Efforts needed to be made to recruit postgraduate students from overseas countries rather than concentration on the Chinese market, in order to bring about a true diversity of cultures

15. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The Panel concluded that the School's provision was of a high quality overall, and in particular wished to commend the School on the following points:

- its retention of such a high level of commitment in times of extremely rapid change

- its appointment of a Convener of Postgraduate Student Affairs. It was hoped that this post would become more visible to students and that part of its remit would be the identification of new overseas markets in order to bring about diversity in the student body

Recommendations

The recommendations interspersed in the preceding report, and summarised below, are made in the spirit of encouragement in order to enhance the already high standards of the School of Business & Management. The recommendations have been cross-referenced to the corresponding sections of the report, and are ranked in order of priority.

1. The Panel **recommended** that the issues surrounding the lack of appropriate teaching accommodation be forwarded to the Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning) the Dean and the Head of Estates and Buildings for consideration (Paragraph 10.2.1)

Action : Head of School; Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning); Dean of LBSS; Head of Estates & Buildings

2.	The Panel **recommended** that the issues surrounding the lack of appropriate teaching technology be forwarded to the Vice-Principal(Teaching and Learning) and the Head of Estates and Buildings for consideration (Paragraph 10.2.2)

Action : Head of School; Vice-Principal(Teaching and Learning); Dean of LBSS Head of Estates & Buildings)

3.	The Panel **recommended** that the School give further thought to ways in which timeous feedback, particularly during the Level 2 course, in the initial transition to Level 3 and for Masters level students, could be provided. This should involve a full review of the assessment scheme for Level 2 in order to ensure that the assessment scheme facilitates and tests student learning effectively (Paragraph 7.2)

Action : Head of School

4.	The Panel **recommended** that steps be taken to improve communication channels between academic staff, the School Office and students in order that information on class content, timetable changes and so on could be received timeously (Paragraph 9.2.3)

Action : Head of School; Dean of LBSS

5.	The Panel **recommended** that the School consider ways of integrating the students on the Local Economic Development programme into the School and enhancing their overall student experience (Paragraph 10.1.1)

Action : Head of School

6.	The Panel **recommended** that the School gather student views on entry and exit, in the most appropriate manner, in order to ascertain student expectations, reasons for applying, and whether expectations had been met (Paragraph 5.5)

Action : Head of School

7.	The Panel **recommended** that Faculty and Senate Office consider the effectiveness of existing systems, notably ACMRs and new course approval procedures, for highlighting accommodation requirements and any problems. (Paragraph 10.2.1)

Action : Dean of LBSS; Associate Dean (Business School); Senate Office

Prepared by: Janet Fleming, Senate Office

Last modified on: Thursday 15 June 2006