

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (DPTLA)

Review of Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII): 26 February 2010

Report Summary

The following is a brief summary of the full report of the review carried out in HATII. Reviews of *Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment* (DPTLA) are internal subject reviews focused on the quality of provision as experienced by students. The review looks at the range of programmes, course content, the teaching methods employed, assessment, facilities and much more.

The full report of the review is available publicly at:

http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_173368_en.pdf

Further information about the DPTLA process can be found at:

<http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/gea/psr/>

Italicised words are explained in a glossary below.

Conclusions

The Review Panel was impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of the *HATII* staff and *GTAs*, and with the Institute's focus on *employability* and practical work. With both staff and students citing it as a strength, the small size of HATII appeared to be of great benefit, allowing for a more personalised approach as well as a varied, if heavy, workload for staff. The student groups were articulate and enthusiastic, and were a credit to HATII.

HATII demonstrated a number of strengths, as well as an awareness of the areas requiring improvement.

Key Strengths

- The approachability and enthusiasm of staff, which was reported to inspire student interest in the subject area.
 - The innovative learning and teaching methods in use.
 - The quality of support provided to students and the individual attention given, not only in times of difficulty but throughout the whole *student lifecycle*.
 - The commitment to *employability* and the inclusion of a large practical element in all courses and programmes.
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Areas to be improved or enhanced¹

1. Assessment

- a) Consideration to be given to providing more detailed course and assessment information to students at the pre-enrolment stage to facilitate more informed course choices. [paragraph 3.3.2]
- b) Clear, formal guidance should be issued to all students outlining the expected turnaround time for the return of assignments and feedback when it is not possible to do so within three weeks. A policy on providing this information should also be developed and implemented. [paragraph 3.3.3]
- c) Course structures where practical assessments take place near the end of the teaching to be reconsidered to provide students with the necessary technical skills to complete the assessment at an early enough stage for results and feedback to be returned before the examination. [paragraph 3.3.4]
- d) Consideration should be given to reducing the amount of student work being *second marked*, particularly at postgraduate level, and to the options for reducing the volume of assessment HATII undertake. [paragraph 3.3.7]

2. Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

- a) All *course descriptors* should be reviewed to ensure they accurately and fully reflect course content. [paragraph 3.2.3]

3. Curriculum Design, Development and Content

- a) The amount of lab time available to undergraduate students to be increased where possible and consideration given to adjusting the balance between lecture and lab sessions, so that some sessions might be entirely lab based. [paragraph 3.4.6]

4. The Quality of Learning Opportunities

- a) The use of *podcasts* in addition to scheduled classes to be considered and increased at all levels. [paragraph 3.7.2]
- b) Contingency plans for delivering courses currently supported by external staff to be considered and developed to ensure the continued sustainability of the programmes. [paragraph 3.7.4]

5. Assuring and Enhancing the Quality of the Students' Learning Experience

- a) A more formal mechanism for recording issues raised by students, and for reporting back to students any action taken to be implemented to ensure the feedback loop is completed. [paragraph 5.4]
- b) The remit of the Teaching Committee should be reviewed to ensure the inclusion of *enhancement*, and that these discussions are fully and accurately minuted. [paragraph 5.6]

6. Resources for Learning and Teaching

- a) The issue of computer lab access (evening and weekend access, or the installation of specific pieces of software on non-HATII computers) to be discussed with the Faculty of Arts and with the Director of Estates and Buildings. [paragraph 3.8.14]
- b) A contingency plan to ensure the provision of the MSc Computer Forensics and E-Discovery programme is sustainable should be formulated. [paragraph 3.8.3]
- c) HATII's core teaching and research activity to be given priority over non-essential activities. [paragraph 3.8.1]

¹ Numbers refer to the paragraphs in the full report that contain the relevant discussion.

- d) An appropriate level of support to be provided for any probationary members of staff. [paragraph 3.8.3]
- e) An increased level of support for the management of academic processes to be provided by the Faculty. [paragraph 3.8.6]
- f) Staff from outside HATII who teach on its programmes should be formally included on relevant committees discussing teaching, learning and curriculum development. [paragraph 3.8.8]

7. Student Recruitment

- a) Possible alternative degree titles for the undergraduate degree to be discussed with a view to raising awareness of the programme content and increasing recruitment. [paragraph 3.5.2]
- b) Serious consideration to be given to the Institute's long term strategy and focus so that it can continue to deliver high-quality provision in a sustainable manner. [paragraph 3.5.4]

Glossary of terms/acronyms used

Course Descriptors

Programme or course aims that describe what the University/Department aims to provide to students through the delivery of the programme or course overall.

Departmental Programmes of Teaching, Learning and Assessment or DPTLA

The University has a six yearly cycle of review of the departments within it. The DPTLA is one of the main ways by which the University assures itself of the quality of the provision delivered by departments.

Employability

Employability is about more than being able to get a job after University. It is about acknowledging and being able to demonstrate achievements, understanding and personal attributes that will contribute to success both during, and after, University.

Enhancement

The University has adopted the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) definition of 'enhancement' which is - 'taking deliberate steps to bring about improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experiences of students'.

Graduate Teaching Assistant or GTAs

Graduate Teaching Assistants, Tutors and Laboratory Demonstrators are students, usually research students, who assist with teaching in the form of tutorials, labs and other activities that are part of undergraduate programmes in the department. They are paid an hourly rate by the University.

Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute or HATII

HATII is one of the world's leading centres for computing and information studies in the arts and humanities.

Intended Learning Outcomes or ILOs

Intended Learning Outcomes or ILOs describe what all students should be able to do or demonstrate, in terms of particular knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes when they successfully complete the course or programme that the ILOs relate to.

Podcast

A podcast is a series of digital computer files, usually either digital audio or video, that is released periodically and made available for download, so that users can subscribe (or unsubscribe) to get access to all current items in each podcast, and have newly published items automatically downloaded.

Second Marking/Double Marking

Second or double marking describes the process where assessments are marked a second time by a different member of staff and the two marks compared. The purpose is to ensure that marks awarded are fair, reliable and consistent. The second marking may be done 'blind' or 'seen' and may be done on all of the class's work or on just a sample. Where the markers agree, the marks are confirmed or verified; where they disagree, the marks are moderated or changed either by agreement between the two markers or by a third person.

Student Lifecycle (Project)

The phrase "student lifecycle" refers to the relationship and contact the University has with each student from enquiry through to graduation and beyond. It came into use with the beginning of the Student Lifecycle Project, an ambitious and far-reaching project to transform the student information system. The new system is called Campus Solutions and is in the construct phase of development (at September 2010).