

UNIVERSITY SUBJECT REVIEW

Provision provided by the School of Management

March 2012

Preface

Purpose of University subject review

The purpose of University subject review is to provide a mechanism which enables the University to be confident that the academic standard set and approved for all credit bearing and non-credit bearing provision and the quality of learning opportunities offered to all students meet University and Scottish Funding Council expectations.

Outline of the procedure

University subject review is implemented in three complementary stages: preparation, led and monitored by the Head of School; scrutiny, led by Academic Quality; and, implementation of a school enhancement plan, led by the Head of School and monitored by the University Quality Assurance Monitoring and Review Committee. Faculty Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee provides support, advice and guidance to schools throughout the process as appropriate. The procedure is evidence-based and is reliant on information gathered during faculty and school-based quality assurance and enhancement activities typically within a six-year cycle. University subject review has been designed to be developmental in nature and encourages self-critical reflection through promoting dialogue between peers on areas where quality might be improved.

Evidence

In order to obtain evidence for the review, the panel carries out a number of activities, including scrutinising a self critical reflection produced by the school with responsibility for the subject areas being reviewed, reviewing the effectiveness of quality mechanisms and their associated documentation, and holding discussions with relevant staff and students. The panel's discussions are also informed by University policy and procedures and external subject benchmark information.

Outcome of the review

The outcome of the review is a school enhancement plan developed by the Head of School using information from the review report. The report records the panel's findings in relation to the effectiveness of the measures being implemented by the school to set and maintain the academic standard of its provision and to enhance the quality of the learning experience of all of its students. The report includes areas of good practice worthy of further dissemination and recommendations made by the panel to improve the school's management of its provision. A draft school enhancement plan noting the good practice identified by the review panel and any recommendations made will form part of the review report.

The school enhancement plan

Within a timescale agreed by the Head of School and Head of Academic Quality the school completes an enhancement plan by identifying: the action to be taken to either share good practice or address recommendations; the individual with responsibility for implementing the action; a completion date; and, the means by which the success or otherwise of the action will be evaluated and reported. The Head of School will monitor the implementation of the enhancement plan and provide their Faculty Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee with regular progress reports. Faculty Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee will provide University Quality Assurance Monitoring and Review Committee with a progress report on the implementation of the enhancement plan as part of the annual reporting procedure.

Executive summary

Summary

The School of Management (the School) is one of three Schools within the Edinburgh Napier University Business School (the Business School). There are three subject groups within the School: Entrepreneurship; Human Resource Management and Strategy, Operations & Economics. The scope of the review includes all provision developed and delivered by the School which takes account of the expectations set out in the following QAA subject benchmark statements:

- Business and Management
- Economics

At the time of the review approximately 1700 students were enrolled within the School. The student profile is truly international – as well as the programmes based within Edinburgh which attract both direct entry European and international students in addition to the more traditional UK based first year entrants there are a number of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes approved for delivery in, for example, Hong Kong and Singapore. The School is also developing an on-line MBA that targets an international market to include Sri Lanka, India, Malaysia and China. In addition, the School plans to offer articulation onto its full time and on-line MBAs to a number of international partners.

The academic standard of all provision in the School continues to meet subject, University, sector and (where appropriate) professional body expectations. The School has strong links with professional bodies including the Chartered Institute for Personnel Development (CIPD) and the Chartered Management Institute (CMI). The School is also participating in the Business School's move towards gaining accreditation from AACSB.

The School's curriculum is relevant, influenced by staff scholarly activity and research and delivered through a variety of innovative learning, teaching and assessment approaches including the use of cutting edge technology. The School monitors the effectiveness of learning and teaching through a range of mechanisms including student staff liaison committees and programme boards of studies. The sample of external examiner reports and student work scrutinised by the Panel consistently confirm the appropriateness of the academic standards across all the School's provision.

The School produced a critical and succinct self-reflection which contained areas of good practice and also identified where development activity was required. This self-reflection alongside enthusiastic discussions with staff and students and scrutiny of the evidence base, demonstrated to the Panel that the School was effectively engaging in enhancement-led activities.

The School portfolio currently offers three undergraduate and seven postgraduate programmes. However modules from all three subject groups are taught on programmes across the Faculty and there is also some inter-faculty provision of teaching as well as the provision of co-curricular modules. A list of the programmes and modules delivered by the School at the time of the review is included as Appendix 1.

Good practice

The following areas of **good practice** were identified for further dissemination University-wide:

- The rapport and interaction between staff and students. The students were greatly appreciative of the support and guidance offered by staff
- The embedding of employability within the curriculum
- The commitment to staff development generally by the School management team and the commitment and enthusiasm of the staff to avail themselves of these opportunities and its impact on curriculum development
- The commitment to strong research culture in the School and the extent to which it informs the student learning experience
- The success of the work placement scheme
- Their initiatives in terms of the LTA forum in light of the restructuring of the University committee structure
- The exploitation of technology led education in particular the development of the on-line MBA
- The commitment to the development of dual awards as evidenced by the HRM programme
- The engagement with School alumni
- The commitment to entrepreneurship

Recommendations

The panel recommends that the School of Management continues to:

- Review the policy of PDT provision to ensure a more consistent approach
- Build on examples of current good practice to ensure consistent quality and timeliness of feedback
- Consider how it can capitalise more on existing commercial and industrial links and develop further opportunities
- Ensure that the guidance to students on assessment requirements for Work Based Learning and the implications for degree classifications are clarified
- Consider how best the on line resources can continue to be exploited and disseminated

Recommendations for the Faculty to consider:

- Consider adopting the School's approach to LTA forum in light of the re-organisation of the University Committee structure
- Explore opportunities for cross Faculty developments and enterprise
- Ensure that PDT provision is adequately resourced

Matters to be referred outside the School (to be forwarded by the Clerk to the relevant individuals).

- Consider the resourcing issues raised by PDT requirements.

EDINBURGH NAPIER UNIVERSITY

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Conduct of the review

- 1 This report presents the findings of the University subject review of provision provided by the School of Management. The review was carried out by:
Rob Kemmer, Director of Quality, School of Computing (Panel Convenor).
Professor Christopher Prince, Executive Dean Birmingham City Business School, Birmingham City University.
Dr Uve Samuels, Executive Vice President, HSBA Hamburg School of Business Administration.
Martin Dowling, Director of Operations, School of Management, University of St Andrews.
Stewart Falconer, Head of School of Accounting, Financial Services and Law.
Vicky Heathwood, Faculty Operations Manager, Faculty of Engineering, Computing and Creative Industries.
David Robinson, student representative, Edinburgh, Napier University Business School.
Gillian Davies, Academic Quality Advisor (Clerk to the Panel).

Setting the review in context

1 The School of Management is one of three Schools within the Business School. In the 2011 NSS survey the School was ranked 2nd top School in the University, achieving an overall satisfaction rating of 89%. The School's Critical Review Document gave evidence of its "dynamic & ambitious" agenda against a culture of internal change as well as examples of its response to the external challenges facing the sector. During discussions with the Senior Management Team it was agreed the School was nearing full capacity in terms of the resources and skill set it had available to meet the challenges it had set itself. However, there was a confidence that its additional income streams and a flexible approach to its provision would stand it in good stead to achieve its stated aims. Furthermore, there was a danger the School will lose out to its competitors if it does not take advantage of the opportunities identified.

2 At the time of the review there were 40 staff in post within the School - 37.3 of these posts are FTE academic staff, a further two Professorial posts were being advertised. The School had also benefited from the appointment of three Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) – individuals who are completing their PhDs in a relevant subject and who also participate in teaching and assessment within the School. It was anticipated that the GTAs would be offered full time employment, on completion of their PhDs, by which time they would be participating fully in the School's teaching, assessment and research activities.

3 There is a breadth of provision across all management disciplines. The School had taken advantage of both the University's move to 20 credits in 2009/10 and the major review of undergraduate provision in session 2010/11 to facilitate a review of provision. The outcomes of these exercises have now been embedded although they are subject to ongoing review. There has been further growth in both UK based and international provision and this was expected to continue. Despite the pressures of trying to balance the

needs of home-based and overseas activities staff displayed a sense of collegiality and enthusiasm in their approach to their work.

4 The range of research activities undertaken within the School and the number of staff involved is impressive. Research activity and policy within the Business School is organised at Faculty level under the direction of a Faculty Director of Research. Within the School research interests span a range of management areas as well as some economic and pedagogic research with a strong core of human resource management related activity.

5 The Panel was impressed with the enthusiasm of the staff and the School's collegiate atmosphere. Discussions with staff emphasised the School's commitment to staff development and support including the opportunity to engage across different subject areas. An example of this commitment includes the number of staff studying for higher degrees - to date 14 staff have completed their doctorates and there are currently 4 staff undertaking the DBA qualification. Staff are keen to pursue these qualifications despite the additional workload, explaining that they were counselled about the implications prior to commencement of their studies and supported throughout. The achievement of the DBA qualification was viewed as giving staff a competitive edge personally and professionally and sits well with the School's strategic objectives. Staff agreed that there was a supportive atmosphere generally especially for new members of staff and a general commitment to trying to "do something better" for students. The Panel agreed the range of activities as identified in the Critical Review Document was impressive although staff acknowledged that there is a tendency to "undersell" these achievements.

6 The School is committed to ensuring its students have general employability skills and to developing their understanding of enterprise skills. In undergraduate programmes students are given the opportunity to undertake work based learning. There are also opportunities for undergraduates to participate in overseas exchanges and their entrepreneurial skills are developed through the study of entrepreneurship modules. The use of case studies and guest speakers and alumni also provides an applied work based element to students' learning.

7 In line with University strategy the School is also undertaking an ambitious internationalisation agenda. The School has already identified a number of new markets overseas and has approved programmes to operate in for example S.E Asia, India and Sri Lanka as well as through collaboration with European partners. There has also been a steady increase in the numbers of international students on home based programmes. The commitment to the challenges of identifying and entering these markets has provided particular challenges for the School in terms of resources and balancing the needs of home based and international students.

8 In response to the University's updated strategy on the use of technology based learning the School is making increased use of these facilities in its provision of programmes. This includes the use of VLE discussion boards, the introduction of the online MBA and the piloting of the Avatar Project on the Creativity to Sustainability module on the MBA programme.

The appropriateness of the academic standard set and maintained by the School

9 The materials viewed by the Panel and the discussions with staff at all levels suggested a commitment to high standards within its provision. There is an awareness of and commitment to QAA subject benchmarks and the SCQF as well as Professional Body guidelines and benchmarks.

10 The School provided evidence of its engagement with professional bodies including accreditation of the MSc Human Resource Management programme by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). The Panel was also offered evidence of the School's commitment to further enhancing the Business School's reputation as a quality educational provider by participating in the exercise to seek AACSB accreditation.

11 Overall responsibility for standards rests at Faculty level under the direction of the Assistant Dean. Through discussions with staff the Panel noted that the School takes a consistent approach to maintaining standards across the breadth of provision both on and off campus at home and overseas. Staff development sessions have been held on the importance of critical self-evaluation in the context of module evaluation and the School operates a system of School wide monitoring meetings to share good practice and highlight any areas requiring further action and or monitoring.

The quality of the learning opportunities and the learning experience provided to students

12 The quality of the learning opportunities is underpinned by the enthusiasm and professionalism of the staff which facilitates the engagement of the students. During the visit discussions with the students clearly demonstrated they were experiencing a stimulating and challenging learning teaching culture in a supportive environment - students consistently referred to the supportive nature and approachability of the staff. Students were also confident that the range and relevance of the modules and programmes to the current environment would benefit them in terms of their future employability. In particular the students highlighted lecturers' use of real life case studies during teaching and the access to guest speakers and alumni.

13 The Panel was impressed at the School's commitment to the use of technology driven resources to enhance the learning experience both at home and overseas and in particular the provision of the online MBA and the development of the Avatar project. The project harnesses avatar technology for the use of a virtual classroom, which the School eventually hoped to roll out onto other distance learning projects. The Panel recognises the challenges the School faces in supporting ongoing developments in terms of the resources required to implement these and the possibility that University systems would be unable to keep pace. However, it is also noted that the School intends to ensure any technology related changes will be incremental so that resource constraints are managed, staff engaged and ensuring students have the ability to access the relevant technology.

14 Within the undergraduate programmes students are offered the opportunity to participate in whole or half year placements depending on the programme of study. Prior to the move to the 20 credit modular scheme the placement element was equivalent to 60 credits as part of a 4½ year programme. However, this was changed in line with similar programmes offered by competitors and the placement doesn't count towards a final degree classification. The placement element is seen as a critical experience for students, many of whom are offered full time employment by the company afterwards and they are supported in their search for placement opportunities by a Placement Officer. The

students who met with the Panel appreciated the experience offered by undertaking a placement but agreed they found it hard to balance the work element with level of assessment (eg the portfolio) and were unhappy that it did not count towards their final degree classification. In light of these comments the School is encouraged to consider reviewing its guidance on work based learning to ensure students are better aware of the assessment requirements and the implications for degree classifications.

15 Discussions with staff and students indicated an understanding of the challenges and opportunities presented by a diverse student population. Confident Futures was seen as an important component in the integration of students, giving all new students an opportunity to meet and mix in the initial stages of study and the School welcomed the support the Confident Futures programme offers. The common first year, structure of the module system and the groupwork elements also allows for integration. However, it was recognised that students needed to be encouraged to integrate and gel as a group which wasn't always a natural process. Once again, however in their meetings with Panel members, students acknowledged the support of the staff in making this process easier for them.

16 Whilst the School is meeting the University KPIs in terms of module passes, the Panel recognises the challenges of meeting and supporting the expectations of a widely diverse student body and a wider access agenda in terms of retention / progression (eg the HND direct entry students). These students are often surprised by the amount of self-study they are expected to undertake in comparison to their previous learning environments and their expectations in terms of attainment have to be carefully managed. Given the evidence provided by members of staff the Panel are satisfied that they are given the guidance and advice required prior to entry and during their studies.

17 The School subscribes to the "Feedback for Learning" campaign, recognising that students need to be encouraged to appreciate that feedback consists of more than comments on assessment. Examples of the different feedback used within the School were offered by staff including individual feedback, and general discussions with students on examples of what constitutes a good piece of work. Students were also encouraged to approach staff if they were unclear on the meaning of their feedback. Staff also appreciated how important the timeliness of feedback was to students and tried to ensure they adhered to the 3 week deadline as set down in the Student Charter. However, the quality and level of feedback can often depend on the tutor and the resources available – this can be particularly challenging where tutors on large modules may have a share of marking that involves large student numbers.

18 Discussions with students showed that the variability of the feedback continued to be an issue for some although in the main it was found to be detailed and helpful. Students were confident however that they could meet with staff to discuss any issues arising out of their feedback and seek clarification. The students' comments on feedback variability were reflected in the sample of student work viewed by the Panel and it is suggested this is monitored by the School.

The effectiveness of the systems implemented by the School to manage the quality and standard of its provision

19 The School has aligned its activities in line with the revised University Committee structure but it was admitted that without the structure of a School LTA committee there was a danger that activities could become a bit ad-hoc. In response to this the School had set up a new LTA Group to promote awareness and share information on LTA activities. In addition LTA issues are regularly discussed by members of the subject groups.

20 Responsibility for the oversight of quality issues lies at Faculty level within the Business School including the approval and monitoring of modules and programmes which is led by the Faculty Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee. This integrated approach reflects the fact that many of the Business School modules are shared across the Faculty. School staff are engaged at different levels in the writing and review of quality related reports and issues are discussed on an informal basis as well as at the standard forums. The Panel recognises the challenge in getting all staff equally involved but has confidence in the School's engagement with University's and Faculty quality enhancement processes.

21 The Panel discussed the School's attempts to engage students in the quality process which appeared to be relatively limited. The SSLC process which is designed to allow students to interact was subscribed to and these forums allowed for dissemination and discussion of module evaluation outcomes.

The effectiveness of the School's engagement with University and faculty strategies, policies, procedures and initiatives

22 The documentary evidence reviewed by the Panel and the discussions that took place show an awareness of and alignment with University strategies and initiatives by staff at all levels within the School including the Feedback for Learning campaign, 3Es, technology enhanced learning and regional coherence. The expectations of the University's *academic signature* are reflected in a commitment to ensuring graduate employability via the vocational content of the School's programmes which are designed to ensure students develop the necessary skills and attributes required by employers.

23 As noted earlier within this report the School is committed to supporting the Faculty's intention to become an internationally recognised Business School. This includes a commitment to pursuing and achieving AACSB accreditation, to become a partner of choice for private, public and third sector employers and further enhance its reputation as a leading modern professional Business School.

24 There is strong evidence of active pursuit and commitment to seeking and developing further links with overseas partners through collaboration and articulation in line with University and Business School strategy. Since 2010, 6 new overseas programmes have been introduced and there has also been a marked increase in the number of direct entry students coming from overseas onto home based programmes. The Panel commends these initiatives and the School's desire to expand further into international markets while encouraging the School to monitor the effect this expansion has in terms of resources and the integration and support of these students.

The effectiveness of the School's engagement with employers and professional and statutory bodies to ensure that its provision remains relevant and produces employable graduates

25 The Panel is satisfied that the School has a strong engagement and relationship with professional bodies and with employers as demonstrated by the work placements on offer to students. Companies including Morgan Stanley, Tesco Bank, Aldi were keen to send representatives to talk to students as well as offering placements.

26 The School had provided the Panel with extensive evidence of informal links with business and had also explained the role of the Edinburgh Institute, which was set up 4-5 years ago and has a research and commercial activity focus, to act as a conduit to external companies. The School also kept in contact with graduates via the alumni office and social media sites including the development of a LinkedIn site for alumni of the MSc

Human Resource Management programme. By maintaining these links the School was able to continue to ensure its programmes were vocationally relevant, identify research opportunities as well as encouraging graduates to appear as guest speakers.

27 The Panel acknowledges the work undertaken by the School to maintain these links but would have expected to have seen more evidence of formal engagement via industrial advisory boards including employer participation in School events, prizes / awards given by (local) employers eg at Graduation. The School is encouraged to build on and share the experiences of these groups who have already established external links eg the HR group. However, it does acknowledge that a substantial amount of the Business School's external engagement activity is carried out by Edinburgh Institute and the Faculty Industry Advisory Group.

The effectiveness of mechanisms for encouraging student engagement with their learning and with quality processes

28 The Panel had the opportunity to meet with a number of students from all stages including PhD, postgraduate and undergraduate students from both the UK and overseas. Although some of the students experiences had been variable prior to arriving at the University (eg in terms of the admissions process) there was strong agreement by all students that School staff offered a supportive and engaging teaching and learning environment and a responsive culture in terms of issues raised by students. Students were also encouraged by the fact that many staff could relate to their learning experiences given that they too were working towards qualifications.

29 The Panel explored the issue of Personal Development Tutor (PDT) provision with staff and students focusing on the very different needs of the student population. Staff agreed that there were challenges involved in implementing the University's PDT requirements while also meeting the different needs and expectations of students. Very often attempts to meet these started at the point of admission. In the case of postgraduate students the Programme Leader would take on the role of PDT because of the relatively small number of students involved. However, at undergraduate level the number of staff involved was larger and it is common for a member of staff to be PDT for up to forty students. Efforts were made to ensure consistency eg students are allocated the same tutor in Years 3 and 4, although they tended to change in the earlier years of study. A more specialised approach was taken for direct entry students eg from China where the member of staff who had met with them initially would normally continue in a PDT role.

30 In discussions with the students the Panel established most students had met with their PDT although it wasn't prescriptive and it was indicated that a number of students did not understand the system – the idea that students are allocated a PDT didn't always appear to work out. However, students agreed the School was supportive when it came to personal difficulties and they also found the student representative system worked well for communicating and resolving problems

31 The Panel believes the School need to revisit / re-examine the provision of PDT which appears to be variable across the School as evidenced during discussions with students and staff. There needs to be a more consistent approach across the School particularly in terms of ensuring all students' needs are met equally and that students are not put at risk of missing out on support.

32 The Panel also took the opportunity to discuss group work arrangements with both staff and students who agreed that when groupwork works it works well as a learning tool. Students were helped by groupwork sessions during induction and also the provision of

Confident Future sessions which helped students get to know each other during the first week, although it was suggested provision of these opportunities was variable eg for direct entry students. However, despite this support, students often felt challenged because of the range of different backgrounds, abilities and nationalities in their classes. Students suggested that when undertaking the groupwork element of their programmes they needed more support and guidance on how to manage a group work situation and also a consistency of approach (eg some group is self-selecting, at other times it's not). This would allow all students to get the best out of this particular learning experience.

The effectiveness of staff engagement with research, knowledge transfer and other personal and professional development activities

33 The Panel was impressed by the School's approach to subject base and pedagogic research. There is clear evidence of a desire to ensure research links into and underpins teaching – all of the School's research active staff are involved in teaching, allowing their experiences to feed into programmes as well as supporting students develop their own research skills. Given the primary focus is on applied research there is also an external interest in the outcomes from the School's business partners. Once again there was evidence of a collegiate approach in terms of dissemination and sharing of information including the intention to digitise the information for placing on a VLE platform.

34 As a result of discussions with staff and students the Panel is confident the School has a healthy research culture which supports the research / teaching links the University is committed to. This was also evidenced by the references within the School's Culture Document which gave examples of the increase in research links with industry through the growth of the professional doctorate programme and the support the School offers in terms of supervision.

35 The success of this strategy is evidenced by the clear indications that the research culture influences the quality of student work in particular the MSc dissertations and the output from the DBA students. In particular the Panel noted comments from External Examiners' reports which indicated the breadth, depth and clear understanding of the subject matter presented within dissertation.

36 In light of its ambitious plans for international provision the School needs to monitor the challenges of maintaining this culture to ensure that links are maintained and the current level of support is not diluted by staff deployment to other areas.

Provision included within the scope of the review

- 1 Undergraduate programmes:
 - a) BA (Hons) Business Management programme suite (Full-Time)
(Business Management with routes: Accounting, Economics, Entrepreneurship, Festival and Events, Finance, Financial Services, Hospitality, Human Resources, Language, Law, Marketing, Tourism)
 - b) BA (Hons) Business Management (Part-Time)
 - c) BA (Hons) International Business Management (Full-Time)
 - d) BA (Hons) Business Studies programme suite (Sandwich) (Full-Time)
(Business Studies with routes: Entrepreneurship, Finance, Human Resource Management, Marketing Management)
 - e) BA (Hons) International Business Studies (Sandwich) (Full-Time)
 - f) BA (Hons) Economics with Management (Full-Time)

- 2 Undergraduate programmes delivered in collaboration with a partner organisation:
 - a) BA (Hons) Business Management (Carnegie) (Full-Time)
 - b) BA Business Management (West Lothian College) (Full-Time)
 - c) BA Business Management (West Lothian College) (Part-Time)

- 3 Taught master's programmes:
 - a) MBA (Full-Time)
 - b) MBA Executive (Part-Time)
 - c) MSc International Human Resource Management (Full-Time)
 - d) MSc Managerial Leadership (Full-Time)
 - e) MSc Business Management (Full-Time) *(Business Management with routes: Entrepreneurship, HRM, Marketing)*
 - f) MSc International Business Management) (Full-Time)
 - g) MSc Human Resource Management (Full-Time)
 - h) MSc Human Resource Management (Part-Time)

- 4 Taught master's programmes delivered in collaboration with a partner organisation:
 - a) MBA (Online) in collaboration with CAPDM
 - b) Partner - HKU (SPACE) Hong Kong
MSc Business Management
MSc Managerial Leadership
 - c) Partner – Asia Global Graduate School, Singapore
BA (Hons) Business Management
 - d) Partner – Singapore Human Resource Institute (SHRI)
BA (Hons) Human Resource Management with Financial Management
(Singapore)

School enhancement plan: School of Management, March 2012						
Good practice						
	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation

School enhancement plan: School of Management, March 2012						
Recommendations						
It is recommended that the School:	Action to be taken	Target date	Action by	Success indicators	Reported to	Evaluation