QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

2010/2011
1. TAUGHT COURSES COVERED BY THE PROCEDURES

1.1. LEVEL 1 A/B
1.2. LEVEL 2 A/B
1.3. LEVEL 3
1.4. LEVEL 4
1.5 MSc Research Methods in Psychological Science + MSc Brain Imaging

2. COURSE DOCUMENTATION

2.1. AVAILABILITY
Course documentation is provided for all taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Copies are provided to all students enrolled on each course and it is available to potential Students, all Academic Staff, the Subject Librarian, the BPS, External Examiners, for the College’s of Arts, Science and Engineering, and Social Sciences, for the Quality Assurance Office and the University Bookshop. The course documentation is also available on the web and unrestricted for foreign students.

2.2. CONTENT
All course documentation includes: the place of the course in the degree programme, including necessary prerequisites and rights of progress; the aims and learning objectives of the course in terms of the attainment of knowledge, understanding and skills; a detailed outline of the course content; teaching hours specifying the teaching methods used; details of course work and class examinations; structure of the degree examinations and assessment procedures; details of course texts and key required reading; methods and assessment; staff member information; information pertaining to British Psychological Society accreditation of the degree; and any additional information which the School considers useful.

3. STUDENT FEEDBACK

3.1. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES
Student Representatives are elected in class time or by email voting during the first 3 weeks of the first term of each academic session, and they are encouraged to attend appropriate SRC training courses. There must be at least one Student Representative from each of the relevant Colleges contributing Students to the course - Arts, Science and Engineering and Social Science. There is one rep. for all MSc students.

These Representatives are encouraged to identify themselves to other Students by displaying on the appropriate noticeboard a point of contact, usually email address, for the transmission of information. They can normally post messages on the student portal as a means of contacting members of the class.

While Representatives are elected for each College, they are expected to receive information and hold a dialogue with Students from any College. The School ensures that Student Representatives have meeting space when required (for example, booking the Psychology Laboratory).

The Course Organiser provides such assistance as required to facilitate elections and awareness in the Student body of their Representatives.
3.2. STAFF/STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEES

There is a Staff/Student Committee for every taught course. The membership of these includes: Course Coordinators, staff members teaching on the course and all Student Representatives from the course. The Director of Teaching, and Head of School may attend any meeting.

The committees exist to provide a forum for consultation between undergraduate Students and Academic Staff on the structures, aims, learning objectives, content, modes of assessment and facilities for all the undergraduate courses provided by the School, and to foster better understanding between undergraduate students and Academic Staff. Levels 1 and 2, Level 3 and 4 and the two MSc courses have joint meetings in order to encourage interaction between the classes.

Committees normally meet once during each semester, but can meet more often at the discretion of the Course Organiser, the Director of Teaching, the Head of School or at the request of the Student members. The written agenda for the meeting is circulated in advance. Items for the agenda can be proposed by any member of the committee. Student Representatives are asked to canvass their classmates for points to raise, concerns, fears and plaudits. Meetings are chaired by the Course Organiser or by his/her nominee. Written minutes are circulated after each meeting and emailed to the class and posted on the internet. Action taken in the light of committee proceedings is reported to the committee as soon as is possible thereafter. The proceedings of the committee are considered by the School’s staff meeting and its Teaching Management Group and are taken into account when the School’s academic strategy and practice are determined. The minutes of all these committee meetings are published on the Psychology intranet and copies are available on the portal for student access.

3.3. STAFF AND SCHOOL MEETINGS

The School has a monthly Staff Meeting scheduled as part of its management process. In addition, at least one such meeting each term is designated a School Meeting and Student Representatives from all taught courses and postgraduate categories are invited to attend. In addition, the Subject Librarian is invited to attend whenever appropriate items are tabled or at the representative’s request.

Student Representatives are asked to canvass their classmates for points to raise, concerns, fears and plaudits. Representatives are provided with an agenda in advance and the first part of the meeting is designed to cover each course in turn with Students being encouraged to air their views. Student Representatives are also given the opportunity to present some or all of their input in writing one week in advance of the School Meeting. This is intended to (a) reduce the discomfort about speaking up in a large group situation, and (b) ensure that considered responses may be made at the meeting itself. Once the agenda items of relevance to the Student Representatives are completed, the meeting goes to deal with other aspects of School management after the Representatives have withdrawn.

3.4 TEACHING MANAGEMENT GROUP

The School has a monthly meeting of the Teaching Management Group to discuss any current issues on the teaching side. Course Organisers, the Director of Teaching, UG exam co-ordinators and the Teaching Administrator attend as well as 2 representatives from the student body.

An agenda is circulated in advance and items can be proposed by any member. Key issues discussed are QA, library issues, external affairs and there are reports from each class tutor.

3.5. STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Student feedback is obtained for all undergraduate courses by means of questionnaires which are anonymous. The content and procedure are subject to modification and improvement from year to year and differ from class to class as follows:

3.5.1. Level 1A/B Psychology

Questionnaires are administered during the academic year. The first is issued during the first term to obtain background information about the class and attitudes to the subject. Further questionnaires are administered at suitable points through the academic year. The purpose of these is to obtain student feedback on the quality and content of teaching and on the laboratory programme.
3.5.2. Level 2A/B Psychology
Questionnaires are administered in the course of the academic year. Questionnaires elicit Student response to lecture content and delivery, tutorial teaching and the laboratory programme.

3.5.3. Level 3 Psychology (Honours and Designated Degrees)
Each module is evaluated with a questionnaire that evaluates course content and teaching quality. Supervision of course work is also assessed.

3.5.4. Level 4 Psychology
Each Level 4 option is evaluated towards the end of the course. Course work supervision is similarly evaluated.

3.5.5 MSc Research Methods/MSc Brain Imaging
Each MSc course is evaluated towards the end of the course using standardised forms.

3.6. Data Analysis
The results of these questionnaires are collated and analysed and reviewed by the Director of Teaching. Data is held by the Teaching Administrator for one year.

3.7. Data Dissemination
The Director of Teaching and the Head of School receive a copy of the data. The data is then considered by the Teaching Management Group and a summary of issues is presented at a staff meeting.

3.8. Other Forms of Student Feedback
All members of the School encourage Students to seek assistance from them with immediate and pressing problems: all Academic Staff have designated Office Hours but they can also be contacted at other times by means of an appointment via a School Secretary or especially by email or note. Students are encouraged to raise relevant issues and difficulties directly with any member of teaching staff they have contact with, as and when such problems arise so that they can be dealt with directly. If this is inappropriate, or if the difficulty cannot be solved at this level, it is then referred to the relevant Course Organiser and, thereafter, to the Director of Teaching and then to the Head of School if necessary.

The Level 3 Tutor organises a Social at the beginning of Term One to which all Level 3 Honours Students and all staff and postgraduates are invited. While this is primarily intended to give Students a chance to meet each other and find out more about their intending course in an informal way, during the two or three hours many aspects of students’ educational experience within the School can be highlighted.

In Level 3, a Reading Party is held at a residential location for two days and one night, with staff and postgraduates attending. This also provides an excellent forum for the informal transmission of information about the current and previous years’ educational experiences.

In the Level 3 Designated Degree students present short talks based on their group research projects. Following this the whole class is invited to provide feedback directly to the Class Tutor. Additionally, a Social event is organised at this time which provides an opportunity for staff and students to informally discuss relevant matters.

In Level 4 there are two Q & A meetings each session when students can ask about the exams.

In the MSc courses students have an oral examination at the end of the course.
4. EVALUATION OF TEACHING

4.1. STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Student questionnaires provide an important source of information on teaching quality and are carefully scrutinised by the Course Organiser for this purpose. All statistics for a given teacher are made available to that teacher. All data is available to the Head of School and the Director of Teaching, who may offer advice and encouragement about improvements. More general feedback about teaching quality is made available to all members of the School through the procedures set out in section 3.8 above.

4.2. COURSE DOCUMENTATION

All course documentation (which includes information about course aims and objectives, teaching methods, etc.) is evaluated by the relevant Course Organiser and by the Head of School. Where appropriate, they comment on and make suggestions for revision and improvement and act as a conduit for incorporating suggestions from students and staff.

Every staff member has to “sign-off” the aims, objectives and lecture content described in the documentation that relate to their own teaching.

A process of standardisation of all documentation has been implemented and it is the School’s policy to have all documentation available on our Web site.

4.3. EXAMINATION RESULTS

Examination results, including pass rates, distribution of results by category and levels of achievement, are scrutinised by the Course Organiser, Exam Officers and the Course Team (the members of staff involved in teaching the course) and the Teaching Management Group. These form part of the report on Annual Course Monitoring Report.

4.4. MARKING PERFORMANCE CHECKS

In the Finals papers, all marking is “moderated” so that a 10% sample is second marked and the marks of the two Markers compared. Where discrepancies become obvious the Finals Examinations Officer investigates these and the markers confer and decide whether all marks should be changed or not. Should there be consistent problems with any Marker, this would be highlighted.

In addition, the L4 Finals Examination Co-ordinator has a frequency distribution check by Marker, by question and by Paper to check for unusual distributions.

In addition checks on Level 1 and Level 2 class work are carried out by the Teaching Co-ordinator.

4.4.1. Finals Moderation System

The following steps define the agreed procedures:

1. The Course Secretary records questions answered on a central database before sending scripts and marksheet to each Marker.
2. Each Marker has 7 days approximately to mark their allocation and return scripts and marksheet.
3. The Course Secretary enters marks from the Marker into the database.
4. The Course Secretary has randomly selected a sample for moderation, following the rule - 10% of scripts for each marker on each course with a required minimum of 10 where available.
   The Moderator receives this random selection plus the same marking scale as the first marker setting out guidelines on categorising scripts and a mark sheet. The Moderator then has approximately 4 days to mark their allocation and return scripts and marksheet.
5. The Course Secretary enters marks from the Moderator into the database and the Examinations Officer (EO), who has additional information about the distribution of marks/summary statistics from Marker and Moderator then identifies unacceptable discrepancies.
6. The operational rule is - if more than 20% of the sample are discrepant by > 2 fine categories.
7. The EO will then instigate a discussion between Marker and Moderator to identify potential problems (with the option of one or both markers remarking all their scripts on that question)
8. The EO adjudicates any continuing problems with a backup to the External Examiner if required.
9. The Examiners’ Meeting will be provided with statistics on all marking and moderating which will enable overall monitoring and feedback on a year-by-year basis.
4.5. **Peer Review**

Team Teaching provides a large amount of built-in peer review. Level 1 and 2 tutorials are visited by the Teaching Co-ordinator and members of the Teaching Committee sample lectures as development of lecturing practice.

4.6. **Graduate Teaching Assistants and Part-time Staff**

The School and the College of Science and Engineering provide formal training sessions (usually in October) for all GTAs and Part-time Teaching Staff. Further training is provided by the Teaching Co-ordinator. Additionally, the work of all Teaching Assistants and Part-time Staff is monitored by the Director of Teaching and the Teaching Co-ordinator who offer briefing, guidance and support.

4.7. **External Examiners**

In 2009/10 the School had three external examiners, one covering 1st and 2nd year, one covering Level 3 Psychological Studies and the honours level and a third covering the MSc courses, who are consulted on matters of course design & delivery, on assessment procedures and who attend appropriate Board of Examiners’ meetings. External examiners are governed centrally by the University and fuller details are specified on the University’s Quality Assurance Office Web Page (http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/)

4.8. **British Psychological Society (BPS) Accreditation**

The School has BPS accreditation for its single and joint Honours Psychology degree programmes. This accreditation is reviewed on a five yearly basis and has a particular influence on course content.

4.9. **Economic & Social Research Council Accreditation**

The MSc in Research Methods of Psychological Science is accredited by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and therefore can form the first element of an ESRC-funded “1+3” PhD programme or the requirements of entry for a “4+3” PhD programme. The MSc in Brain Imaging is currently awaiting ESRC accreditation and components of the courses are also effectively accredited by other funding bodies (BBSRC, EPSRC) as forming part of the research training of funded PhD students.

5. **Student Support Mechanisms**

5.1. **Procedures for Monitoring Student Progress**

Student support centres on monitoring their work from the following occasions. These procedures vary from course to course as follows:

5.1.1. **Level 1A Psychology**

In semester 1, one coursework essay handed in, 3 laboratory exercises with associated MCQ tests and a full report based on a selected laboratory, plus a 2 hour unseen examination in January. Group project and presentation.

5.1.2. **Level 1B Psychology**

In semester 2, one coursework essay handed in, 3 laboratory exercises with associated MCQ tests and a full report based on a selected laboratory, plus a 2 hour unseen examination in May/June.

5.1.3. **Level 2A Psychology**

In semester 1, one coursework essay handed in, 4 quizzes with associated MCQ tests and a full report based on a selected practical, plus a 3 hour unseen examination in January.

5.1.4. **Level 2B Psychology**

In semester 2, one coursework essay handed in, 3 quizzes with associated MCQ tests and a full report based on a selected practical, plus a 2 hour unseen examination in May/June. Group project and presentation.
5.1.5. Level 3 Psychological Studies
Two formative essays normally handed in towards the end of Semester 1. In mid Semester 2 a careers skills portfolio and group research project are handed in. Feedback is also provided on based on group research project presentations.

Five academic modules are summatively examined in unseen degree exams usually in May.

5.1.6. Level 3 Honours Psychology
Two Critical Reviews, two mini projects and one Professional Skills portfolio handed in on separate occasions throughout the year.

First semester modules are formatively examined in a one or two-part examination held at the end of Semester 1 or the start of Semester 2. All academic modules are summatively examined in unseen degree examinations as the first part of the two-part finals (usually in May).

5.1.7. Level 4 Psychology
A Practical Paper contributes 12.5% to the final mark and is made up of one Critical Review (30%) submitted in early January, an unseen examination (50%) and the Level 3 report mark (20%) (from the 2nd level 3 Mini Project) (10%) and the second Level 3 Critical Review (10%).

The Maxi Project 12.5% (Final Year Dissertation) is handed in during mid March with a draft of everything bar the discussion encouraged. The discussion is entirely the student's own work. Options are examined in unseen, one-hour degree examinations in Dec or April/May or by continuous assessment, as the second part of the two-part finals 37.5%. Level 3 honours modules make up the final 37.5%.

5.1.8 MSc Research Methods and MSc Brain Imaging
The MSc dissertation is handed in during July and is worth 80 credits (project proposal, oral exam+ project report). Core modules and options are examined through coursework and account for 100 credits in total.

5.2. MARKING OF WORK
In the case of all courses, written coursework and/or projects (whether or not they are formally assessed) provide an important opportunity to offer Students feedback on progress.

At levels 1-3 all written course work is assigned a mark, and the student is provided with written comments explaining the mark and suggesting ways of improving the work where appropriate, except for Level 3 CR2 which is marked as part of the Finals and no feedback is therefore provided. All Students have the option of discussing their work, and the comments made on it, with the Lecturer or Course Organiser.
5.3. **Warnings to Students at Risk**

For the Level 1A/B and Level 2A/B classes, all Students are assigned to a Learning Set/Tutorial Group. A register of attendance is maintained. The classwork co-ordinators are responsible for monitoring progress and attendance. Unexplained irregular attendance on the part of a Student will elicit a written request for an explanation and, if necessary, reports to the Student's Adviser of Studies will be made by the Teaching Co-ordinator. Where the Student has received a ‘fail’ mark for a piece of work, the Teaching Co-ordinator will append a note to the work asking the Student to discuss the matter. If no response is forthcoming, a letter is sent (by Recorded Delivery) to the Student asking him/her to come in to speak to the Teaching Co-ordinator who will make suggestions to improve the quality of the work.

The School conducts regular, systematic checks on Student progress at all work hand-in dates in first and second terms in both Level 3 and Level 4 years. These checks concern attendance and completion of written work and any other course requirement and are undertaken by the Level 3 and Level 4 Tutors. At MSc level students receive feedback on marks. All students have the option of discussing their work with the course tutors and MSc co-ordinator.

Students who have failed to satisfy course requirements may be asked to meet their Course Organiser to discuss problems and to work out a way to catch up within a mutually agreed time. At this point, Advisers are notified that progress has not been sufficient. If a Student subsequently continues to fail to meet course requirements and/or fails to catch up with work as mutually agreed, s/he may, at the discretion of the Head of School, and after consultation with the Student's Adviser, be excluded from the class and from the final degree examinations. Where a Student fails to make satisfactory progress during the Level 3 year, he/she may be required by the Head of School, or may him/herself choose, to exit the degree at the end of Level 3 without honours. This is organised in conjunction with the Chief Advisers for the College.

5.4. **Assigned Member of Staff**

All Students are assigned to a member of staff who is responsible for monitoring and advising on progress. In the case of the Level 1 and Level 2 courses, this is the Tutor of the learning set/tutorial group to which the Student has been assigned. These Tutors report directly to the Teaching Co-ordinator.

In Level 3 honours, it is the Course Organiser who is the assigned member of staff who in turn is advised by the tutors responsible for the critical reviews and miniproject. In semester 1, all students are assigned in small groups to a tutor who supervises a critical review, and who has meetings with them, usually on a weekly basis. In semester 2 another tutor is assigned to supervise the second critical review. For BSc Psychological Studies, Level 3, it is the Course Organiser who is the assigned member of staff who in turn is advised by the tutor who is responsible for the dissertation. At Level 4, it is the Course Organiser who is the assigned member of staff, who in turn is advised by the staff responsible for the individual options taken by the Student and especially by the Maxi Project Supervisor and the Critical Review Supervisor, who see each student individually.

At MSc level it is the supervisor who is the assigned member of staff and the Coordinator.

5.5. **Availability of Staff**

All members of Academic Staff have designated Office Hours and an email address. Each also has an arrangement whereby they can be contacted outwith these times, either directly or with the mediation of a School Secretary. Teaching Assistants must also establish procedures whereby they can be contacted, either directly or with the assistance of a School Secretary.
6. **FORMAL COURSE REVIEW**

6.1. **ANNUAL COURSE MONITORING REPORTS**

Every taught course is required to complete an Annual Course Monitoring Report as part of the College and university quality assurance procedures. This is scrutinised by the Teaching Management Group and presented to a staff meeting before being sent to the College Quality Assurance Officer for his consideration. Up till now comments from the Faculty QA is fed back to TMG and informs decision making on enhancement in assessment, curriculum development and student communication as well as new course proposals. It is assumed that this will continue within the new college structure.

6.2. **SCHOOL FORMAL COURSE REVIEW**

Formal course reviews normally take place every four years. In addition, interim reviews of all courses take place annually, through reports to the Teaching Committee.

Finally our accreditation reviews by the BPS as well as our SHEFC subject reviews contribute to reflection on our teaching practice. These also allow us to compare our procedures to other like institutions nationally.

6.3 **NEW COURSE AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT**

Proposals are initiated by individuals, course teams and the TMG. All new developments are scrutinised by TMG and are consistent with university guidelines on consultation, resourcing and if necessary marketing and costing. Some proposals originate in response to student feedback, others to developments in the discipline and others in response to new sources of student demand. The relevant student groups are consulted on all new course and major changes to programmes. This done through the student representatives on the SSLC and also forums on the Portal are set up to gather comments on the proposed changes. Following the consultation the course and programme changes are then registered on PIP by the Teaching Administrator and therefore begin the College course and programme approval process.

7. **QUALITY ENHANCEMENT**

7.1 **SCHOOL ENHANCEMENT PROCEDURES**

The school is the process of developing Quality Enhancement Procedures. At the moment the School allows for the provision of funds for student summer projects that are linked to enhancement project such as the revision of the practical course. Also the School advertises a number of enhancement project on its main website.