

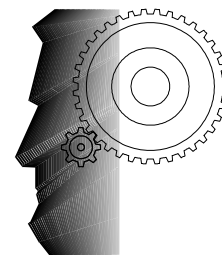


UNIVERSITY
of
GLASGOW

Department of Psychology

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

2004/2005



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

2. COURSE DOCUMENTATION

2.1. AVAILABILITY

Course documentation is provided for all taught undergraduate courses. It is available to potential Students and copies are provided for all Students enrolled on each course, all Academic Staff, the Subject Librarian, the BPS, External Examiners, for Faculties of Arts, Science and Social Sciences, for the Quality Assurance Office and the University Bookshop.

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 Department 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 Faculties contributing Students to the course - Arts, Science and Social Science.

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.

While Representatives are elected for a Faculty, they are expected to receive information and hold a dialogue with Students from any Faculty. The Department ensures that Student Representatives have meeting space when required (for example,

booking the Psychology Laboratory)

The Course Tutor 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 Tutor/s, staff members teaching on the course and all Student Representatives from the course. The Teaching Convenor and Head of Department 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 Department, and to foster better understanding between undergraduate students and Academic Staff.

Levels 1 and 2 have joint meetings in order to encourage interaction between the classes.

Committees normally meet once during each term, but can meet more often at the discretion of the Course Tutor, the Teaching Convenor, the Head of Department 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 Tutor or by his/her nominee. Written minutes are circulated after each meeting and emailed to the class and 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 Department's staff meeting and its Teaching Management Group and are taken into account when the Department's academic strategy and practice are determined. The minutes of all these committee meetings are published on the departmental intranet and copies are available on the portal for student access.

3.3. STAFF AND DEPARTMENTAL MEETINGS

The Department has a monthly Staff Meeting scheduled as part of its management process. In addition, at least one such meeting each term is designated a Departmental 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 Departmental 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 may go on to deal with other aspects of Department management after the Representatives have withdrawn.

3.4. 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:

3.4.1. 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.

3.4.2. 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.

3.4.3. 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.

3.4.4. Level 4 Psychology

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

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

The results of these questionnaires are collated and analysed by Mr Paddy O'Donnell and Dr Margaret Martin. Raw data is held by the Teaching Convenor for one year.

3.6. DATA DISSEMINATION

The Teaching Convenor and the Head of Department receive a copy of the data. The data are then considered by the Teaching Management Group and a summary of issues is presented at a staff meeting.

3.7. OTHER FORMS OF STUDENT FEEDBACK

All members of the Department 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 Department 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 Tutor and, thereafter, to the Teaching Convenor and then to the Head of Department 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 Department can be highlighted.

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

A social event is organised for level 4 students by the level 4 tutor approximately half way through the academic year. This allows level 4 students to discuss any problems or ideas with staff informally.

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 Tutor for this purpose. All statistics for a given teacher are made available to that teacher. All data are available to the Head of Department and the Teaching Convenor, who may offer advice and encouragement about improvements. More general feedback about teaching quality is made available to all members of the Department through the procedures set out in section 3.6 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 Tutor and by the Head of Department. 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 Department'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 Tutor 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 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.
5. The Moderator receives a random selection plus the same marking scale as the first marker setting out guidelines on categorising scripts and a mark sheet. These are returned to the Course Secretary within approximately 4 days.
6. 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. 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 Teaching Co-Ordinator.

4.6. GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND PART-TIME STAFF

The Department and the Faculty of Information and Mathematical Sciences provide formal training sessions (usually in October) for all GTAs and Part-time Teaching Staff. Additionally, the work of all Teaching Assistants and Part-time Staff is monitored by the Teaching Convenor and the Teaching Co-ordinator who offer briefing, guidance and support.

4.7 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

In 2003 the Department had two external examiners, one covering 1st and 2nd year, one covering Level 3 Psychological Studies and the honours level, 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/Otherdepts/Quality/examiners/index.html>)

4.8 BRITISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY (BPS) ACCREDITATION

The Department 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.

5. STUDENT SUPPORT MECHANISMS

5.1. PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING STUDENT PROGRESS

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 laboratory practicals 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 laboratory practicals 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

One formative essay normally handed in towards the end of Semester 1. In mid Semester 2, 4 course work essays, a careers skills portfolio and dissertation are handed in.

First semester modules are formatively assessed in a one or two part examination held at the end of semester one or beginning of semester 2. All academic modules are summatively examined in unseen degree exams usually in May.

5.1.6. Level 3 Honours Psychology

Two Critical Reviews normally handed in at the end of the first and beginning of the third term, one MiniProject handed in at the beginning of the second term and another normally by the middle of the third term.

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). The Professional Skills module is assessed by a portfolio.

5.1.7. Level 4 Psychology

One Critical Review is submitted early in the second term. This constitutes 30% of a practical paper. An unseen practical examination constituting another 50% of this paper takes place in April/May. The final 20% of this paper is based on the second Level 3 Mini Project (10%) and the second Level 3 Critical Review (10%). The MaxiProject (Final Year Dissertation) is handed in at the end of the second term with a draft being required in advance. All options are examined in unseen, two-hour degree examinations as the second part of the two-part finals in April/May.

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. All Students have the option of discussing their work, and the comments made on it, with the Lecturer or Course Tutor.

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 Department 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.

Students who have failed to satisfy course requirements may be asked to meet their Course Tutor 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 Department, 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 Department, or may him/herself choose, to be examined at the Advanced Ordinary Special level.

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 Tutor who is the assigned member of staff who in turn is advised by the tutors responsible for the critical reviews and miniproject. In term 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 term 2 another tutor is assigned to supervise the second critical review and miniproject. For BSc Psychological Studies, Level 3, it is the Course Tutor who is the assigned member of staff who in turn is advised by the tutor is responsible for the dissertation. At Level 4, it is the Course Tutor 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 MaxiProject Supervisor and the Critical Review Supervisor, who see each student individually.

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 Department Secretary. Teaching Assistants must also establish procedures whereby they can be contacted, either directly or with the assistance of a Department secretary.

6. FORMAL COURSE REVIEW

6.1. ANNUAL COURSE MONITORING REPORTS

Every taught course is required to complete a Faculty Course Monitoring Report as part of the Faculty and university quality assurance procedures. This is scrutinised by the Teaching Management Group and presented to a staff meeting before being sent to the Faculty Quality Assurance Officer for his consideration.

6.2. DEPARTMENTAL 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.