Periodic Review of the International Foundation Programme

Introduction

1 An internal review of the International Foundation Programme was held on 15 and 16 November 2011. The members of the Panel were:
   - Dr Paddy Woodman (Faculty co-Director of Teaching and Learning, Arts, Humanities and Social Science)
   - Dr John McKendrick (School of Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy)
   - Dr Hong Wei (School of Systems Engineering)
   - Dr Richard Gadsden (formerly of Sheffield Hallam and Loughborough Universities)
   - Mr Graham Davies (SOAS)
   - Vicky Howard, Quality Support Office

2 The Panel met the following:
   - Ms Clare Nukui, Director of International Foundation Programme and Module Tutor (International English)
   - Ms Ros Richards, Director of International Study and Language Centre
   - Professor Christopher Duggan, Head of School of Literature and Languages
   - Dr Julia Waters, School Director of Teaching and Learning, School of Literature and Languages
   - Dr Chiara Cirillo, Director of Institute-Wide Language Programme
   - Dr Elisabeth Wilding, Senior Academic Tutor for the IFP and Module Tutor (Academic Skills and International English)
   - Mrs Amanda Favva Verde, IFP Course Tutor and Module Tutor (Academic Skills and International English)
   - Mr Louis Rogers, IFP Course Tutor and Module Tutor (Academic Skills and International English)
   - Dr Mark Peace, IFP Course Tutor
   - Dr Dawn Clarke, Module Tutor (Politics and Sociology)
   - Mrs Val Baker, Module Tutor (Law)
   - Mrs Sue Peel, Module Tutor (Economics and Mathematics for Economics)
   - Ms Emma Grenside, Module Tutor (Academic Skills and International English) and Personal Tutor
   - Dr Prue Griffiths, Module Tutor (Environmental Science and Academic Skills)
Personal Tutor

- Mrs Liz Glaister, Module Tutor (Further Mathematics)
- Dr David Wright, Module Tutor (Chemistry)
- Dr Meiko Murayama, Module Tutor (Henley Business School)
- Dr Paul Glaister, Module Convenor (Head of Department of Mathematics and Statistics)
- Professor Rosemary Auchmuty, School Director of Teaching and Learning, (School of Law)
- Dr Elizabeth Page, Module Convenor (Department of Chemistry)
- Professor Yelena Kalyuzhnova, School Director of Teaching and Learning, (Politics, Economics and International Relations)

3 The Panel met with current IFP students, who intended to take the following degree programmes:

- BA in Business and Management
- BSc in Electronic Engineering
- BSc in Finance and Investment Banking
- LLB in Law
- BSc in Quantity Surveying
- BSc in Real Estate

4 The Panel also met with alumni of the IFP who are now Part 1 and 2 students on the following degree programmes:

- BA/BSc in Accounting and Economics
- BSc in Biological Sciences
- BA in Fine Art
- LLB in Law
- BSc in Psychology
- BSc in Speech and Language Therapy
- BSc in Real Estate

General observations

5 The Panel met with a wide range of students and staff and wished to express its gratitude to all those who had participated in the review process. It was clear to the Panel that the IFP had a highly collegiate environment and that module tutors felt very well supported, with a strong sense of belonging. The Panel was aware that the IFP had undergone a period of change and readjustment following the merger with the Centre for Applied Language Studies (CALS) in August 2010 to form the new International Study and Language Centre (ISLC) and encouraged the team to continue to embrace the opportunities that being part of this new larger unit affords.
The Panel thanked the School for the provision of the Blackboard Organisation which facilitated members’ access to documentation before the Review and for the detailed information provided during the Review itself, which included: publicity material; programme documentation and sample work; the Staff Handbook; the Halls Survival Guide; a sample IFP newsletter for students; a sample ISLC e-bulletin; IFP Personal Tutorial Folder; and InForm, the journal for international foundation programmes produced by IFP staff.

The Panel welcomed the involvement of current and former students who gave a very positive endorsement of the programme, the vast majority of whom stated that they felt very well integrated into the University. In particular, the Panel noted the excellent support provided to students by IFP staff and wished to praise:

- the efficiency and turnaround time of the applications process;
- the excellent pastoral support, evidenced by student praise of the Halls Liaison Officer;
- academic support, evidenced by the accessibility of staff and the guidance they provide to students in selecting modules;
- the wide and effective use of Blackboard across modules;
- the user-friendly documentation, evidenced by the Student Handbook and the Halls Survival Guide; and
- the popular social activities organised for students, including the Away Day. These activities were of particular benefit to younger students, who were not always able to participate in University socials.

**Academic standards of the programmes**

**Educational aims of the provision and the learning outcomes**

The Panel was provided with evidence in the form of the programme specification, module descriptions, the student handbook, external examiners’ reports and student work. It also held a number of meetings with staff and students, and reviewed samples of student work.

The Panel reviewed the educational aims and learning outcomes of the provision. The Panel confirmed that the programme aims, whilst broad, were clearly stated and appropriate to the programme. The panel agreed that students undertaking any combination of modules would have the opportunity to achieve the programme outcomes.

The Panel noted that there was no Subject Benchmarking Statement for this provision and that the QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications did not apply to the IFP. The IFP publishes the InForm journal for IFP teaching professionals and participates in an annual conference at which best practice is shared between foundation programmes around a chosen theme. The Panel noted that there was an emerging desire to form an organisation akin to or within the Foundation Network to provide parity and maintain standards of IFPs across the sector and commended as an example of good practice the IFP’s involvement in these developments (good practice a).
Whilst the Panel confirmed that the learning outcomes were broadly appropriate to the overall aims, it agreed that the *Skills and other attributes* listed in the programme specification would not necessarily be relevant to all students, depending upon their selection of modules. The Panel further agreed that module outcomes, as expressed on module descriptions, were generally clear, but observed that in some cases (e.g. Chemistry, Economics and Information Systems and Statistics) they might be rearticulated for greater clarity. Furthermore, the Panel observed that assessment arrangements were not always clearly or consistently expressed on all module descriptions, including those for Chemistry, Economics, Mathematics and Statistics and Politics and Sociology. In particular, the Panel noted that the *Requirements for a pass* were articulated variously (e.g. Biology and Environmental Science and Information Systems and Statistics) and that *Re-assessment requirements* appeared to vary (e.g. for Environmental Science, coursework can be used if advantageous, but this was not mentioned for other modules). The Panel agreed to recommend (advisable recommendation a) that the IFP:

a) revise *Skills and other attributes* as part of their annual review of the content of the programme specification and identify those skills which might not be achieved by all students (e.g. by addition of ‘where appropriate’); and

b) review module descriptions to ensure the clarity of module outcomes and the consistency and clarity of assessment arrangements.

The Panel agreed that the teaching, learning and assessment strategies were clear.

**Curricula and assessment**

The Panel reviewed the reports of the three External Examiners for the programme and noted that they commented favourably upon the IFP, indicating that the curricula and assessment were consistent with the programme specification and module descriptions, and that the IFP responded to comments appropriately.

The Panel recognised that the curricula were necessarily broad, as the programme provided a route into a wide range of degree programmes. The Panel noted that in addition to the module on International English and the compulsory Academic Skills module students choose at least two of the eleven available subject modules, depending upon their intended degree programme. The Panel noted as an example of good practice the opportunities available to students to reflect upon their module selection, including guidance in the Student Handbook and the accessibility of staff (good practice b).

The Panel noted the collaborative nature of the IFP programme and its delivery, whereby most of the modules are owned by Schools and are the responsibility of a Module Convenor who is a member of staff in the relevant school. The module is usually taught by a module tutor (often a sessional member of staff) who is employed by the School, but with whom IFP have a close relationship. Assessments are moderated by the module convenor within the School or by the IFP for the Academic Skills and International English. The programme team did note that this arrangement was challenging in terms of ensuring effective communication between the Schools and the IFP.
The Panel noted that the IFP had, at its Pathfinder Away Day, considered and rejected a proposal that the ownership of the modules be transferred to the IFP. The Module Convenors who met with the Panel shared the view that modules should be owned by the School to ensure that subject experts delivered the modules and were not isolated from developments in their subject area. Schools were also aware of the demands and content of University programmes and the likely experience of other applicants to these programmes.

The Panel formed the opinion that not all Schools were fully aware of their responsibilities in the ownership of modules and identified that, for historic reasons, the Information Systems and Statistics module (previously 'IT and Statistics') was owned by the Department of Chemistry, rather than the School of Systems Engineering. The Panel recommends that the IFP and Schools review and formally set out their respective responsibilities and consider developing mechanisms to ensure a collaborative approach to the management, delivery and development of modules (advisable recommendation b).

In relation to the list of modules, the Panel identified that, largely for historic reasons, there were a number of quantitative modules, which had comparable aims and outcomes. The Panel was concerned that, in the context of the proposed expansion of the IFP and to ensure that the structure of the programme was robust enough to sustain any such expansion, it would be advisable to take a strategic view of the list of modules, particularly in relation to the range of quantitative modules (advisable recommendation c). This might be achieved by reviewing with receiving Schools the types of modules they might wish their eventual students to have undertaken.

The Panel was broadly content with the academic standards of the modules, but during its meeting with students, identified that students regularly compared modules and questioned their relative difficulty; External Examiners had not raised this concern. The Panel formed the opinion that the weighting of assessment was not consistent across modules and that an inconsistency in the timing and weighting of assessment across modules meant that the demands on students did not always appear to be comparable. This issue arose as assessment methods for modules were set by the Module Convenors/Schools rather than the IFP.

The Panel observed that a significant proportion of assessment took place in the Spring Term, and as a result, students found the transition from Autumn to Spring Term to be a significant step-up; this view was also expressed by students in the Pathfinder process and the IFP stated in its Self-Evaluation Document that it intended to take actions to make the first term more challenging. The Panel endorsed the IFP’s plan to review the transition from Autumn to Spring Term and agreed to recommend that the IFP develop mechanisms to ensure that all modules have a comparable and not insignificant proportion of summative assessment in the Autumn Term (advisable recommendation d).

The Panel undertook a discussion of the compulsory Academic Skills module, which aimed ‘to help students develop their study skills in order to be successful on the International Foundation Programme and as undergraduates’. It recognised the difficulty of delivering a range of academic skills to students wishing to undertake a variety of degree programmes, in particular when delivery was outside of a subject-specific module. Whilst the Panel confirmed that students (and in particular, former
students) appeared to value the module as important preparation for their undergraduate study, it noted concerns from some students in relation to assessing this module by formal examination (currently assessed by 70% coursework and 30% formal examination). The Panel agreed to recommend (desirable recommendation a) that the IFP undertake a review of the Academic Skills module and consider whether:

a) the development of academic skills could be embedded or more closely connected to subject-specific modules; and

b) it might be more appropriate to assess the module through 100% coursework.

21 The Panel commended as an example of good practice the case studies on using sources and avoiding plagiarism included in the Student Handbook (good practice c).

Use of student management information

22 The Panel noted that the IFP had mechanisms for the collection and analysis of statistical data, External Examiners' reports, student evaluation of academic modules and for student representation. These processes inform the production of the Annual Programme Reports by the Boards of Studies.

23 The Panel reviewed Module Reports, prepared by Module Convenors, which included module marks, student evaluation of academic modules and a response from the Module Convenor, including an account of any actions to be taken. The Panel noted that the Module Reports were reviewed by the Programme Director and submitted to the Board of Studies for the International Foundation Programme, but that they were not formally reported to the School delivering the module. The Panel recommended that Module Reports be formally submitted to the School delivering the Programme, with a request that the School considered the Reports appropriately (advisable recommendation e).

Quality of learning opportunities offered by the programmes

Teaching and learning

24 The Panel noted that staff had a number of opportunities to share expertise and undertake developmental activities, which included: organised lectures led by internal and external speakers; an annual 'away morning'; and twice-termly staff meetings for tutors to exchange ideas on teaching practice.

25 The Panel acknowledged that a system of Peer Review of Module Tutors, coordinated annually by the IFP, was in place, but that feedback was not routinely submitted to the Module Convener. The Panel recommended that the IFP develop mechanisms to ensure that the outcome of Peer Review was shared with Module Convenors (advisable recommendation f).

26 The Panel formed the view that students received rapid, structured and appropriate feedback on assignments, as well as termly progress reports for each module. The IFP used a variety of means to provide feedback, both oral and written, and the Panel noted, in particular, that the IFP had participated in the trialling of Asset for feed-forward and feedback processes. The Panel noted that the IFP had developed feedback sheets for student work and recommended that the IFP ensure that feedback sheets were consistently used for all modules, as appropriate (desirable recommendation b).
The Panel noted that teaching methods varied depending on the subject area, with weekly practical classes in laboratories in some Science modules, in addition to lectures, seminars, tutorials and surgeries. The Panel was pleased to note the wide and effective use of Blackboard across all modules, which contained assessment schedules, course materials, links to websites, interactive tasks and video links (good practice d).

The Panel commended the excellent academic and pastoral support provided to students and noted the many opportunities for students to receive individual assistance (good practice e). However, it noted comments from some past IFP students that they might have benefitted from undertaking more independent study and research as part of the IFP, in order to develop as independent learners in preparation for their degree programme when this would become the norm. The Panel advised that the IFP team review the level of support received by students on each module in order to encourage students to develop as independent learners and prepare them for transition to degree programmes (advisable recommendation g).

The Panel noted that there had been an increase in the number of students recruited to the programme over the past three years, with between 128 and 176 students registering. As part of the University’s Internationalisation Policy, the IFP has been asked to recruit approximately 300 students by 2013-14. The IFP has introduced a second January entry point for the programme (effective from January 2012) as part of the proposed expansion.

The Panel noted that IFP and Reading International Office staff undertook annual recruitment visits to stable and developing markets and worked closely with agents. Students who met with the Panel stated that they had found out about the IFP through internet searches, UCAS, sponsors and agents, but that generally they had chosen the IFP because it provided a route into their preferred degree programme at the University.

During the meetings, students praised the simplicity, efficiency and turnaround time of the applications process, which was clear and transparent. The Panel noted that applications had previously been co-ordinated by the ISLC office, with the Programme Director and Senior Academic Tutor having responsibility for admissions decisions. Decisions were conveyed to applicants within 48 hours of receipt and the status of applications was closely monitored by staff. Following the introduction of a centralised admissions process, the Admissions Administrator was no longer based in the ISLC and the Panel recommended that the IFP and Head of Admissions monitor the new arrangements so that the strengths of the former admissions process are retained (advisable recommendation h).

The Panel formed the opinion that the induction programme for students was effective and commended the user-friendly documentation provided to students, which included the Student Handbook and the Halls Survival Guide (good practice f). Nonetheless, the Panel identified that student induction to the wider University could be improved even further by developing links with the Students’ Union. The Panel therefore advised the IFP team to develop further links with RUSU in order to enhance students’ integration with the Union, societies and student representation (desirable recommendation c).
The Panel noted that the Student Handbook clearly stated which modules were prerequisites for Reading degrees. Whilst the Panel had some concerns that the module requirements might restrict students' choice should they eventually wish to undertake a different programme, it noted that students received a significant amount of guidance in choosing modules (e.g. through pathway talks and one-to-one appointments with Personal Tutors) and that extra tuition was available to students throughout the session.

The Panel noted that according to University policy, students might normally be permitted to change programmes up until the start of week 5 of the Autumn Term. The Panel, however, was concerned that the normal deadline was too late for students to change modules and pathways on this particular programme, where students would have missed a significant amount of teaching by that point. The Panel was concerned that one student had been permitted to change modules as late as Week 7 and recommended that the IFP review the deadline for changing modules and pathways, in the context of the amount of teaching that would have been missed (advisable recommendation i).

The Panel noted that whilst almost all students passed the IFP, an average of 65% of students usually qualified for progression to University of Reading degree programmes. The progression rate was 72% in 2010-11. Students who failed to achieve the progression requirements for their chosen programme received support from staff to apply for other Reading programmes via internal clearing or received support to apply to other Universities.

The Panel considered the progression rate to be comparable to other Foundation Programmes, but identified inconsistencies in the management of students who passed the programme, but did not achieve the necessary grades to progress to their preferred programme at Reading. The Panel observed that in some cases, such IFP student applications were rejected by the University, while at the same time as the University recruited students from other Foundation Programmes via clearing. Furthermore, IFP staff stated that, where there were good links with Schools, they were usually able to help students to make a strong case for being accepted onto a programme.

The Panel confirmed that students clearly understood the various progression requirements from the programme, evidenced by the helpful case-studies on degree opportunities and progression in the Student Handbook and the positive feedback from students. However, in its review of the normal admission requirements for some University programmes the Panel identified inconsistencies with progression requirements for IFP students intending to undertake those programmes. For example, in order to progress to the LLB Law, IFP students were required to undertake the Law module and achieve Grade 1, whereas A-Level students or other applicants were not required to have undertaken Law A-Level. The Panel noted that external applicants wishing to undertake degrees in Economics were not required to have studied Economics at A-Level, whereas the Economics Module was compulsory for IFP students. The Panel noted that the IFP was not routinely informed of changes to admission requirements by Schools, evidenced by the removal of the requirement for Computer Science students to have undertaken an A-Level in Mathematics.

The Panel agreed to recommend that the IFP and Schools, in consultation with the Head of Admissions, undertake a review of progression requirements to University programmes and develop mechanisms to ensure that admission requirements were
clearly stated and both parties were working towards the same goals (advisable recommendation j). The Review should include:

a) the identification of programmes where progression requirements appeared to be more restrictive on previous subjects studied for IFP students than for other incoming students;

b) establishing a mechanism to annually review the standard entry requirements of programmes and negotiate with Schools, as appropriate; and

c) formalising and making more transparent processes for ‘internal clearing’ (progression) to all programmes.

39 The Panel discussed with IFP staff progression requirements in relation to the International English module and noted that post IFP cohort tracking indicated that students had not failed to progress purely because of a lack of English language proficiency. Whilst receiving Schools reported that they were broadly content with the performance of IFP students at Part 1 and confirmed that students integrated well, the Panel noted that the grade descriptors for the International English module had not recently been compared to descriptors of other standardisation English language tests used for entry to degree programmes and agreed to recommend that the IFP team undertake a benchmarking exercise to ensure that progression requirements were consistent with standard admission requirements for programmes (advisable recommendation k).

40 The Panel noted that in a number of cases, Module Tutors also taught at Part 1 of degree programmes and that this provided useful continuity to IFP students (good practice g).

41 The Panel reviewed IFP student tracking progression statistics and noted that in a sample of students graduating between 2007 and 2009, only 4% of former IFP students achieved a First, whereas the percentage was 12% for home students and 9% for overseas students. 35% of IFP completers achieved a 2.1; the percentage was 62% for home students and 44% for overseas students. A significant proportion of IFP graduates (47%) achieved a 2.2. This percentage was lower for home students and overseas students (24% and 37% respectively). In terms of Fail/DNS, the percentage was comparably low for all groups. The Panel noted that IFP students did not tend to perform as highly as Home and Overseas students within this sample. It is, however, difficult to draw any real conclusion from this sample.

42 The Panel advised that the IFP assess, if possible, the progression statistics of students who had undertaken Foundation programmes elsewhere (desirable recommendation d).

Learning resources

43 Following the merger which created the ISLC, the IFP had relocated to the HumSS Building. The IFP now benefitted from dedicated IT support, improved technology in classrooms and students had easy access to the Self-Access Centre; staff were, however, concerned that the identity of the IFP was less visible in its new location, although students did not generally share this concern.

44 The Panel noted that the ISLC had now reached its capacity in terms of offices and teaching rooms and that this might be a cause for concern in the context of the expansion of the programme and the introduction of a January intake. Furthermore,
the Panel noted the importance of ensuring that a robust structure was in place to deliver the programme to larger cohorts. It noted that as well as space, it would be necessary to ensure that students continued to receive the same level of academic and pastoral support by maintaining the optimal student: staff ratio and that there was an appropriate level of administrative support. The Panel advised that the ISLC consider space and staffing implications in the context of the planned expansion, and particularly whether relying on more sessional staff was appropriate (advisable recommendation l).

45  The Panel was pleased to note the sharing of expertise within the new ISLC; the IFP and CALS teams had shared expertise in examinations, administration and the organisation of social activities. The Panel wished to encourage the IFP to continue to share and develop expertise with colleagues and to make use of the resources and facilities in the new ISLC (desirable recommendation e).

46  It was clear to the Panel that the IFP has a highly collegiate environment and that module tutors felt very well supported, with a strong sense of belonging. Although module tutors are embedded within delivering Schools and Departments, it was evident that tutors felt part of the IFP team and benefitted from the ‘welcoming and supportive’ environment. Module Tutors who met with the Panel stated that acting as Personal, as well as Module, Tutors helped them to integrate further with the IFP.

47  However, the Panel identified that the role of the Module Convenor was not always clear and that practice tended to vary across delivering Schools. It was expected that module tutors were supported by Module Convenors and that Convenors attended Examiners’ Meetings and provided programme support expertise. However, as there was not an established job description for Module Convenors, the IFP, module tutors, Module Convenors and Schools did not have a shared understanding and expectation of the role and this had caused some difficulties for the IFP.

48  The Panel noted that the Department of Economics had developed a job description for the role of the Module Convenor and recommended that the IFP, in consultation with Schools, clarified the role of the Module Convenor by developing a standard job description (advisable recommendation m). This would ensure a shared understanding of the role and ensure that Schools provided adequate support to and recognition of Module Convenors.

Employer engagement

49  As the International Foundation Programme prepares students for Higher Education, rather than employment, the Panel agreed that Employer engagement would not be included in this Periodic Review.

Enhancement of quality and academic provision

50  It was clear that the IFP had actively engaged in the Pathfinder process. In its review of the Self-Evaluation Document and Action Plan, the Panel agreed that the latter required further development so that it addressed more clearly the issues that the IFP had identified as important. The recommendations of this Review would also indicate to the IFP areas for further reflection and development.
The Panel acknowledged that staff were well supported by the IFP. The enhancement of quality and academic provision was facilitated by a number of activities for staff (special lectures, ‘away morning’ and twice-termly meetings), the production of the InForm journal and the sharing of expertise within the new ISLC.

The Panel agreed that in the context of the recent merger and the proposed expansion of the IFP, it was important for the IFP to establish clear ownership and management of the programme. The Panel identified that links between Schools and the IFP team should be developed, so that there was a shared understanding of the programme and its aspirations.

The Panel has identified in this report a number of recommendations which the IFP should consider in order to ensure greater ownership of the programme, whilst ensuring Schools’ engagement with and commitment to the modules they own, including recommendations that:

a) the IFP and Schools review and formally set out their respective responsibilities and consider developing mechanisms to ensure a collaborative approach to the management, delivery and development of modules (advisable recommendation b);

b) Module Reports be formally submitted to the School delivering the Programme, with a request that the School considered the Reports appropriately (advisable recommendation e);

c) the IFP develop mechanisms to ensure that the outcome of Peer Review was shared with Module Conveners (advisable recommendation f);

d) the IFP and Schools, in consultation with the University Admissions Manager, undertake a review of progression requirements to University programmes and develop mechanisms to ensure that admission requirements were clearly stated and both parties were working towards the same goals (advisable recommendation j); and

e) the IFP, in consultation with Schools, clarified the role of the Module Convenor by developing a standard job description (advisable recommendation m).

The Panel noted that the Programme Director was not the Chair of the Board of Studies and agreed that the sense of ownership of the programme might be developed if this were the case. The Panel agreed to recommend that the Programme Director assume the role of Chair of the Board of Studies (desirable recommendation f).

The Panel further noted that, although the team had recently reviewed the arrangement for module ownership, it would be important to keep this under review in the near future. The Panel were particularly concerned that the current arrangements may hamper plans to expand the delivery of the programme.

Main characteristics of the programme under review

The aim of the IFP is to help ‘students in their transition from school to university and to develop independent learning skills and flexibility in a friendly, caring environment’, as per the Self-Evaluation Document. The Panel agreed that the broad curricula of the IFP prepared students for entry to a wide range of degree programmes and noted the
very positive comments of students and staff, particularly in relation to the supportive and collegiate atmosphere which had been created.

Following the recent merger and the planned expansion of the programme, the Panel agreed that the IFP had an excellent opportunity to review and drive changes to the programme and its composite modules and to formalise its relationship with Schools across the University. The Panel hopes that the many strengths of the programme would be maintained as the IFP undergoes expansion.

Conclusions on innovation and good practice

The Panel commends the following as areas where the Department has particular strengths:

a) The Panel noted that there was an emerging desire to form an organisation akin to or within the Foundation Network to provide parity and maintain standards of IFPs across the sector and commended as an example of good practice the IFP's involvement in these developments.

b) The opportunities available to students to reflect upon their module selection, including guidance in the Student Handbook and the accessibility of staff.

c) The case studies on using sources and avoiding plagiarism included in the Student Handbook.

d) The wide and effective use of Blackboard across all modules, which contained assessment schedules, course materials, links to websites, interactive tasks and video links.

e) The excellent academic and pastoral support provided to students and the many opportunities for students to receive individual assistance.

f) The effective induction programme for students and the user-friendly documentation provided to students, which included the Student Handbook and the *Halls Survival Guide*.

g) In a number of cases, Module Tutors also taught at Part 1 of degree programmes. This provided useful continuity to IFP students.

Conclusions on quality and standards

The Panel has agreed that the:

- intended learning outcomes of the programme are being obtained by students;
- quality and standards of the programme are being achieved; and
- the programme specification is appropriate.

Recommendations

The Panel agreed to recommend to Faculty Board for Teaching and Learning for Arts, Humanities and Social Science that the International Foundation Programme be re-approved for a period of six years.
The Panel does not consider that any recommendations must be addressed as a condition of re-approval.

The Panel makes the following recommendations to the Department:

**Advisable**

a) The Panel agreed to recommend that the IFP:
   i. revise *Skills and other attributes* as part of their annual review of the content of the programme specification and identify those skills which might not be achieved by all students (e.g. by addition of ‘where appropriate’); and
   ii. review module descriptions to ensure the clarity of module outcomes and the consistency and clarity of assessment arrangements.

b) The Panel recommends that the IFP and Schools review and formally set out their respective responsibilities and consider developing mechanisms to ensure a collaborative approach to the management, delivery and development of modules.

c) In the context of the proposed expansion of the IFP and to ensure that the structure of the programme was robust enough to sustain any such expansion, it would be advisable to take a strategic view of the list of modules, particularly in relation to the range of quantitative modules.

d) The Panel agreed to recommend that the IFP develop mechanisms to ensure that all modules have a comparable and not insignificant proportion of summative assessment in the Autumn Term.

e) The Panel recommended that Module Reports be formally submitted to the School delivering the Programme, with a request that the School considered the Reports appropriately.

f) The Panel recommended that the IFP develop mechanisms to ensure that the outcome of Peer Review was shared with Module Conveners.

g) The Panel advised that the IFP team review the level of support received by students on each module in order to encourage students to develop as independent learners and prepare them for transition to degree programmes.

h) The Panel recommended that the IFP and Head of Admissions monitor the new arrangements so that the strengths of the former admissions process are retained.

i) The Panel recommended that the IFP review the deadline for students to change modules and pathways, in the context of the amount of teaching that would have been missed.

j) The Panel agreed to recommend that the IFP and Schools, in consultation with the Head of Admissions, undertake a review of progression requirements to University programmes and develop mechanisms to ensure that admission requirements were clearly stated and both parties were working towards the same goals.

k) The Panel agreed to recommend that the IFP team undertake a benchmarking exercise to ensure that progression requirements were consistent with standard admission requirements for programmes.

l) The Panel advised that the ISLC consider space and staffing implications in the context of the planned expansion, and particularly whether relying on more sessional staff was appropriate.
m) The Panel recommended that the IFP, in consultation with Schools, clarified the role of the Module Convenor by developing a standard job description.

**Desirable**

a) The Panel agreed to recommend that the IFP undertake a review of the Academic Skills module and consider whether:

i. the development of academic skills could be embedded or more closely connected to subject-specific modules; and

ii. it might be more appropriate to assess the module through 100% coursework.

b) The Panel noted that the IFP had developed feedback sheets for student work and recommended that the IFP ensure that feedback sheets were consistently used for all modules, as appropriate.

c) The Panel advised the IFP team to develop further links with RUSU in order to enhance students’ integration with the Union, societies and student representation.

d) The Panel advised that the IFP assess, if possible, the progression statistics of students who had undertaken Foundation programmes elsewhere.

e) The Panel wished to encourage the IFP to continue to share and develop expertise with colleagues and to make use of the resources and facilities in the new ISLC.

f) The Panel agreed to recommend that the Programme Director assume the role of Chair of the Board of Studies.

62 The Panel does not have a recommendation to the Faculty Board for Teaching and Learning as to whether any proposal(s) for new degree programmes should be approved as this is not applicable.