

Periodic Review of English Language and Applied Linguistics

Introduction

1 An internal review of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes in the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics was held on 29 February and 1 March 2016. The members of the Panel were:

- Dr Elizabeth McCrum, Teaching and Learning Dean (Chair)
- Professor Alison Sealey, Lancaster University
- Diane Schmitt, Nottingham Trent University
- Kate Pepper, English Language Centre, Reading
- Dr Emily West, History
- Professor Simon Sherratt, Systems Engineering
- Sol Vardi, student member
- Vicky Howard, Secretary

2 The Panel met the following members of staff:

- Professor Clare Furneaux (former Department Director of Teaching and Learning)
- Professor Rodney Jones (Head of Department)
- Professor Jane Setter (Department Director of Teaching and Learning)
- Dr Parvaneh Tavakoli (PGT Director of Studies)
- Dr Christiana Themistocleous (UG Director of Studies)
- Dr Fraibet Aveledo (lecturing staff)
- Dr Michael Daller (lecturing staff)
- Dr Sylvia Jaworska (lecturing staff)
- Lesley Hammond (administrator)
- Amanda Horn (administrator)
- Anne Whitbread (administrator)
- Jackie Skinner (library liaison)
- Natalia Kampakli (teaching assistant)
- Chris Ryder (teaching assistant)

- Jan Trębacz (teaching assistant)
- 3 The Panel met Part 1, 2 and 3 students who represented the following degree programmes:
- BA English Language
 - MA English Language Teaching (campus-based and distance study)
- 4 The Panel met former students, who had graduated from the following degree programmes between 2010-2015:
- BA English Language
 - BA English Language and Literature
 - MA English Language Teaching (campus-based)
 - MA Applied Linguistics

General observations

- 5 The Panel met with a range of staff, students and alumni during the Review process and wishes to thank all who participated for their contribution. The Panel was impressed by the Department's resilience and forward thinking within a recent history of organisational turbulence with the merger with English Literature and the subsequent reorganization into the current Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics. The Department had also participated in the English Project in 2014, which had facilitated a review of provision and subsequent changes to and enhancements of programmes.
- 6 The Panel thanked the department for the detailed, thorough and reflective Self Evaluation Document which reflects a culture of review and continuous improvement within the Department. The Panel was also pleased to receive the useful and informative student submission, which included contributions from undergraduate and postgraduate taught students and had been submitted alongside the SED.
- 7 The strength of Teaching and Learning within the Department is manifest in its clear ethos and 'Student Promise' [good practice a]. Significantly, by April of the final year of reporting (2014/15), all academic staff in the Department had achieved Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, with two winners of the University Outstanding Contributions to Teaching and Learning awards, two University Teaching Fellows and one National Teaching Fellow [good practice b].
- 8 In addition to matters specifically within the purview of the Periodic Review, the Department raised a small number of matters in its SED for consideration by the Panel. The Panel provided feedback on these matters and, in particular, agreed to make **three recommendations to the University**, as follows:
- a) the University consider the articulation of the MA TESOL and the MA Education (English Language Teaching) offered by the University's Institute of Education with a view to better differentiating the markets for the programmes;
 - b) information available from HESA on comparator institutions and programmes be made available to departments, without charge, in order to better inform their recruitment strategies; and
 - c) the University continue to review the impact of the Professional and Administrative Services (PAS) Review on small departments, such as DELAL, and the maintenance of a high level of student-specific support.

- 9 The Panel met with a range of students and staff and an impressively large number of alumni. Both current and past students very clearly valued their experiences on their programmes and particularly the high levels of support that they received from academic and administrative staff within the department.

Academic standards of the programmes

Educational aims of the provision and the learning outcomes

- 10 In reviewing the educational aims and learning outcomes of programmes, the Panel considered a range of evidence, including programme specifications, module descriptions, student handbooks, external examiners' reports and annual programme reports. It read a sample of student work and held a number of meetings with staff, students and alumni, all of whom were able to articulate clearly a strong sense of how the various modules on the programmes relate to each other and to the subject material of the programmes being studied.
- 11 The Panel found that the aims and learning outcomes were entirely appropriate for the programmes. The external examiners verify the comparability with programmes in other universities in each of their annual reports and the programmes are also consistent with the appropriate external reference points.
- 12 The teaching, learning and assessment strategies are clear and staff, students and external examiners appear to have a clear idea of the aims and learning outcomes of the programmes. This information is clearly laid out in the formal programme specification documents.
- 13 It was noted in the most recent previous Periodic Review (2010) that the BA programme integrates presentation of theories with applications to 'real life' situations, with positive implications for graduates entering the labour market. Similar points were made to the Panel very eloquently by several alumni during this review. The Panel also learned of prospects for further developments of links between English Language as an academic subject and applications of the discipline beyond the University – e.g. by extended use of workplace placements and opportunities to study abroad.
- 14 The most recent previous Periodic Review also commented positively on the differentiation of the different tracks (dissertation, portfolio and taught) within the Masters level programmes. The Department continues to recognise the different students that this programme attracts and to maintain distinct pathways appropriate to the needs of the students.
- 15 Staff, students and alumni see the programmes provided as outward-looking and very relevant to the notion of global citizenship. Not only are many of the staff (as well as the postgraduate students, in particular) bi- or multilingual themselves, the subject matter of English Language and Applied Linguistics lends itself particularly well to consideration of internationalisation, which is thoroughly integrated into the curriculum [good practice c].

Curricula and assessment

Curricula – Undergraduate Programmes

- 16 The Department offers an undergraduate curriculum that is noteworthy for the wide-range of optionality, whilst retaining clear pathways throughout the programme, with

compulsory modules in each Part of the degrees providing core skills and knowledge which is extended in the optional choices. This ensures that students have the opportunity to explore a wide range of topics in English Language, but also offers students the opportunity to focus in on a specific area, as per the department mission statement:

'To enable students to leave the University of Reading ahead of the national field in at least one distinctive area of English Language and Applied Linguistics, well-grounded in theories and confident in applying those theories in practice, using a wide range of the latest tools and methodologies.'

- 17 The Panel believes that the current format of the degree where Part 1 students have to take at least 40 credits from modules across the University is especially valuable as this generally offers students the opportunity to explore a wide range of subjects from an academic perspective, but more specifically offers the opportunity to begin to see the importance of language in all aspects of life and to discover how language is used differently for different purposes and in different disciplines **[good practice d]**.
- 18 The Panel was entirely satisfied that the content and design of programmes were appropriately informed by recent developments in teaching and learning and commended the Department for its achievements in this area: as noted above, all academic staff are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy; two have won University Outstanding Contributions to Teaching and Learning awards, two are University Teaching Fellows and one is a National Teaching Fellow. The curriculum benefits from research-informed teaching and affords the students opportunities to participate in or carry out research as part of a number of modules. The curriculum also draws on content on language use from a wide range of context across the UK and worldwide and has benefited from the introduction of the module *Techniques and Skills for Applied Linguistics* which aims to assist students in making the transition to university study and specifically introduces academic skills relevant to the discipline and future employment. The module convenor has closely involved students in the development and revision of the module to ensure that both content and delivery are relevant.

Curricula – Postgraduate Taught Programmes

- 19 The Masters programmes offer students a high standard of curricula and assessment opportunities. The programmes have been reviewed since the last Periodic Review, including as part of the English Project, ensuring that content is up-to-date, assessment is appropriate to the modules and that student needs are met, especially those experiencing UK education for the first time.
- 20 The Panel acknowledges the appropriacy of the curriculum for the different cohorts of students recruited onto the MA English Language Teaching programme. The dissertation track affords experienced teachers the opportunity to research and theorise their practice and offers relevant training to those who wish to go on to doctoral study. Similarly, the portfolio track offers less experienced teachers the opportunity to combine theory and practice. The Panel noted, however, declining enrolments onto the taught track and asked that the Department consider whether provision of this track continued to be appropriate, particularly given the content and strengths of the dissertation and portfolio tracks **[desirable recommendation a]**.
- 21 The Panel supports the Department's decision to suspend recruitment to the MA ELT/TESOL by Distance Study (DSMA), noting that staffing issues had made it difficult to update module content and to move delivery of the programme to a technology-

enhanced platform. Nonetheless, the Panel believes that the distance mode serves a different category of student from those on the other pathways and presents opportunities for growth in student numbers. The Panel also noted that the programme was well known and regarded worldwide. The Panel therefore recommends that the Department explore the possibility of continuing provision of the DSMA, cognisant of the significant resource implications of any such decision [advisable recommendation a] and of the University's recent decision that a centrally supported dedicated Distance Learning Strategy not be actively pursued at this time.

- 22 As noted in its General Observations above, the Panel's attention was drawn to the availability of two MA programmes within the University which appear to be aimed at a similar market, i.e. the MA ELT/TESOL within the Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics and in the Institute of Education the 'specialist pathway' on English Language Teaching within the MA Education. The Panel compared the way the two programmes are represented online, and the extent to which the distinctive features - in terms of the experience and aims of students to be recruited, and the modules offered of each programme - are clear. It has therefore recommended that the University consider the articulation of the programmes and their associated specifications, with a view to better differentiating them and their respective markets.

Assessment

- 23 External Examiners confirm that the standards achieved by students are appropriate to the award and align to external reference points. Whilst one External Examiner had raised an issue in regard to moderation and the reconciliation of marks, the Panel was satisfied that appropriate University procedures were being adhered to in the Department and indeed that systems are in place to induct and to train new markers and to ensure standardisation across marking teams [good practice e].
- 24 Assessment opportunities are well designed to enable students to demonstrate assessable learning outcomes. There are a variety of assessment tasks utilised as appropriate to the discipline, with care taken to ensure that assessment is authentic to the substantive focus of a module. Examples of the range of assessment activities include- group projects, poster and video presentations, blogs, websites, and oral presentations, alongside essays and examinations [good practice f].
- 25 The Panel noted some concern from students about fairness in group assessment. There are a number of areas of good practice in this regard, and strategies for addressing this. The Department might therefore give some consideration to this issue and consider the ways in which this good practice might be disseminated across modules and programmes in order to address students concerns in this area [desirable recommendation b].
- 26 The core 'Techniques and Skills for Applied Linguistics' Part 1 module explicitly addresses issues to support the development of students' assessment literacy, including an introduction to academic integrity through the formative use of originality checking software. Students have the opportunity to submit an assignment for formative feedback and to reflect on the ways in which they have incorporated this final feedback into their summative submission [good practice g]. There are examples of the ways in which students are encouraged to actively engage with assessment criteria and the Department could consider sharing this practice across modules and programmes [desirable recommendation c].

- 27 The Panel also observed a strong culture of academic personal tutoring in the Department, including the use of personal tutor time to support students in engaging with feedback [good practice h].
- 28 Departmental NSS scores for assessment and feedback have risen consistently and significantly over the last 4 years. The Panel was pleased to note that the promptness of feedback is an area of particular improvement and students confirm that feedback on their work is provided in a timely manner.

Use of student management information

- 29 The Department makes extensive use of data from a range of sources, including the NSS, module and programme evaluations, classification data, External Examiners' Reports, and admissions data. The Department has strong systems in place to reflect on student performance and it was clear that the Boards of Studies and the Student-Staff Liaison Committees give appropriate consideration to relevant datasets, and that the Annual Programme Report addresses key issues. Staff are responsive to students' comments and feedback and, following comments from Part 2 students that the first couple of weeks of summer term had been very busy with revision for examinations clashing with various assignment deadlines, the undergraduate BoS decided to change the deadline of submission of the Dissertation Proposal.
- 30 It was evident to the Panel that DELAL is an engaged and caring Department, with highly qualified Teaching and Learning staff, and has clear strengths in looking after students, via academic and support staff. The Department expressed its concerns around the PAS Review, specifically concerning the volume of support that might be available to and required by smaller departments. As noted above, the Panel has therefore agreed to recommend to the University that it continue to review the impact of the PAS Review on small departments, such as DELAL, and the maintenance of a high level of student-specific support.

Teaching and learning

- 31 As previously noted, the Department has a strong culture of T&L and is very well represented in the allocation of rewards and recognitions in teaching and learning. The T&L vision for the department is articulated in the 'Student Promise'.
- 32 The Department makes effective and appropriate use of a variety of teaching methods and corresponding learning resources and these continue to evolve, for example with the introduction of flipped learning in English Phonology modules.
- 33 There is a programme to induct new staff into teaching and learning. This includes briefings for staff on teaching and learning policy and practice and a series of screencasts on supporting teaching and learning administration, for example on accessing RISIS, and booking teaching rooms [good practice i]. There is a well-established peer review process and mentoring of staff, which includes PhD students with teaching responsibilities.
- 34 The Department has a very strong culture of research-led teaching and there are many examples of ways in which students are actively engaged in developing their research skills in the curriculum, for example in the collection and analysis of data, and presentation of research findings in the Part Two 'Applied English Language Studies' module. In light of these strengths, the Panel recommends that Department draw together these examples and look at the ways in which students are able to develop

and build their skills incrementally across a programme [desirable recommendation d].

Student admission and progression

- 35 The Department has an exemplary web and social media presence which it uses to keep in contact with students and alumni, and for marketing purposes. In particular, the Panel agreed to commend as good practice the virtual visit days (VVDs), which had been introduced to address a decline in applications [good practice j] and attract a diverse student body. The VVDs involve inviting offer holders, usually based overseas, to one-to-one Skype interviews, held by existing or previous PGT Programme Directors, as well as the provision of online videos. The Panel also noted that a return to an offer of BBB for 2015/16 from ABB the previous two years had resulted in an increase in admissions.
- 36 The Panel confirmed that there are appropriate and effective arrangements for admission, induction and transition and that students' individual needs are identified and addressed appropriately. All students, UG and PGT, and whether from the UK or overseas, submit a short first essay that is only formatively assessed; they receive feedback on this before submitting their first summatively-assessed work. At PGT level and in addition to any pre or in-sessional English language support that may be required, students take the non-credit bearing module *LSMAPAL Academic Practice in Applied Linguistics*, which aims to support students not familiar with UK Higher Education.
- 37 The Panel confirmed that student progression is appropriate to the stated aims of the programmes and consistent with the attainment of intended learning outcomes. No progression problems were evident and the Panel was particularly pleased to note that in 2015, 24% of students were awarded a first class degree, with 0% being awarded a third, pass or fail. The number of Distinctions and Merits amongst PGT students had also increased over the period under scrutiny.
- 38 As noted above, the Panel felt students were well supported to make informed decisions in the selection of optional modules and developing pathways throughout their programme.
- 39 The Panel was very interested in the 'Professional Track', a non-credit bearing initiative led by the School of Literature and Languages, which is available to DELAL students. The Professional Track offers students the opportunity to develop their vocational and academic skills through placements, explore career areas and attend professional courses. Whilst there are a number of free activities included within the Professional Track, some of the students the Panel met were not aware of these opportunities and others expressed concern regarding the cost of some of the externally-provided activities. The School of Literature and Languages is therefore asked to consider how it might best communicate to students the range of free opportunities and consider proposing alternative sources of funding and sponsorship to enable all students to benefit equally from the paid-for opportunities [desirable recommendation a to the School].
- 40 The Department's ethos of creating Global Citizens was very clear and well evidenced. Alumni were very complimentary about the staff and the content of their programme in this respect. Notwithstanding the recent introduction of the Year Aboard, the Department, in consultation with the School, could consider shorter periods aboard and/or incorporate the time spent abroad as part of the credit-bearing placement

modules to further student's experience in this important area [desirable recommendation e].

Learning resources

- 41 Whilst the Panel noted recent challenges in respect of staff resources, it agreed that the cohort of staff provide the collective expertise to deliver the curricula and allow the intended learning outcomes of those programmes to be achieved. The Panel was pleased to note the recent appointment of Professor Rodney Jones as the new Head of Department, as well as further possible appointments, which broadened the range of teaching areas to be offered to students.
- 42 There is currently appropriate administrative support for the operation of the programmes, with students, staff and external examiners all speaking highly of the support provided. In light of the new academic structures, Professor Jones has recognised the need to move towards more 'School' academic administrative roles.
- 43 As previously noted, additional technical expertise would be required for the development and relaunch of the Distance Study MA.
- 44 There are suitable resources in terms of teaching accommodation, equipment, library stocks and IT facilities, and these are deployed in an effective manner. In particular, the Panel noted that the Department Library budget had recently been increased and that students and staff alike commend the support provided by the liaison librarians. Postgraduate Taught students commended the provision of a communal study space within the School.
- 45 Learning resources are inclusive and appear to support appropriately the diversity of the student cohort. As previously noted, formative work is used to support a diverse student body and support is provided for PGT students without English as a first language by various means, including: pre-sessional English language training for those not meeting IELTs requirements; in-sessional EAP language support; and a HSMAPAL non-credit bearing module with formative work.
- 46 Within the curriculum itself, the Department also has an exemplary record of embracing inclusive learning resources and supporting a diverse student cohort. There are opportunities for study abroad (which would become more inclusive with the introduction of the opportunity to spend a semester, rather than a year, abroad). Modules often have a global reach, including language testing and considering text books and case studies from around the world. Students have the opportunity to explore English in different cultures and learn about issues relating to gender, class, ethnicity and sexual minorities [good practice k].

Employer engagement

- 47 The Panel has noted the work being undertaken to review careers provision within the curriculum and endorses the desire to embed careers and employability across the curriculum. The SED confirmed that the enhancement of UG student employability is a key priority in the Department's ongoing development work.
- 48 The Panel was very impressed by the alumni of the undergraduate programme, who were very well able to articulate the ways in which the knowledge, skills and dispositions that they had developed through their study of the discipline had contributed to their employability. Alumni believed they had been well supported by staff and had developed the confidence required to apply for jobs and gain employment.

- 49 The Panel noted that alumni were keen to support the programmes and develop relationships with current students and agreed that their formal involvement would be an excellent way to enhance the Department's provision in the area of careers and employability [**desirable recommendation f**].
- 50 The student submission indicated slightly lower satisfaction with the guidance offered to students in considering future employment or further study than with other categories surveyed. Students who met with the Panel explained that the current timing of the provision of careers learning within the curriculum might be reconsidered as part of the wider embedding of careers and employability across the curriculum.
- 51 The Panel believed that the Department should continue to develop contacts with employers locally, nationally and internationally in order to increase the number of work placements available to their students. Furthermore, the Department should consider the development of further links with secondary schools and EFL schools in the area [**desirable recommendation g**]. This would also support the progression of students from University programmes to CELTA/Trinity/Delta teaching qualifications.

Enhancement of quality and academic provision

- 52 The Panel considered that it is an example of good practice that student submissions from undergraduate and postgraduate taught students have been made alongside the SED to the Periodic Review Panel. It was evident that students had engaged thoughtfully with the Periodic Review process, both in their written and oral feedback to the Panel. The Panel supports the roll out of the student submission as part of all future Periodic Reviews [**good practice i**].
- 53 The Department employs committed teachers keen to link teaching and research. Recent innovations include: separating modules at Part 2 and 3; the introduction of a new BA in Spanish Studies and English language; and the re-naming of MA programmes to MA TESOL. The Department has also introduced a BA with year abroad from 2014-15, although interest is fairly low at this early stage. The Department is committed to exploring the possibility of offering a semester abroad and the Panel believes that this may be of greater interest to potential participants.
- 54 The Panel was pleased to note that the new compulsory 20-credit module, LS1TAL *Techniques and Skills for Applied Linguistics*, was developed alongside students, through a grant from the University's Partnerships in Learning and Teaching fund (PLANT) awarded to Professor Jane Setter and students. The module aims to support students more effectively in the development of their academic writing, reading and research skills, to help them make the transition from school to the UKHE environment more effectively. The Panel also noted the development of an innovative new Part 2 module on Language and New Media.
- 55 The Department has developed a forward-looking plan for its academic provision and the Head of Department is considering how the Department might use staff resource differently were it unsuccessful in obtaining new staff, for example by re-configuring administrative roles and making more use of PGR students as Teaching Assistants. In particular, the Department wishes to recruit a Lecturer in the area of Technology Enhanced Learning, which would also enhance access and diversity in participation, and appeal to new student markets.
- 56 As outlined in previous sections, the Panel agreed that appropriate development opportunities are made available to and taken up by staff.

Main characteristics of the programmes under review

- 57 The Panel was particularly impressed by the range of examples of good practice identified during its visit, in no small part due to the strength of the Teaching and Learning culture within the Department. Both current and past students very clearly valued their experiences on their programmes and particularly the high levels of support that they received from academic and administrative staff within the Department. The Department's commitment to students is manifest in its clear ethos and 'Student Promise'.

Conclusions on innovation and good practice

- 58 The Panel identifies the following as representing particularly good practice:
- a) the strength of Teaching and Learning within the Department is manifest in its clear ethos and 'Student Promise';
 - b) by April of the final year of reporting (2014/15), all academic staff in the Department had achieved Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, with two winners of the University Outstanding Contributions to Teaching and Learning awards, two University Teaching Fellows and one National Teaching Fellow;
 - c) staff, students and alumni see the programmes provided as outward-looking and very relevant to the notion of global citizenship. Not only are many of the staff (as well as the postgraduate students, in particular) bi- or multilingual themselves, the subject matter of English Language and Applied Linguistics lends itself particularly well to consideration of internationalisation, which is thoroughly integrated into the curriculum;
 - d) the Panel believes that the current format of the degree where Part 1 students have to take at least 40 credits from modules across the University is especially valuable as this generally offers students the opportunity to explore a wide range of subjects from an academic perspective, but more specifically offers the opportunity to begin to see the importance of language in all aspects of life and to discover how language is used differently for different purposes and in different disciplines;
 - e) the operation of systems to induct and to train new markers and to ensure standardisation across marking teams;
 - f) assessment opportunities are well designed to enable students to demonstrate assessable learning outcomes. There are a variety of assessment tasks utilised as appropriate to the discipline, with care taken to ensure that assessment is authentic to the substantive focus of a module. Examples of the range of assessment activities include- group projects, poster and video presentations, blogs, websites, and oral presentations, alongside essays and examinations;
 - g) the core 'Techniques and Skills for Applied Linguistics' Part 1 module explicitly addresses issues to support the development of students' assessment literacy, including an introduction to academic integrity through the formative use of originality checking software. Students have the opportunity to submit an assignment for formative feedback and to reflect on the ways in which they have incorporated this final feedback into their summative submission;
 - h) a strong culture of academic personal tutoring in the Department, including the use of personal tutor time to support students in engaging with feedback;

- i) the programme to induct new staff into teaching and learning includes briefings for staff on teaching and learning policy and practice and a series of screencasts on supporting teaching and learning administration, for example on accessing RISIS, and booking teaching rooms;
- j) the Department has an exemplary web and social media presence which it uses to keep in contact with students and alumni, and for marketing purposes. In particular, the Panel commends as good practice the virtual visit days (VVDs), which had been introduced to address a decline in applications and attract a diverse student body;
- k) modules often have a global reach, including language testing and considering text books and case studies from around the world. Students have the opportunity to explore English in different cultures and learn about issues relating to gender, class, ethnicity and sexual minorities;
- l) the Panel considered that it is an example of good practice that student submissions from undergraduate and postgraduate taught students have been made alongside the SED to the Periodic Review Panel. It was evident that students had engaged thoughtfully with the Periodic Review process, both in their written and oral feedback to the Panel. The Panel supports the roll out of the student submission as part of all future Periodic Reviews.

Conclusions on quality and standards

59 The Panel has concluded that the quality and standards of the programmes reviewed are appropriate.

Recommendations

- 60 The Panel **recommends** to the Faculty Board for Teaching and Learning of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science that the following degree programmes be re-approved to run for a further six years or, in the case of joint programmes, until the Periodic Review of the other discipline:
- BA English Language
 - BA English Language with a Year Abroad (4 years)
 - BA English Language and Literature
 - BA French Studies and English Language
 - BA German Studies and English
 - BA Italian Studies and English Language
 - BA Spanish Studies and English Language
 - MA English Language Teaching (renamed MA TESOL for 2016/17)¹ (full-time)
 - MA English Language Teaching (renamed MA TESOL for 2016/17)² (part-time)
 - MA English Language Teaching (renamed MA TESOL for 2016/17) by Distance Study³
 - MA Applied Linguistics⁴

¹ Three possible tracks – taught track, dissertation track and portfolio track. Tracks are reflected in the transcript only.

² Three possible tracks – taught track, dissertation track and portfolio track. Tracks are reflected in the transcript only.

³ Programme currently suspended until end of 2016-17.

⁴ Campus-based only; dissertation track only

- 61 The Panel does not consider that any recommendations must be addressed as a condition of re-approval.
- 62 The Panel recommends that the following actions be taken by the Department:

Advisable actions:

- a) the Department to explore the possibility of continuing provision of the MA ELT/TESOL by Distance Study (DSMA), cognisant of the significant resource implications of any such decision.

Desirable actions:

- a) the Department to consider whether provision of the taught track of the MA in English Language Teaching continued to be appropriate, particularly given the content and strengths of the dissertation and portfolio tracks;
- b) the Department to give consideration to issue of fairness in group assessment and consider the ways in which good practice in the Department might be disseminated across modules and programmes in order to address students' concerns in this area;
- c) the Department to consider ways of sharing the practice of encouraging students to actively engage with assessment criteria across modules and programmes;
- d) the Department to draw together examples of ways in which students are actively engaged in developing their research skills in the curriculum and look at the ways in which students are able to develop and build their skills incrementally across a programme;
- e) notwithstanding the recent introduction of the Year Aboard, the Department, in consultation with the School, to consider shorter periods aboard and/or incorporate the time spent abroad as part of the credit-bearing placement modules to further student's experience in this important area;
- f) the Department to consider how alumni might be formally involved in supporting the programmes and developing relationships with current students, in order to enhance the Department's provision in the area of careers and employability;
- g) the Department to continue to develop contacts with employers locally, nationally and internationally in order to increase the number of work placements available to their students. Furthermore, the Department should consider the development of further links with secondary schools and EFL schools in the area.

- 63 The Panel recommends that the following desirable action be taken by the School:

School:

- a) the School to consider how it might best communicate to students the range of free opportunities available as part of the 'Professional Track' and consider proposing alternative sources of funding and sponsorship to enable all students to benefit equally from the paid-for opportunities;

- 64 The Panel recommends that the following actions be taken by the University:

University:

- a) the University to consider the articulation of the MA TESOL and the MA Education (English Language Teaching) offered by the University's Institute of Education with a view to better differentiating the markets for the programmes;
- b) information available from HESA on comparator institutions and programmes be made available to departments, without charge, in order to better inform their recruitment strategies; and
- c) the University continue to review the impact of the Professional and Administrative Services (PAS) Review on small departments, such as DELAL, and the maintenance of a high level of student-specific support.