

SOAS IRENI 2013: ACTION PLAN

This action plan addresses the recommendations made in the QAA's report of its Institutional Review of SOAS in 2013. The report can be found at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/Pages/SOAS.aspx>. The action plan was approved and monitored by LTQC, who confirmed this updated version in June 2014. LTQC continues to monitor the issues identified in Institutional Review and enquiries should be directed to the Quality Assurance Manager, Jenni Rhodes (jr45).

Recommendation	By when	Actions	Update
1 update its information for applicants and current students with a physical disability regarding access to its facilities	End 2012/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the support of the Students' Union, students with disabilities were consulted to establish priorities for information updates. • Results were collated by Student Services and used to update online access statements. 	Done
2 undertake fuller recording of the outcomes of Annual Research Programme Reviews to enable good practice to be disseminated	End 2012/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcomes of the annual programme reviews relating to 2011/12 were considered at REC in May 2013 and a report forwarded to LTQC. • Following discussion at the Doctoral School Management Group, revisions have been made to the PGR Code of Practice to clarify the responsibilities of Heads of Department and Research and Enterprise Committee in relation to this procedure. The revised CoP will be published and distributed to incoming PGR students in September. 	Done
3 implement fully its plans to ensure that feedback is returned to undergraduate and taught postgraduate students in the stated timeframe	Start 2013/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the Deans' scheduled report to EB on targets for returning feedback, KPMG was asked to undertake an audit of the student experience focusing on assessment, feedback to students, and academic support. Recommendations will be received in September. • The Faculties had reported issues with data collection to support these targets, and this was addressed in Term 3, with a reporting tool available for use in the coming session. • It was agreed that ADC would receive termly updates on the Faculties' progress in this area. 	Done: EB and ADC following up

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4 put in place a system for the approval of nominations of external advisers for programme approval which is independent of the proposing department	Start 2013/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately following receipt of the review report, the Academic Development Directorate drafted procedures to approve the nomination of external advisers for programme approval. • These were agreed by JFPP and LTQC for implementation in 2013/14. • Approval of nominations at FMG ensures that this step is independent of the department proposing the programme. 	Done
5 redesign the external adviser's report form for proposed new programmes to require specific comments about alignment with relevant subject benchmarks and the FHEQ	Start 2013/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately following receipt of the review report, the Academic Development Directorate drafted procedures to require external advisers to make more specific comments on programme proposals generally and particularly in relation to alignment with subject benchmark statements and the FHEQ. • These were agreed by JFPP and LTQC for implementation in 2013/14. • Comments will be considered at each stage of the approval process and Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees must now confirm that external comments have been taken into account in the final development of the proposal. 	Done
6 record more fully the deliberations that take place in the approval of a new programme	Start 2013/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the help of the SU, student representatives were consulted as to the content and delivery of information which they would find most useful. This consultation found a greater interest in programme withdrawals than approvals and this was taken into account in planning further action. • It was agreed that pending the appointment of a permanent Head of Registry, Quality Assurance Managers would attend meetings of Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees where detailed discussion of new programmes takes place. • During this interim period, QAMs will pilot a process where they collate their notes of meetings with formal minutes to produce a report on new programme discussions. 	Underway

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7 develop a minimum standard for the timely upload of material to the School's virtual learning environment	Start 2013/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the help of the SU, students including those with disabilities were consulted on their expectations for the BLE and their experiences of good and bad practice in its use. • ADD staff researched best practice in the sector, including responses to similar review recommendations. • Academic staff were consulted on the barriers to achieving best practice in e-learning; these discussions will continue at FLTCs in Term 1. • Guidance for course convenors was drafted, including examples of best practice and recommendations for material to be included; this was published alongside the annual roll-over of the system in late July and will be advertised at the start of session 2013/14. 	Guidance has been published; proposals for more binding guidelines were approved by LTQC June 2014.
8 ensure that steps are taken to improve the systematic and demonstrable use of data and the outputs of its quality assurance processes to drive the enhancement of learning opportunities	Start 2013/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional support for QA team over the summer and autumn period has enabled plans to be put in place for better communication with FLTCs regarding APRs and Student Evaluation of Courses. • Additional post in Planning/Marketing will enhance use of data in programme design and consideration of proposals. 	Additional staff are facilitating data use and communication with FLTCs; a revised SEC questionnaire has been approved for trial in 2014-15.
9 ensure that a more effective system is put in place at School level to facilitate the dissemination of good practice	Start 2013/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that the Director's Teaching Prize remained an effective vehicle for the identification of good practice, and plans were put in place for the wider dissemination of results. 2012/13 winners and runners-up have been asked to contribute on a voluntary basis to a bank of online podcasts and a series of workshops, and if feedback on these is favourable it will be established as a regular requirement for DTP finalists. • A BLE page is under construction as a place to collate and discuss good practice. • The Students' Union have agreed that it would be a beneficial addition to their very successful Educational Priorities document if in 13/14 it also included one or two commendations for Faculties or Departments whose practice particularly enhanced the experience of their students. 	New section of QAH at http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/g/

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A chapter on the identification and dissemination of good practice has been drafted for addition to the online Quality Assurance Handbook, and this will be published and advertised in time for the start of session. 	
10 ensure the use of the FHEQ is made explicit and consistent in programme specifications, course outlines and other associated documentation and that students are provided with course outlines which give clear information about the level of study	Start 2014/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amendments to the course approval form and programme specification template will be considered in Term 1 of 2013/14. Online information about existing courses and programmes will be amended ahead of course sign-up for 2014/15. 	Recording of FHEQ levels for existing courses complete; revised course forms to be in use for 2014-15.
11 review its programme approval and review documentation to ensure that appropriate work-based learning opportunities are considered as part of curriculum design and development	Start 2014/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional support for the programme design process from both ADD and Planning (as described under recommendation 8 above) will facilitate consideration of this and other good practice in programme design. This will be reflected in the reporting on deliberations described under 8 above. Discussions are scheduled to discuss how to formalise this consideration and whether amendments are needed to the approval and review procedures. 	Review complete: revisions to programme approval documentation over the summer will incorporate appropriate consideration of work-based learning.

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The team affirms...			
12	Progress to date and ongoing plans of the Doctoral School to improve facilities for research students and to enhance the research community by seeking to minimise variability and promote inter-disciplinarity	The Doctoral School continues to develop its plans for enhancement in this area and reports regularly to REC.	
13	progress in developing a Student Charter to be completed and implemented within the planned timescale	Student Charter was approved by Governing Body in July 2013 and can be found at https://www.soas.ac.uk/about/studentcharter/ .	
14	its stated plans to streamline and improve its provision of information for a range of users	The Business Intelligence Project and Web First Project continue and EB will receive reports in 2014/15.	