PERIODIC REVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGY AND CLINICAL LANGUAGE SCIENCES

INTRODUCTION

1   An internal review of programmes in the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences was held on 6 and 7 February 2017. The members of the Panel were:

   a.   Dr Martin Bicknell, School Director of Teaching and Learning, Henley Business School *(Chair)*

   b.   Dr Catherine Gallop, Director of CYP IAPT Programmes, Exeter University *(external member, subject specialist)*[1]

   c.   Dr Catherine Loveday, Principal Lecturer, University of Westminster *(external member, subject specialist)*

   d.   Mrs Diane Payne, Associate Director – Workforce Redesign / Professional Lead for Speech and Language Therapy, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust *(external member, industry)*

   e.   Dr Rob Banham, Associate Professor, Department of Typography & Graphic Communication *(internal member)*

   f.   Dr Andrew Charlton-Perez, Associate Professor, Department of Meteorology *(internal member)*

   g.   Ms Kathleen Burns, Part 2, MChem Chemistry with a Year in Industry/Research, University of Reading (*student member*)

   h.   Ms Jennie Chetcuti, Senior Quality Support Officer, Centre for Quality Support and Development *(Secretary).*

2   The Panel met the following members of staff:

   a.   Professor Laurie Butler *(Head of School)*

   b.   Dr Tom Loucas *(School Director of Teaching and Learning)*

   c.   Professor Ingo Bojak *(Deputy Head of School, Staffing)*

   d.   Dr Craig Steel *(Deputy Head of School, Finance)*

   e.   Dr Carmel Houston-Price *(Head of Section, University of Reading Malaysia (UoRM))*

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[1] Dr Gallop was unable to attend the Periodic Review visit on 6 and 7 February due to unforeseen circumstances but subsequently contributed to the Periodic Review Report.

  f. Dr Rachel Pye *(Director of Undergraduate Programmes)*

  g. Dr Kate Harvey *(Director of Postgraduate Programmes)*

  h. Dr Vesna Stojanovik *(Director of Clinical Programmes)*

  i. Professor Philip Beaman *(Examinations Officer)*

  j. Mrs Allie Biddle *(Disability Representative, Clinical Coordinator)*

  k. Dr Manda Branson *(Undergraduate Placements Lead, Psychology)*

  l. Ms Carol Fairfield *(Programme Director, BSc and MSc Speech and Language Therapy)*

  m. Dr Eva Feredoes *(Psychology Taught Postgraduate Projects and Placements Coordinator)*

  n. Dr Jayne Freeman *(Senior Tutor)*

  o. Dr Dan Jones *(Lecturer, UoRM)*

  p. Dr Andreas Kalckert *(Laboratory Manager, UoRM)*

  q. Dr Beth Law *(local Programme Lead and Examinations Officer, UoRM)*

  r. Ms Eleanor Luckcock *(Graduate Research Technician, UoRM)*

  s. Mrs Tania Lyden *(Careers Advisor, Careers and Employability)*

  t. Dr Emma Pape *(Part 2 Tutor, Psychology)*

  u. Dr Treshi-Marie Perera *(Lecturer, UoRM)*

  v. Mr Mohammad Izzat Morshidi *(Lecturer, UoRM)*

  w. Dr Graham Schafer *(Director of International Student Recruitment)*

  x. Dr Tan Kok Wei *(Lecturer, UoRM)*

  y. Dr Hannah Whitney *(Director of CBT Programmes).*

3 The Panel met students who represented the following degree programmes:

  a. BSc Speech and Language Therapy

  b. BSc Language Sciences and Psychology

  c. BSc Psychology

  d. BSc Psychology, UoRM

  e. BSc Psychology with Professional Placement

  f. MSc Clinical Aspects of Psychology

  g. MSc Language Sciences.

4 It also met with three PhD students who were employed as Teaching Assistants on the Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences programmes.

5 The Panel met a recent graduate from the MSc Speech and Language Therapy programme and an employer from Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

6 The Review Panel held both face-to-face meetings and a videoconference with a range of staff from across the School, including staff based at the University of Reading Malaysia (UoRM). The staff were fully engaged with the review process and made the Panel feel very welcome. They provided a useful tour of the School's impressive facilities. The Review benefitted from a

comprehensive and well-organised Blackboard organisation, which was invaluable in reviewing the School's activities. Any additional documentation requested by the Panel was supplied in a timely manner. The Panel extends its thanks to all staff members who participated in the Review.

7   The Panel welcomed the opportunity to meet face-to-face and via videoconference with current and former students, including a number of students based at UoRM, who generally gave a very positive endorsement of the programmes under review as well as making a number of constructive suggestions for further improvements to the provision. The Panel wishes to express its thanks to these students, and to all those who contributed to the written Student Submission, for their valuable input to the Review.

8   The Panel noted that, in August 2016, the School had moved from a traditional departmental structure to a cross-School structure in response to both internal and external drivers. The new structure was intended to provide more efficient and distributed leadership and to improve the balance and visibility across undergraduate, postgraduate and clinical teaching. The Panel considered that the new structure appeared to have been successful in promoting effective planning, communication and sharing of good practice across discipline areas and wishes to commend the introduction of a management structure aligned to delivery needs [**Good practice (a)**].

9   The Panel was impressed by the School's willingness to engage in critical self-reflection. The School clearly recognised a number of major challenges that it was currently facing, including: the falling levels of student satisfaction on the BSc Psychology; the discontinuation of NHS funding for the Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) programmes, and relatively poor recruitment and student satisfaction on a number of taught postgraduate programmes. The School had adopted an open, collegiate and pro-active approach in addressing the issues identified, allied to a clear commitment to increase student engagement in decision-making. This included the development of an Assessment and Feedback Action Plan, linked to a longer-term vision for improvements in this area; a major review and revision of the BSc SLT programme currently underway, and the ongoing review of taught postgraduate provision across the School [**Good practice (b)**].

ACADEMIC STANDARDS OF THE PROGRAMMES

Committee structures

10   The Panel was satisfied that the committee structures in place were appropriate and effective for the quality management and enhancement of the programmes. Following the recent re-organisation of the School structure, an overarching School Board for Teaching and Learning (SBTL) had been introduced, with separate Boards of Studies (BoS) for undergraduate, taught postgraduate and clinical programmes. Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) were aligned to the various BoS, alongside a separate SSLC for UoRM. Separate meetings were also arranged between student and staff representatives for each of the programmes delivered by the Charlie Waller Institute (CWI). The Panel considered that the membership of the various committees was appropriate and noted that suitable provision was made for student representation.

11   In the case of clinical programmes, additional meetings were held with key external stakeholders, where programme management issues were discussed amongst other things. This included the Practice Partnership Forum for Clinical Language Studies programmes and the Training Committee for adult Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programmes delivered by the CWI.

12   The Panel found evidence, in the form of minutes of meetings, that the various School and programme level committees were fulfilling their formal responsibilities in respect of quality management and enhancement. This included giving proper consideration to External Examiner Reports, National Student Survey (NSS) and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) results, annual programme reporting and proposals for new programmes/amendments to existing programmes.

13   The Panel noted that the School continued to experience difficulties with student representation at taught postgraduate level; attendance at SSLC meetings had been relatively poor in recent years and the Student Submission noted that there was "currently little communication between the reps and administration and confusion as to who they need to meet with". A number of alternative approaches had been trialled in the former Department of Psychology, including informal meetings between Programme Directors and students and inviting all taught postgraduate students to BoS meetings. The Panel **recommends** that the School continue to promote student representation at taught postgraduate level in order to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for the voice of the entire taught postgraduate student community to be heard and acted upon [**Advisable recommendation (a)**]. The Panel suggests that the School involve student representatives in organising meetings and that it might also wish to consider the use of virtual meetings.

Programme design

14   The Panel was provided with a range of evidence including module descriptions, programme specifications, student handbooks, External Examiners' reports, annual programme reports and samples of students' work. These, along with discussions with staff and students and the Panel's own deliberations, enabled the Panel to confirm that the academic standards of the programmes under review were appropriate and comparable with programmes in other universities.

15   The Panel considered that, overall, the degree programmes offered were coherent and of appropriate scope. The programmes had been designed to meet the requirements of the relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and, in the case of the SLT and CWI programmes, the requirements of the commissioning bodies. The Panel considered that the BSc Psychology provision could usefully be expanded in a number of areas and suggests that the School consider extending the existing coverage in the areas, for example, of social psychology, organisational psychology, counselling and forensics.

16   The Panel noted the distinctive nature of the applied programmes delivered by the CWI, which offered a range of postgraduate training opportunities to staff who were practising in clinical settings. The programmes were nationally commissioned by Health Education England and supported by NHS England due to the need to provide salary support for some of the students. The Panel wishes to commend the high quality programme design across all CWI programmes, which is linked clearly to national curricula and to the accreditation standards set by the national accreditation and professional bodies. The Panel noted that the programme design and assessment strategy allowed not only for the teaching and evidencing of core knowledge, but importantly for the development of clinical competency to an appropriate standard. This was vital given the applied nature of the courses and the fact that the students were being trained to deliver clinical, evidence-based interventions in services with the respective client/patient populations.

17   The Panel noted that the aims and learning outcomes of individual modules were properly documented in the relevant module descriptions and meetings with students confirmed that the majority of lecturers discussed module learning aims with their students. The Panel noted that the learning outcomes of taught postgraduate programmes were clearly laid out in programme specifications and concluded that the aims and learning outcomes of the taught postgraduate

programmes were appropriate and clearly communicated to students. The Panel noted that, following a change to the structure of undergraduate programme specifications across the University from 2016-17, programme learning outcomes had been removed from these documents and would be included in a Further Programme Information area of the University website, which had yet to be published. The Panel **recommends** that the University: consider the content and presentation of the Further Programme Information; define and publicise policy in this area, and ensure that the Further Programme Information is available to future Periodic Review panels [**Advisable recommendation to the University (a)**]. On the basis of programme specifications relating to the 2015-16 academic session and discussions with staff, the Panel was satisfied that the aims and learning outcomes of undergraduate programmes were appropriate.

18   The Panel wishes to commend the breadth of the programmes offered and the strong research focus which is reflected in the teaching. It recognised this as a clear selling point to prospective students. This was particularly evident in the range of Part 3 optional modules for Reading-based undergraduate Psychology programmes, which provided students with valuable opportunities to learn about current research in their discipline [**Good practice (c),** please see also the section on **Teaching and Learning** below]. Notwithstanding these comments, the Panel questioned whether the current system of allocating one Part 3 module to each member of staff was efficient and whether this level of choice was necessarily beneficial to students and to future employers. The Panel considered that such a high level of staff autonomy risked precluding the development of a coherent programme focus on student and employer needs. Meetings with students suggested that Parts 1 and 3 of the Psychology programmes sometimes felt like a "collection of modules" rather than a coherent, integrated whole [please refer to **Advisable recommendation (c)** below]. The Panel also noted that, whilst staff considered that there was a fair, clear and transparent system in place for allocating students to optional modules, this was not a view shared by all students. Staff clearly sought to allocate students to *more* preferred options. However, students concentrated on the fact that they did not get onto their *most* preferred options.

19   The Panel noted that the options available to Psychology students at UoRM would necessarily be more constrained than those available at Reading and that the School would need to continue to ensure that the options were appropriate, relevant and reflected the career options available in Malaysia.

20   Students on the BSc SLT programme had noted some duplication in the material covered by different modules. The Panel also noted that students on the BSc SLT and the BSc Language Sciences and Psychology did not always perceive the relevance of Psychology modules to them, and that these students often felt 'anonymous' in the larger lectures shared with Psychology students. The Panel advises the School to consider these issues as part of the ongoing review of the BSc SLT programme.

21   As noted above, the School was currently in the second phase of a comprehensive, market-led review of its taught postgraduate provision (which excluded the current CWI and other IAPT programmes). The review aims to increase student numbers and to reduce the number of programmes and modules with very small numbers of students. The Panel was supportive of the aims of the review and of the progress made to date, as evidenced in the documentation provided and through discussions with staff.

Assessment and Feedback

22   External Examiners' reports verified that the standards achieved by learners met the minimum expectations for awards, as measured against the relevant Subject Benchmarking Statements and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, and that the standards set by the relevant PSRBs were being achieved. It was clear to the Panel that comments made by the External Examiners were carefully considered and that they had informed changes to

programmes, which had then been reported back to the relevant External Examiner. For example, the School had made a number of changes to the continuous assessment for the Grammar and Meaning 1 module in 2015-16 in response to feedback from the External Examiner that the assessment had yielded a very high percentage of Firsts in 2014-15.

23   The Panel confirmed that the assessment structure and strategy across all CWI modules was robust and appropriate across the range of programmes offered. Assessments were linked clearly to curricula and the learning objectives that were set within those.

24   The Panel found evidence that undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes across the School incorporated a variety of assessment methods, including essays, poster presentations, in-class tests, research proposals, written examinations, oral assessments, portfolios and laboratory reports. Discussions with students and the Student Submission confirmed that students were generally satisfied with the range of assessment types. However, the Panel considered that there were opportunities to improve the diversity of assessment in some areas. This was supported by comments from a number of External Examiners who, whilst being generally supportive of the assessment regime, considered that there was further scope to use more innovative, less traditional methods of assessment.

25   The Panel found evidence of over-assessment on a number of programmes, and considered that this tendency could be partly attributed to the relatively high number of 10-credit modules. One External Examiner had suggested that the School might wish to consider more synoptic assessments which could help to reduce any over-assessment.

26   The Panel noted that a number of undergraduate Psychology modules made use of weekly continuous assessment questions (CAQs) on Blackboard. While the Panel was supportive of the aim to encourage students to reflect on, and consolidate, their learning throughout the term, it noted that the use of CAQs had elicited a mixed response from students. Some students failed to perceive their value, particularly at Part 1, and a number of students commented that marks did not accurately reflect performance for questions with multiple parts, and that feedback was limited. The Panel advises the School to consider how CAQs might be used more effectively. One element of this should be better communication to students of the potential value they can individually gain from the CAQs.

27   The Panel commends the School's efforts over the past few years to achieve consistency and transparency in the marking criteria issued to students across all programmes. However, the Panel noted continued concerns amongst students in respect of consistency and fairness in marking and the comparability of different modes of assessment, as reflected in the NSS 2016 and in the Panel's discussions with students. The Panel advises the School to review the credit weightings attached to different methods of assessment in order to address the perceived inequity in the weighting of assessments across modules, which was particularly apparent in the case of Part 3 Psychology modules. It should be noted that the Panel would **not** advocate an overly prescriptive approach to assessment e.g. all Part 3 optional modules should be assessed by a 1500 word essay worth 25% and a written exam worth 75%.

28   The Panel encourages the School to focus on assessment literacy. It considers that students would benefit from additional opportunities to engage critically with the assessment criteria and from additional guidance at sub-criteria level by grade boundary (i.e. A first will demonstrate analysis that …). The Panel suggests that student concerns in respect of the comparability of assessments might be alleviated to some extent by making more time for discussion about assessment.

29   The Panel wishes to highlight as an example of good practice the use of calibration techniques in marking for a number of modules with large cohorts [**Good practice (d)**]. The Panel encourages the School to adopt this approach more consistently for all modules involving group marking. It suggests that this approach could be extended by asking staff to look at a range of examples in

different marking bands. The use of such approaches should help to further promote consistency in marking.

30   The Panel's discussions with current students, in conjunction with NSS and PTES results, indicated considerable variation in respect of the level and quality of feedback students received. Some students, including students on CWI programmes. had received high quality and effective feedback on assignments which clearly identified strengths and areas for improvement and was linked to assessment guidance, and some members of staff had provided additional sessions dedicated to providing feedback on particular assessments. However, other students reported receiving very limited feedback on assignments. A number of students reported frustration with the lack of feedback provided for examinations, in-class tests and multiple choice questionnaires, where students were often provided only with their mark. The Panel suggests that the School might wish to consider making use of a wider variety of modes of feedback (for example, audio feedback, guided self-reflection, peer review) at both class and individual levels.

31   The Panel commends the recent introduction of a Feedback Assessment Matrix for students on non-clinical undergraduate programmes. Students are encouraged to use the matrix to record feedback on assessed work, which they can then review with their Personal Tutors in order to identify areas for development and ways in which these could be addressed [**Good practice (e)**]. However, the Panel noted that many students were not yet comfortable in using the matrix and advises the School to further promote use of this tool by emphasising the associated benefits.

32   The Panel welcomed the School's Assessment and Feedback Plan, which identified a number of key issues and associated actions for implementation in the short term. It was pleased to note that best practice guidance for staff had been produced, supported by School teaching and learning days, and that a system of monitoring and audit had been introduced from 2016-17. The Plan also outlined a number of other actions in respect of feedback to students, including the provision of generic feedback on examinations and in-class tests. The Panel encourages the School to maintain its focus on enhancement of assessment and feedback and to continue to identify and disseminate good practice across the School.

33   In light of the above observations, the Panel **recommends** that, as programmes are reviewed as part of the Curriculum Framework over the next three years, the School conduct a comprehensive review of assessment within and across programmes. This review should have as a guiding principle the notion of assessment <u>for</u> learning, as well as <u>of</u> learning, and should include consideration of:

i.   methods of assessment;

ii.   workload (for students and staff);

iii.   weighting of assessments;

iv.   balance between formative and summative assessment;

v.   the differences between assessments for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students on shared modules;

vi.   timing of assessments; and,

vii.   the format, level and quality of feedback to students.

The review should include mapping of assessments to module and programme learning outcomes [**Advisable recommendation (b)**].

QUALITY OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY THE PROGRAMMES

Teaching and learning

34 The Panel was pleased to note that staff research and scholarship were clearly embedded in teaching and learning, and that programmes were therefore very current and up-to-date, as noted in a number of External Examiners' reports. However, the Panel noted that this needed to occur in the context of the overall programme aims, and be driven by coherent programme design that focussed on the needs of students (and their potential employers), rather than the specialist research interests of individual members of staff (please see also the section on **Programme Design** above and **Advisable recommendation (c)** below). The Panel noted from its discussions with current students that students often lacked an awareness of the strong research profile of staff. It **recommends** that the School consider ways of making staff research profiles more visible to the student community, for example, through talks or blogs [**Desirable recommendation (a)**].

35 The Panel found that research and enquiry were clearly embedded in the clinical programmes. It noted that undergraduate Psychology students were given opportunities to develop their research and enquiry skills on a number of modules, including the Psychological Research module at Part 1 and Research Methods module at Part 2, culminating in the Project at Part 3. The Panel was pleased to note various extra-curricular opportunities for students to participate in research and wished to highlight as a particular example of good practice the whole-School Big Science Projects whereby staff and students collaborate on a research study during Week 6 of term [**Good practice (f)**]. The Panel noted the value of the Big Science Projects in respect of fostering the development of a community of scholars.

36 The Panel noted from its meetings with students, and further evidence in the form of the Student Submission, module evaluations and NSS/PTES results and qualitative responses, that students were generally satisfied with the quality of teaching on their programmes, although they noted some variability between lecturers. The Panel found evidence of innovative and inspirational teaching, including the introduction of blended and flipped learning on a number of Psychology and SLT modules and the use of enquiry-based learning in a number of areas. The Panel also noted that the School was making good use of technology-enhanced learning in a number of areas, including the use of online discussion boards to complement lectures for Part 2 Psychology modules and a move towards full e-assessment. Individual members of staff had been recognised for their excellence in teaching by a number of University awards; the Director of Undergraduate Programmes became the School's first University Teaching Fellow in 2016. The Panel considered that there was further scope for disseminating and applying diverse and innovative teaching and learning methods more widely across the School and for introducing more variation on the standard lecture format.

37 The Panel found that the clinical programmes provided space for students to reflect on the characteristics of their discipline, most notably during clinical placements and associated tutorials. It considered that there was less space for reflection and discussion on the Psychology programmes, and particularly the undergraduate programmes. Similarly, the Panel considered that the extent of student engagement with, and active participation by students in, their learning varied across the School. Students on the SLT programmes and UoRM Psychology programmes were generally highly engaged with their learning, which might be linked to the smaller class sizes.

38 The Panel commends the overall quality of provision and opportunities for staff and student development in the Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences Section at UoRM. This was highlighted in meetings with UoRM staff and students, who were extremely positive about their experiences. The Panel was impressed by the way in which the School was meeting the

challenges, and benefitting from the opportunities, presented by the opening of the new campus. A strong staff team had been established at UoRM and there was regular communication between staff at UoRM and Reading. The Panel noted the importance of maintaining the quality of provision as numbers started to grow.

39   The Panel was pleased to note that undergraduate Psychology students studying at Reading were given the opportunity to spend a term at UoRM. The Reading-based students with whom the Panel met who were currently studying, or had studied, at UoRM praised the quality of teaching at UoRM and welcomed the opportunity to increase their cultural awareness. The Panel **recommends** that the School consider additional ways to promote this valuable study abroad opportunity to its students, including holding sessions where students returning from UoRM could share their experiences, and that it consider providing additional opportunities for student and staff exchange between Reading and UoRM [**Desirable recommendation (b)**].

40   The Panel found evidence that the School identified and addressed the needs of the diverse cohort both within the curriculum and through supplemental support. This included: the creation of an Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team, which demonstrated the School's commitment to gender equality; the provision of additional academic support for mature students on CWI programmes; the introduction of Peer-Assisted Learning (PAL) in one Psychology and one SLT module, and weekly academic English support sessions at UoRM. The Panel wishes to commend in particular the recent introduction of the Skills for Psychology with Academic English module, a 'sister' module to a compulsory Part 1 module which is provided in conjunction with the International Study and Language Institute for all students identified as having weak academic English skills at the start of the programme [**Good practice (g)**].

41   However, the Panel considered that the School's efforts should be more explicitly focussed on providing opportunities for <u>all</u> students to achieve their full potential and on pro-actively considering from the outset how to maximise access, rather than adopting a reactive approach to diversity. The Panel noted that there was also more work to do in respect of providing opportunities for students to study content and reflect on issues from alternative cultural perspectives, which was likely to be particularly challenging for the SLT programmes. The Panel noted that the School would give further consideration to issues relating to diversity and inclusion as part of the Curriculum Framework review of programmes.

42   In light of the above observations and those noted in the section on **Programme Design**, the Panel **recommends** that the School use the opportunity provided by the Curriculum Framework to conduct a thorough 'root-and-branch' review of undergraduate programmes in Psychology [**Advisable recommendation (c)**]. This review should fully place the student at the centre and should draw on best practice from across the School, including UoRM. The review should include consideration of:

   i.   overall programme coherence, particularly at Part 3. The Panel suggests that the School might wish to consider the introduction of 'streams' or 'pathways' through the programme;
   ii.   the structure and content of Part 3, including the range of optional modules and arrangements for capping modules. The Panel notes that reducing the number of optional modules would free up staff time which could then be focussed elsewhere (see (iv) below);
   iii. how to ensure that the choice offered in relation to optional modules is perceived by students to be meaningful , relevant and realisable; and,
   iv.   increasing the amount of small group teaching, and of active and collaborative learning including enquiry based learning and team based learning, particularly at Part 1. The Panel considers that this would increase student engagement and allow students more space to reflect on their learning,

Student admission, retention, progression and attainment

43   The Panel was pleased to note that recruitment to undergraduate Psychology programmes, SLT programmes and programmes offered by the CWI remained strong, and that the recently introduced BSc Psychology with Professional Placement was proving popular. The Panel was satisfied that poor recruitment to a number of taught postgraduate programmes was being addressed by the ongoing review of the School's taught postgraduate provision.

44   The Panel noted that numbers of international students remained relatively small across the School, although there had been a substantial increase in applications from, and enrolments of, international students on a number of programmes in recent years. Discussions with staff demonstrated that the School had a strategy in place for improving international recruitment.

45   As noted earlier in this Report, the School was reviewing its current offering in SLT in response to the discontinuation of NHS funding for these programmes. The Panel advises the School to consider the potential impact of the change in NHS funding rules beyond the SLT programmes.

46   The Panel considered that appropriate arrangements were in place for induction of new undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, including introductory sessions and other briefing sessions during Welcome Week and an induction day for students on CWI programmes. Academic briefings were also arranged at the start of each year with separate briefings on topics including examinations and projects for students in Parts 2 and 3. However, the Panel noted that the current arrangements for induction did not appear to foster a sense of belonging to a community of scholars amongst undergraduate Psychology students. It advises the School to give further consideration to how to achieve this.

47   The Panel also advises the School to consider whether more could be done within the curriculum to develop academic literacy and support the transition into Higher Education (to complement the 'Transitions to Learning' session in Welcome Week), and to facilitate the progression from guided to self-directed learning. The need for improved 'scaffolding' was evidenced by a lack of student engagement with online discussion forums in Part 2 Psychology modules and by the issues experienced with the group work element of the Introduction to Medicine module in the SLT programmes. Students did not appear to be adequately prepared for these methods of teaching, which had an impact on their effectiveness.

48   The Panel noted that students were provided with clear written guidance in the form of a Programme Handbook. It **recommends** that the School review the Programme Handbooks to more clearly articulate programme aims and professional development aspects [**Desirable recommendation (c)**].

49   The Panel confirmed that student progression was appropriate to the stated aims of the programmes and consistent with the attainment of intended learning outcomes. The Panel noted that programmes across the School showed good retention and progression rates and that student attainment across the School compared favourably with attainment across the University more widely.

50   The Panel found evidence in the form of annual programme reports and minutes from SSLC, BoS and SBTL meetings that the School reflected regularly on the performance of its students and on a range of student management information. However, it suggests that the School might wish to reflect further on attainment patterns across key demographic categories, including ethnicity, gender and disability.

51   The Panel noted that degree apprenticeships and the apprenticeship levy could in time have an impact on recruitment and programme design. Whilst imminent change was not foreseen, the Panel advises the School to keep a 'watching brief' on developments in this area. Staff should track developing views among PSRBs, major employers and students toward apprenticeship programmes and ensure they consider any standards of relevance that are approved by the Skills Funding Agency.

Learning environment and student support

52   The Panel agreed that the collective expertise of the academic staff was suitable for effective delivery of the current curricula and for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. It noted that staff expertise would need to be reviewed as part of the ongoing and planned reviews of taught postgraduate and undergraduate provision.

53   The Panel noted that the School's technical and administrative support had changed as a result of the Professional and Administrative Services review conducted by the University, with teaching and learning administration and student support now provided centrally by the relevant Support Centre and technical support provided by a dedicated Technical Cluster within the new centralised Technical Services. The Panel recognised that the impact of these changes was still being assessed.

54   The Panel was impressed by the state-of-the-art specialised facilities and equipment available within the School, including the TMS and MRI facilities, Speech Laboratory and suite of SLT clinic rooms [**Good practice (h)**]. The Panel encourages the School to continue to monitor usage of the specialised spaces available and to ensure that sufficient testing space remains available for the large numbers of Psychology students in particular.

55   The Panel was pleased to note the School-owned PC laboratory, the undergraduate student common-room and resources, which had been expanded recently to include a study space with PCs, and the postgraduate common room and study space which had been created in 2015 in response to student demand. The Panel noted the value of 'student-owned' spaces in a large school in respect of fostering a sense of community. However, the Panel considered that the study space available was insufficient in light of the numbers of students. It also noted that student access to the common rooms and PC lab was currently restricted to office hours. The Panel supports the School's plans to increase the size of the undergraduate student common room and encourages the School to consider providing smaller, quieter spaces suitable for individual study or group work. The Panel **recommends** that the School explore with the University whether student access to the PC lab and common rooms could be further extended outside of normal office hours [**Desirable recommendation (d)**].

56   The Panel noted that, in addition to the books and journals available in the University Library, the School provided additional books and journals locally for students together with other key resources such as psychological test batteries. Students at both Reading and UoRM were also making increasing use of electronic resources.

57   The Panel noted that students at UoRM were taught in a purpose-built, state-of-the-art campus and had access to an appropriate range of research labs and equipment. However, the Panel was concerned to note that while students at UoRM praised the study spaces and IT provision in the Library building at EduCity, they reported issues with availability of key texts. The Panel **recommends** that the School monitor closely the provision of library resources at UoRM and ensure that sufficient copies of key texts are made available to students [**Advisable recommendation (d)**].

58   The Panel noted that Reading-based undergraduate Psychology students in particular lacked a sense of being part of an engaged, cohesive community of scholars and considered that this was partly attributable to the cohort sizes and the predominance of large 'anonymous' lectures during Part 1 and, to some extent, Part 2. It noted that the School was taking various steps to develop a more active and collaborative learning environment and community and to encourage student engagement, and considered that a number of the Panel's recommendations would lead to improvements in this respect. The Panel noted that increasing the amount of small group work would also support preparedness for the workplace, by giving students experience of effective strategies for managing others and working within large organisations.

59   On the basis of its meetings with undergraduate and taught postgraduate students and qualitative comments in the NSS, the Panel noted considerable variation in the student experience of the Personal Tutor system, with some students reporting that they had regular meetings and that their Personal Tutor was extremely supportive, while others reported that they met infrequently, or not at all, and that their Personal Tutor was unresponsive to emails. The Panel **recommends** that the School implement measures to achieve more consistency in personal tutoring, and that a monitoring system be put in place to ensure that all tutors are having meaningful termly meetings with their students, in accordance with University policy [**Advisable recommendation (e)**].

60   The Panel noted that the nature of CWI students as employees with diverse academic and work experience meant that strong student support processes needed to be in place. Furthermore, the overall aims of the programmes were to develop and change practice and so the pastoral and academic support that staff were providing, in addition to linking out with services (please see also the section on **Employability** below) , should not be underestimated.

Employability

61   The Panel wished to highlight as a particular feature of good practice the introduction and expansion of a wide range of work-based learning opportunities for students on all programmes [**Good practice (i)**]. This included the recent introduction of the four-year BSc Psychology with Professional Placement programme and plans to create placement versions of other programmes. Support for students applying for, and currently undertaking, placements was provided by the Careers Consultant and by a Placement Coordinator, who were available on a regular basis for appointments. SLT students received support from a clinical tutor for their clinical placements, which constituted a significant proportion of their programmes. The Panel noted that the School housed three NHS facilities on site providing clinical services (including the Anxiety and Depression in Young People clinic) and a further non-NHS clinic, which provided internal student placement and research opportunities.

62   The Panel noted that Psychology students had difficulty in clearly articulating the value of their placements. It considered that they would benefit from further support to define and reflect on placement objectives and to reflect on how their technical skills and training could be applied in the real world in light of the challenges of limited resources and the need to develop core professional skills quickly (e.g. managing others). The Panel also considered whether the full value of placement learning was exploited as students returned to their final year studies. The Panel **recommends** that the School help students to develop a list of personal learning objectives for work placements in Psychology that are reported on at the end of placements by both students and placement providers [**Desirable recommendation (e)**].

63   The Panel was pleased to note the increasing focus within the School on personal and professional resilience, which was recognised as essential both for studying and moving into the workplace. It commends the introduction of the SPRINT Women's Development Programme from 2016-17, which aims to enhance emotional intelligence, confidence and resilience [**Good practice (j)**].

64   The Panel noted the importance of the professional discussions both within and outside of the curriculum which were taking place on the SLT programmes. These discussions increased students' understanding of how to operate in the real world, including how to manage with limited resources and how to handle difficult conversations. The Panel noted the benefits associated with discussing real, working life case studies with alumni and employers. It also noted the importance of getting students to reflect on values-based recruitment to prepare them for job interviews; this was particularly relevant to students planning to work in the NHS.

65   The Panel noted the need to engender from the outset in undergraduate Psychology students a sense of 'being a psychologist' and an understanding of the relevant values and skills. This could enhance confidence and a sense of community, and engender a more self-directed response to learning opportunities. The Panel advises the School to explore additional ways of relating the knowledge gained to real world settings the students would encounter in their careers, thereby enriching the students' experience and developing their professional readiness.

66   The Panel noted that team-based learning, which was currently somewhat limited on the undergraduate Psychology programmes, provided a valuable opportunity to develop a number of important skills for employment, including: the ability to work effectively in teams, assisted by an understanding of the self and others (e.g. MBTI, Belbin); effective communication within groups; leadership and followership, and the team mindset (sharing responsibility for failures as well as successes). It also could be considered central to the discipline. Social psychology and organisational psychology have much to say on team formation and effectiveness. Team working could itself become a learning experience [please also refer to **Advisable recommendation (c)** above].

67   The Panel noted that the School had made a number of changes to the content and structure of the compulsory Careers in Psychology Part 2 module in response to student feedback, which included the addition of a practical skills component. However, the Panel noted from its discussions with current students that the module remained unpopular with many students, who failed to perceive its value. The module appeared to have a transactional, rather than a reflective, focus i.e. 'how to get a job in general terms'. The Panel considered that bracketing careers skills into a discrete, credit-bearing career module represented an outdated approach to careers learning. It **recommends** that the School consider how to embed employability throughout the curriculum for all programmes [**Advisable recommendation (f)**]. The Panel noted that this might include retaining some discrete elements of career learning but that this should be approached in a more creative way. This would be consistent with the principles outlined in the new University *Policy on Career Learning: Embedding Employability* which would be introduced from 2017-18.

68   The Panel noted that the School had developed formal links with NHS services, who employed approximately half of SLT graduates, through the Practice Partnership Forum. NHS employers were engaged with the SLT programmes at several different levels, including advising on the curriculum, contributing to teaching and contributing to assessment in final year clinical examinations.

69   In relation to the CWI programmes, the Panel found evidence of strong engagement with service partners, which was essential in light of the applied nature of the programmes and the fact that the students were employees in services. For example, service leads played a key role in the Training Committee, Contract Review Meetings and monthly project board meetings. The high levels of employer engagement were evident in strong recruitment and retention rates. The Panel noted that the nature of the programme portfolio required the CWI to be responsive to regular commissioning changes, often having to develop new programmes with no additional development funding and within tight time-frames. The success of the CWI's offering was also dependent on its ability to take a lead both locally and nationally on the delivery, uptake and development of programmes. In light of these observations and comments in previous sections of this Report, the Panel wishes to commend the CWI on their successful delivery of a complex portfolio.

70   The Panel noted that the School maintained a database of placement providers for Psychology students and that the Business Development team in the central Careers service had been working to develop relationships with organisations that offered relevant, graduate-level training schemes suitable for Psychology graduates. The Panel was also pleased to note the recent launch in the School of the Thrive career mentoring scheme, which provided opportunities for

Psychology students to be mentored by alumni working in a variety of settings and aimed to assist them to move forward in their career decision making and develop their employability. However, the Panel considered that there were limited opportunities for employer demand and employment opportunities to inform programme design in Psychology.

71   The Panel **recommends** that the School:

   i.   reflect on the variety of career paths open to its graduates and ensure that these are reflected in the content of programmes offered;

   ii.   explore ways to increase employer/alumni engagement in the Psychology curriculum; for example, by creating an employers' forum which meets annually with core teaching and learning staff. This should include professionals working in Human Resources and other key employment destinations for Psychology graduates [**Advisable recommendation (g)**].

ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY AND ACADEMIC PROVISION

72   The Panel considered that the School made appropriate and effective use of a range of datasets and found evidence of reflection on PSRB reports and guidance. For example, staff teaching on the SLT clinical modules had revised the student-held record of professional development, based on new Health and Care Professions Council guidance on conduct and ethics, by working in conjunction with students and Placement Educators.

73   The Panel recognised that the School had developed clear plans to enhance the quality of its provision and that significant changes were already in progress in many areas. The summer Away Days provided a valuable opportunity for staff across all programmes to share experiences and disseminate good and effective practice. It was clear to the Panel that staff in key teaching and learning roles were working hard to maintain excellence in areas of teaching and learning which were working well and to improve in other areas. However, the Panel noted the considerable workload of a number of key staff, which had an impact on their ability to plan and implement strategic changes. The Panel **recommends** that the School give further consideration to the current distribution of teaching and learning roles by creating additional roles and/or separating out existing roles; for example, creating a Deputy School Director of Teaching and Learning role or separating the Director of Studies and Programme Director roles [**Desirable recommendation (f)**].

74   The Panel commends the recent establishment of the Student Advisory Panel, which aims to include a wide range of students from across the School in discussing issues of concern, for example, assessment and feedback. The Panel considers that this provides an innovative mechanism for engaging a range of students in programme design and delivery [**Good practice (k)**]. It advises the School to consider further ways to ensure that students are fully engaged as co-creators of the curriculum in the sense envisioned by Curriculum Framework.

75   The Panel was generally satisfied that issues raised by student module evaluations were given proper consideration and that appropriate actions were taken in a timely manner. However, the Panel questioned whether students were always aware of changes that had been made as a result of module evaluation. It **recommends** that the School explore additional, more dynamic means to ensure that the wider student body is informed of actions taken as a result of module evaluations, thus closing the 'feedback loop' [**Desirable recommendation (g)**].

76   The Panel was pleased to note that the School was fully engaged with the University's Facilitating Learning and Teaching Achievement and Individual Recognition (FLAIR) scheme and was working towards the University goal of 80% of all staff holding a teaching qualification.

77   The Panel welcomed the recent increase in staff engagement with peer review of learning and teaching. It noted that peer review would focus on assessment and feedback practice the following year and wishes to commend this use of peer review as a mechanism to target strategic areas for improvement, an example of good practice which could be shared across the University [**Good practice (l)**]. However, the Panel noted that it was essential that staff submit paperwork from peer reviews to the SDTL so that good practice could be shared and areas for improvement acted upon. The Panel **recommends** that the School continue to promote staff participation in peer review and ensure that reviews are properly documented, in line with University policy [**Advisable recommendation (h)**, please see also **Necessary recommendation (a)** below]. The Panel also advises the School to encourage cross-disciplinary peer review wherever possible.

78   The Panel met with a small group of PhD Teaching Assistants who were extremely enthusiastic, motivated and able, and highly committed to improving the student experience. The valuable input of Teaching Assistants to programmes was recognised by students at all levels. However, the Panel was concerned that the School did not appear to support these individuals and their development as early career academics as fully as it might. It noted significant issues in relation to: workload, particularly where PhD students were asked to teach topics outside of their specialisms; the lack of advance information and clear expectations about their role; poor organisation and management, and a severe lack of guidance and support from module convenors in some cases. The Panel noted that the current arrangements were likely to deter some PhD students from pursuing a career in academia.

79   In light of these concerns, the Panel **recommends** that the School:

    i.   introduce a formal mentoring scheme for Teaching Assistants;

    ii.   develop School-wide training for Teaching Assistants to complement the University's *Preparing to teach* programme, to include an overview of programmes in the School and the School's approach to teaching, learning and assessment;

    iii.   ensure that feedback from Teaching Assistants is regularly sought and properly considered;

    iv.   ensure that all postgraduate research students with regular and substantive roles in teaching and supporting learning participate in peer review, in line with University policy;

    v.   ensure that module convenors understand how to make effective use of Teaching Assistants and how to support and develop them;

    vi.   explore ways to better integrate PhD students into the teaching community; for example, introducing them to students in lectures at the start of term and including them in key teaching and learning meetings (including planning meetings) and School Away Days;

    vii.   explore other ways to be pro-active in the development of Teaching Assistants as early-career academics [**Necessary recommendation (a)**].

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROGRAMMES UNDER REVIEW

80   The Panel considers that the diverse range of programmes offered by the School are coherent, current and of appropriate breadth and scope. They have been carefully designed to meet the requirements of the relevant PSRBs and the requirements of commissioning bodies where relevant. The programmes reflect the School's strong research focus and provide good opportunities for students to engage in research and enquiry and in a wide range of work-based

learning opportunities. The School's impressive specialised facilities and equipment, both at Reading and UoRM, and the School-owned common rooms and PC lab at Reading provide excellent support for students' learning.

81   The Panel saw evidence of innovative and inspirational teaching on all programmes, and noted high levels of student engagement on the SLT and UoRM programmes in particular. The quality of teaching and learning is reflected in good retention and progression rates and strong attainment across all programmes. The Panel congratulates the School on its willingness to engage in self-reflection and on its open, collegiate and pro-active approach to the enhancement of teaching and learning and the student experience.

CONCLUSIONS ON INNOVATION AND GOOD PRACTICE

82   The Panel identified the following as representing particularly good practice:

    a.   the introduction of a management structure aligned to delivery needs;
    b.   the School's willingness to engage in critical self-reflection. The School clearly recognises a number of major challenges that it is currently facing and has adopted an open, collegiate and pro-active approach in addressing the issues identified, allied to a clear commitment to increase student engagement in decision-making;
    c.   the breadth of the programmes offered and the strong research focus which is reflected in the teaching;
    d.   the use of calibration techniques in marking for a number of modules with large cohorts;
    e.   the recent introduction of a Feedback Assessment Matrix for students on non-clinical undergraduate programmes;
    f.   the whole-School Big Science Projects whereby staff and students collaborate on a research study during Week 6 of term;
    g.   the recent introduction of the Skills for Psychology with Academic English module;
    h.   the state-of-the-art specialised facilities and equipment available within the School, including the TMS and MRI facilities, Speech Laboratory and suite of SLT clinic rooms;
    i.   the introduction and expansion of a wide range of work-based learning opportunities for students on all programmes;
    j.   the introduction of the SPRINT Women's Development Programme from 2016-17, which aims to enhance emotional intelligence, confidence and resilience;
    k.   the recent establishment of the Student Advisory Panel, which provided an innovative mechanism for engaging a range of students in programme design and delivery;
    l.   the use of peer review as a mechanism to target strategic areas for improvement.

CONCLUSIONS ON QUALITY AND STANDARDS

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

CONCLUSIONS ON NEW DEGREE PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

84   The Panel received no submissions with regards to new programme proposals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

85   The Panel **recommends** to the University Programmes Board that the following degree programmes taught by the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences are re-approved to run for a further six years or, in the case of joint programmes, until the Periodic Review of the other discipline:

   a.   BSc Language Sciences and Psychology

   b.   BSc Mathematics and Psychology

   c.   MSci Psychological Theory and Practice/MSci Applied Psychology (Clinical)?

   d.   BSc Psychology (offered in the UK and at UoRM)

   e.   BSc Psychology, Childhood and Ageing

   f.   BSc Psychology with Neuroscience

   g.   BSc Psychology with Professional Placement

   h.   BSc Speech and Language Therapy

   i.   BA Art and Psychology

   j.   BA Finance and Psychology

   k.   BA Psychology and Philosophy

   l.   MSc Clinical Aspects of Psychology

   m.   MSc Cognitive Neuroscience

   n.   MSc Development and Psychopathology

   o.   MSc Language Sciences

   p.   MSc Research Methods in Psychology

   q.   MSc Speech and Language Therapy

   r.   PGDip Evidence-Based Psychological Treatment for Children and Young People (CYP IAPT)

   s.   PGDip/PGCert Evidence-Based Psychological Treatments (Part-time)

   t.   PGDip/PGCert Evidence-Based Psychological Treatments(IAPT Pathway)

   u.   PG Cert Supervision for Children and Young People's Improving Access to Psychological Treatment

   v.   PGCert Transformational Leadership in Children and Young People's Mental Health Services

   w.   PGCert Traumatic Stress Studies

   x.   PGCert Enhanced Evidence-Based Practice

   y.   Grad Dip Evidence-Based Psychological Treatment for Children and Young People (CYP IAPT)

   z.   Grad Cert Evidence-Based Psychological Treatments(IAPT Pathway)

   aa. Grad Cert Enhanced Evidence-Based Practice

86   The report will categorise any issues as follows, in order of priority:

- Those areas where the Review Team believes it is **necessary** for action to be taken urgently to safeguard the standard of provision;

- Those areas where it is **advisable** that the issues be addressed as soon as possible;

- Those areas where it is **desirable** that the issue be addressed over a longer time span.

87 The Panel does not consider that any recommendations must be addressed as a condition of re-approval.

88 The Panel makes the following recommendations to the **School**:

Necessary

a. The Panel **recommends** that the School:

i. introduce a formal mentoring scheme for Teaching Assistants;

ii. develop School-wide training for Teaching Assistants to complement the University's *Preparing to teach* programme, to include an overview of programmes in the School and the School's approach to teaching, learning and assessment;

iii. ensure that feedback from Teaching Assistants is regularly sought and properly considered;

iv. ensure that all postgraduate research students with regular and substantive roles in teaching and supporting learning participate in peer review, in line with University policy;

v. ensure that module convenors understand how to make effective use of Teaching Assistants and how to support and develop them;

vi. explore ways to better integrate PhD students into the teaching community; for example, introducing them to students in lectures at the start of term and including them in key teaching and learning meetings (including planning meetings) and School Away Days;

vii. explore other ways to be pro-active in the development of Teaching Assistants as early-career academics.

Advisable

The Panel **recommends** that the School:

a. continue to promote student representation at taught postgraduate level in order to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for the voice of the entire taught postgraduate student community to be heard and acted upon;

b. conduct, as programmes are reviewed as part of the Curriculum Framework over the next three years, a comprehensive review of assessment within and across programmes. This review should have as a guiding principle the notion of assessment for learning, as well as of learning, and should include consideration of:

    i. methods of assessment;

    ii. workload (for students and staff);

    iii. weighting of assessments;

    iv. balance between formative and summative assessment;

    v. the differences between assessments for undergraduate and taught postgraduate students on shared modules;

    vi. timing of assessments; and,

    vii. the format, level and quality of feedback to students;

    c.   use the opportunity provided by the Curriculum Framework to conduct a thorough 'root-and-branch' review of undergraduate programmes in Psychology. This should fully place the student at the centre and should draw on best practice from across the School, including UoRM. The review should include consideration of:

        i.   overall programme coherence, particularly at Part 3;

        ii.   the structure and content of Part 3, including the range of optional modules and arrangements for capping modules;

        iii.   how to ensure that the choice offered in relation to optional modules is perceived by students to be meaningful , relevant and realisable; and,

        iv.   increasing the amount of small group teaching, and of active and collaborative learning including enquiry based learning, particularly at Part 1;

    d.   monitor closely the provision of library resources at UoRM and ensure that sufficient copies of key texts are made available to students;

    e.   implement measures to achieve more consistency in personal tutoring, and put a monitoring system in place to ensure that all tutors are having meaningful termly meetings with their students, in accordance with University policy;

    f.   consider how to embed employability throughout the curriculum for all programmes;

    g.

        i.   reflect on the variety of career paths open to its graduates and ensure that these are reflected in the content of programmes offered;

        ii.   explore ways to increase employer/alumni engagement in the Psychology curriculum; for example, by creating an employers' forum which meets annually with core teaching and learning staff;

    h.   continue to promote staff participation in peer review and ensure that reviews are properly documented, in line with University policy.

Desirable

The Panel recommends that the School:

    a.   consider ways of making staff research profiles more visible to the student community, for example, through talks or blogs;

    b.   consider additional ways to promote existing study abroad opportunities at UoRM to its students, and that it consider providing additional opportunities for student and staff exchange between Reading and UoRM;

    c.   review the Programme Handbooks to more clearly articulate programme aims and professional development aspects;

    d.   explore with the University whether student access to the PC lab and common rooms could be extended outside of normal office hours;

    e.   help students to develop a list of personal learning objectives for work placements in Psychology that are reported on at the end of placements by both students and placement providers;

    f.   give further consideration to the current distribution of teaching and learning roles by creating additional roles and/or separating out existing roles;

    g.   explore additional, more dynamic means to ensure that the wider student body is informed of actions taken as a result of module evaluations, thus closing the 'feedback loop'.

89   The Panel makes the following recommendation to the **University**:

Advisable

a. that the University: consider the content and presentation of the Further Programme Information; define and publicise policy in this area, and ensure that the Further Programme Information is available to future Periodic Review panels.

90 The Panel does not have a recommendation to the University Programmes Board as to whether any proposal(s) for new degree programmes should be approved, as this is not applicable.