

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on 15 June 2011 at the Jordanstown campus

PRESENT

Professor D A McAlister (Chair), Professor A Adair, Ms S Alexander, Professor R R Barnett, Dr D Barr, Professor P Carmichael, Professor T Cook, Miss C Cochrane, Professor C Curran, Dr D Gray, Professor K Greenan, Ms A Honan, Dr T Irwin, Mr N Macauley, Professor N McClenaghan, Professor M McColgan, Mr L McCurry, Mr D McGivern, Professor M McHugh, Professor R J Millar, Professor I Montgomery, Mr C Nelson, Professor P Ó Dochartaigh, Mrs U Quinn, Dr I Taylor, Dr J A C Webb

APOLOGIES

Professor N D Black

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs C G Avery, Mr A G Faulkner, Mr M Fitzpatrick (for min 11.47), Dr A Masson (for min 11.79), Mrs F McCloy (for min 11.54), Mr S Tyler (for min 11.47)

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

11.47 GREATER BELFAST DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Mr Sam Tyler, Partner, Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios gave a presentation on the 'Teaching and Learning Layout Comparison' for the Greater Belfast Development project as part of the ongoing consultation with internal stakeholders. His report examined the use of space with efficiency tested through various layouts to reflect a range of pedagogical approaches from formal didactic delivery in large lecture theatres to small student-centred learning spaces. The University Space Plan had been directly compared with typical space standards. Mr Tyler emphasised, however, that the pedagogical requirements of the University should determine provision. It would also be important to ensure that the final design represented a long-term asset for the University which would be capable of responding to different approaches to course delivery.

The Committee noted possible alternative layouts for flat-floored teaching space. These were not final designs but simply captured principles of design development. Specific storage requirements would be considered further through design development and the identification of anticipated use.

Members agreed that there would still be a need for large tiered lecture theatres. This should be balanced by smaller and flexible rooms to facilitate seminars and small group teaching, which was of growing importance. Members envisaged a need to accommodate classes of 50-80 in larger rooms, with a 'Harvard' style layout favoured. Practical considerations included the actual space required for

students engaged in a range of activities, sight lines and acoustics and the staff resource required for the re-arrangement of furniture between classes.

The Committee supported efficiency in the space standard but this should be balanced against the need for flexibility to provide a range of small group configurations to support a variety of teaching and learning methods. It was noted that there would be further opportunities for members or other academic staff to join focus groups discussing teaching space.

11.48 MINUTES (30.3.11)

The confirmed minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2011 were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

11.49 Copyright Compliance/VLE Transition (Min 11.20)

Ms Alexander provided a progress update on the VLE upgrade (Paper No TLC/11/17).

The Committee noted the technical developments to date, the timeline for content migration and the arrangements for staff training and support. The VLE Upgrade Board had determined that the University had met the criteria for institutional readiness. The Committee endorsed the recommendation that the upgrade process should proceed with Blackboard Learn becoming the default VLE in September 2011.

The importance of staff training and completion of the necessary content checks and updates in a timely manner was noted. Technology Facilitated Learning would continue to provide Heads of Schools/Departments with monthly reports to allow local management of any residual risk.

11.50 Rebranding of University Placement Awards (Min 11.36)

The Chair reported that Senate at its April meeting had approved the new award titles associated with years of study abroad and placement (Senate min 11.41b refers).

Senate had also approved in principle a possible new model for the placement year designed to exclude it from the University's full-time MaSN but had expressed concerns regarding the implementation timetable (2011/12) and some operational issues. It was noted that subsequently a meeting had been held with representatives from DEL who had responded positively to the University's desire to remove the placement year from MaSN. The Department was actively investigating the possibility that placement students be counted as 0.5 FTE in the MaSN next year and of removing them entirely in future years. It had been recommended to Senate at its June meeting that, subject to a positive outcome to these discussions, the pilot be postponed. Faculties should, however, continue to work within the academic plan and control intakes, as DEL had confirmed that any overshoot would result in a substantial fine.

11.51 Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Assessment of Self-employed Placements (Min 11.37iii) refers)

Senate, at its April meeting, had endorsed the revision to Regulation 6b) of the Regulations for the Diploma/Certificate in Professional Practice.

11.52 University Graduate Award (Min 11.40)

Following consultation and meetings with student focus groups Senate had approved the title of 'Ulster EDGE' (Engagement, Development, Graduate Employability) for the scheme which would be launched in September 2011 for first and second year undergraduates. Professor Adair reported that a communications strategy was in place. Marketing materials were being developed for internal use and for external stakeholders, including schools and employers.

11.53 Working Group on Timetabling (Min 11.41)

The Chair reported that Senate had endorsed the proposed guiding principles and had asked the Teaching and Learning Committee to give consideration to the establishment of a working group to oversee their dissemination and implementation (Senate min 11.61 refers). The Committee noted that the original Working Group had deliberately avoided a prescriptive approach and that considerable progress had been made through the engagement between the Faculties and Physical Resources in developing the principles. Members considered that it would be preferable to assess whether the voluntary adoption of the principles had proved effective before seeking to direct their implementation more closely.

AGREED: that the Working Group be asked to reconvene in 18 months' time to report to the Committee on how well the principles had been adopted, their impact on timetabling and any recommendations regarding implementation.

11.54 Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning (Min 11.42)

The Committee had endorsed the draft principles but had asked the Working Group to consult further with Faculty Teaching and Learning Co-ordinators with a view to reducing the number of principles and streamlining the final implementation plan.

Professor Greenan presented the final Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning, which had been reduced from twelve to seven, and the implementation plan (Paper No TLC/11/18). Five sections covered University, subject/school and programme levels, a support strategy (encompassing web-based resources, staff development and the dissemination of best practice), and student engagement. Faculties would be asked to develop action plans and progress would be monitored through the annual reporting in the Teaching and Learning Strategy.

Mrs Fiona McCloy, ADL, gave a demonstration of the web-based resources which would include an explanation of each principle, together with internal and external examples of approaches that might be adopted. Web-based tools would also be available.

The Committee noted the intention for the Working Group to incorporate the Principles into the Assessment Handbook in Spring 2012.

AGREED: that the Principles (Appendix 1) and implementation plan be endorsed.

CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

11.55 JISC Innovation Programme

The Committee noted that the University intended to submit one institutional bid for funding to JISC in response to the call for projects on assessment and feedback. The Chair advised that any staff wishing to be involved with the University bid should contact Professor Greenan, Ms Alexander or Dr Masson as soon as possible, as the JISC deadline for proposals was 15 July 2011.

11.56 Aegrotat Awards

The Committee noted that at its May meeting the Academic Development and Enhancement Committee had received a report from the Annual Monitoring Sub-Committee which had recommended that the Teaching and Learning Committee specify the minimum credit required for consideration of an Aegrotat award. Although this was not supported by ADEC, a paragraph would be added to the External Examiners' Handbook and other internal documentation to provide more guidance on the matter.

11.57 COURSE APPROVAL SUB-COMMITTEE

Professor McAlister presented the report of the meeting held on 7 June 2011 (Paper No TLC/11/19a).

11.58 Course Approval (Item 1)

The Committee noted the outcomes of twelve evaluation and revalidation events, and the revisions and withdrawals approved by Faculties.

Four new courses were recommended for approval:

FdSc Property, Planning and Housing at Belfast Metropolitan College
FdSc Agriculture and Rural Studies at CAFRE
PgDip/MSc Sport and Exercise Nutrition (JN)
PgCert in Digital Media Communication (JN)

The Committee noted the following changes in title:

BSc Hons Business – now BSc Hons Business Management

BSc Hons Civil Engineering (Technologies and Operations) – now BSc Hons Civil Engineering (Geoinformatics)
BSc Hons Financial Services – now BSc Hons Banking and Finance
BA Hons Irish History and Politics – now BA Hons Irish History and Society

Professor Ó Dochartaigh advised the Committee that the title of the PgDip/MA Irish History and Politics would also change in line with the Honours degree programme. A CA3 should be submitted to process formally this change.

The Committee noted that the revalidation panel which had considered the proposed MSci Urban Planning and Property Development had supported an imbalanced study load in year 1 of the full-time programme, with 55 credits in semester 1 and 65 in semester 2 on account of a 'long-thin' 10 point module, 'Professional Took-Kit'. This departed from the University's regulatory framework and required Senate approval.

AGREED that:

- i) the provision be approved and re-approved as set out in Appendix 2;
- ii) the following be recommended to Senate for approval:
 - a) a one year extension (to include the 2011 intake) to the period of approval for the PgCert Professional Development (Researchers);
 - b) the new title of PgCert Digital Media Communication - originally proposed as 'Digital Online Communication';
 - c) the imbalanced study load in year 1 (FT) of the MSci Urban Planning and Property Development.

11.59 Late Reports

The Committee agreed that Chair's action be authorised on behalf of the Course Approval Sub-Committee and the Teaching and Learning Committee in respect of the outcomes of ten late evaluation/revalidation event for which reports had not yet been received.

11.60 Annual Report on Evaluation and Revalidation Activity in 2010/11 (Item 4)

The Committee noted that, arising from the 2010/11 review, the Sub-Committee had agreed a number of measures to improve efficiency and effectiveness of evaluation and revalidation arrangements from 2011/12. The Sub-Committee had also noted concern about a tendency by Faculties to seek to re-use external panel members in a variety of roles, which could compromise the critical stance and fresh perspectives expected of panel members.

The report had drawn attention to a range of key points highlighted in panel conditions and recommendations, examples of suggested enhancements and some less positive issues raised by students as well as evidence of research/scholarship informed teaching; these were to be considered by Faculty

teaching and learning committees and teams preparing for evaluation and revalidation.

11.61 PSRB ACCREDITATION

The Committee received the report of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Visiting Board for its revalidation of BA Hons Architecture and the Architecture Revisiting Board for the MArch (a follow-up to 2009 visit) (17/18 June 2010), together with the Faculty's response (Paper No TLC/11/19b).

The Committee noted that the report had been very positive with no conditions or recommendations, although advice had been provided. The Committee commended the Faculty, in particular Professor Peter Walker, on the excellent outcome and for the comprehensive response to the report.

11.62 NON-AWARD BEARING PROGRAMMES: Report of Working Group

Professor Curran presented the Working Group's report (Paper No TLC/11/19c).

The Teaching and Learning Committee, at its June 2010 meeting, had received a paper proposing a review in light of the internal auditors' report which had recommended consideration of a centralised system for efficient administration and effective oversight, management and development of short course activities (min 10.119 refers).

A University-wide Working Group had been established to progress a feasibility study of moving all such non-credit bearing activity (NCB) to a centralised system. The remit of the Group was subsequently extended to include all non-award bearing (NAB) activity, ie credit and non-credit bearing short courses, as there were similar issues in respect of approval, application, payment and evidence of completion (min 10.177 refers). Ulster Educational Partnerships Limited had been excluded from the development of policy and operational procedures in order to expedite contractual obligations.

11.63 Scope

It was noted that activity had been divided into five main types:

- short courses with no academic credit, delivered by Ulster staff;
- short courses with no academic credit, delivered by an individual external to the University;
- bespoke short courses/group training provided to an external organisation/ company and delivered by Ulster staff. Typically such activity had no academic credit;
- modules with academic credit, attached to award-bearing programmes, studied as stand-alone courses with no intention of obtaining an award;
- courses which could be taken with or without credit, ie dual purpose modules.

For the purposes of a forthcoming pilot (see min 11.68) NCB short course activity would not include conferences, workshops, seminars, and summer schools.

The Group had identified insufficient clarity in the University's draft revised consultancy policy in respect of training courses generated through Innovation Ulster as distinct from other education and training courses. The Group recommended that the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) in conjunction with the Chief Finance and Information Officer be asked to provide further clarity around the level and extent of training which might be facilitated under the consultancy banner and to ensure that future provision was dealt with in a consistent and coherent manner with clear guidance on course-related expenditure, central/overhead costs and return of surplus to Faculties/Schools.

11.64 Quality Assurance

The Working Group proposed that the approval and monitoring arrangements for credit-bearing short courses be harmonised as far as possible with those for award-bearing courses. Arrangements for non-credit bearing courses would be covered in an activity contract.

The Working Group recommended that:

- a) the principles for the approval of credit-bearing short courses originally established in 1998 be affirmed;
- b) the recording of approved credit-bearing short courses (and the maintenance of student records) be accommodated within the Student Records Information System (see min 11.65);
- c) the Academic Office develop an approval process for the central recording of credit-bearing short courses, based on the CA3 process for course revisions in award-bearing courses and the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development;
- d) the Quality Management and Audit Unit be asked to consider appropriate arrangements for monitoring such activity, and in due course whether a themed audit would be appropriate.

11.65 Administrative Processes

The Working Group proposed that administrative processes should be integrated with the existing Banner student record system. The Group recommended that, subject to the outcome of the pilot, the application, payment and enrolment process should be a single online transaction instead of the current two-stage process (which required approval of applications by staff), as there would normally be no enforceable entry conditions for NCB courses. Applicants would, therefore, be individually responsible for making sure that they could meet any prerequisites to undertake the course, and to apply and pay online. These aspects would, however, continue to be dealt with manually for commissioned short courses and an administrative interface would be developed for applicants without electronic access.

The Working Group also proposed that over time the system supporting the administration of NAB activity should have the flexibility to offer discounts where appropriate; Banner did not currently provide for this.

For credit-bearing short courses, a transcript would be available on request. For on-line NCB activity, the pilot would test a facility to enable participants who complete their short course to print for themselves a certificate of completion.

11.66 Marketing

The Working Group noted that there was currently no consolidated area within the University's web or printed materials where a prospective student might find out about credit and non-credit bearing short courses. The Working Group recommended that during the pilot period Lifelong Learning should bring together all short course offerings to ensure that there would be a single online repository. In the longer term short course activities should be promoted and listed on the institutional website in a consistent and coherent manner. For this purpose the Working Group recommended that non-credit bearing activity should be considered within the remit of the relevant sub-group of the Web Strategy Board.

11.67 Student Access to Resources

The Working Group recognised that, while occasional students on non-credit bearing courses were unlikely to require access to University resources such as the portal or email accounts, some campus-based courses might require use of the VLE or Library catalogues. Consequently the Group asked the Committee to consider providing a statement of the resources to which such students should be permitted access. The Committee noted that this would be determined by the requirements of the particular short course. The Working Group recommended that Library, Information and Student Administrative Services Committee be asked to endorse any necessary changes to the licensing arrangements with the VLE vendor.

11.68 Pilot

The Working Group had determined that a pilot should be undertaken in semester 2, 2011/12 to test its proposals regarding single transaction application, payment and enrolment. This would be arranged by Lifelong Learning Administration and restricted to non-credit bearing short courses a) offered *on campus* which aimed to recruit a cohort of students and b) for individuals wishing to avail of *online* CPD for statutory body requirements. A systems working group was currently scoping the development work required and the Working Group recommended that it should ensure any future system should have the potential to accommodate all NAB activity.

AGREED that:

- i) the Working Group be thanked for its work to date;
- ii) the recommendations be endorsed and taken forward by the Working Group and ADL in conjunction with relevant departments;

- iii) revised terms of reference and membership of the Working Group and an implementation plan be considered in October;
- iv) a report on the pilot be forwarded for consideration by the Committee in June 2012.

11.69 CERTIFICATE OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms Alexander presented the annual report on the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development framework (Paper No TLC/11/20).

The primary purpose of the framework (developed in 2007/8) was to create opportunities for widening access and engagement in higher education, which would in turn increase the University's non MaSN enrolments and further strengthen HE applications from adult learners.

The Committee noted that the number of live modules had continued to increase with 102 in 2010/11 compared to 68 in 2009/10. However, only six modules were available for external student registration and these had attracted 220 students. Internally, there were 3,324 students enrolled, the majority of whom accessed one or two modules for enhancement purposes, rather than aiming for the full Certificate award.

While external students followed the online application and enrolment process reviewed in paper TLC/11/19c), internal application and enrolment was undertaken manually with bulk enrolments processed through Lifelong Learning to Student Administration. It was noted that much of the work needed to develop the student record systems for CPPD was now subsumed within the requirements for short course activity, addressed by the Non-Award Bearing Working Group.

The Committee noted that current full-time registered students paid no additional fee for CPPD modules nor did they add to the University's non-MaSN return.

It was noted that the introduction of the new Ulster Edge Award, as well as the new mechanisms proposed for credit-bearing short courses in TLC/11/19c), would provide further routes to capture additional learning and skills engagement outside the student's main degree. The paper proposed that schools/units should review their provision for existing students to ascertain whether the CPPD route remained the most appropriate way to validate such activity. Mr McGivern commented on the value of the rigorous standards and quality assurance provided by the assignment of academic credit within the CPPD framework, which was not a feature of the Ulster Edge Award.

Staff Development continued to offer a small number of CPPD modules which could be undertaken by University staff as part of their professional development and new provision was proposed for 2011/12.

Ms Alexander reported that, while CPPD activity was allocated to ADL for the academic planning purposes, actual delivery to the external market was largely dependent on the credit-bearing modules provided by Faculties. In order to

incentivise a greater contribution to non-MASN activity it was recommended that this provision become part of Faculty academic planning targets.

The Committee noted that Lifelong Learning's website contained information on short course availability and the CPPD. A sustained marketing initiative at the level of the Framework for the external market would not be feasible until a reasonable range of courses was available.

There was growing concern around the financial return to Schools to justify the cost of delivery, internally or externally. In order to sustain the long-term development of the CPPD framework, Ms Alexander reported that consideration needed to be given to a revised fee structure. The two current reduced rates (widening participation rate for target community and voluntary groups, and a concessionary rate for individuals in receipt of benefit) were considerably lower than the concessionary fee of the University's main competitor. A single concessionary fee was proposed at circa 70% of the full undergraduate rate. Where the market supported it, Faculties were encouraged to offer CPPD modules at a premium rate.

AGREED that:

- i) CPPD activity should continue to be formally assigned to ADL within the academic planning process but that a mechanism should be devised to identify Faculty plans;
- ii) the proposed revision to fees be recommended to the Chief Finance and Information Officer for consideration by the Resources Committee;
- iii) schools/units should review their CPPD modules for existing students, to ascertain whether the credit-bearing route within CPPD remained the most appropriate way to validate such activity.

11.70 SUB-COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYABILITY

Professor Millar presented the report of the meeting held on 24 May 2011 (Paper No TLC/11/21).

11.71 Study USA Ulster Steering Group Annual Report (Item 1)

The Committee noted that Ulster students continued to secure places on this increasingly competitive programme, with 29 offers made for 2011/12 (39 in 2010/11).

11.72 Diploma in International Academic Studies (Item 2) and DPP

The Committee noted that a review of assessment for the DIAS had been undertaken and a centrally located module had been proposed to ensure a University-wide standard and consistency for students studying abroad.

The Sub-Committee had agreed to consult the Committee on the retention of the higher threshold for the award (50%) than for progression (40%), which was not

consistent with other undergraduate qualifications. This issue also applied to the DPP award.

Although there was support for a move to 40% for the award standard, it was proposed that before a decision was taken the Sub-Committee should revisit, in relation to the DPP award, how best to assess work-based learning. If comparability of marking standards could not be guaranteed, then it might be more appropriate to assess skills and competence on a pass/fail basis.

AGREED: that, pending a further report from the Sub-Committee, the current award standard for DIAS and DPP (50%) be retained.

11.73 Employability Development Opportunities Review Tool (EDORT) (Item 3)

The Committee noted the success of the EDORT tool which had now been developed as an online resource to support course teams in reviewing employability opportunities within programmes. It was being further refined to include a statement of graduate attributes and would be available in its final online form from September 2011. After three years' experience the Sub-Committee recommended that the use of the tool be made mandatory by those course teams which offered DEL-funded programmes and in their preparation for revalidation. A pilot exercise was proposed for DHSSPS funded programmes.

AGREED: that Faculties ensure that teams preparing for revalidation (DEL-funded courses) use the EDORT tool.

11.74 Professional and Career Enhancement (PACE) System (Item 4)

The Committee noted that PACE had replaced the PDS system. It supported the broad Employability agenda and workshops would be held on all campuses in September.

11.75 PDP Forum Report (Item 5)

The Committee noted that the Forum had upgraded and enhanced the learning outcome statements on Ulster Module Activity Planning (UMAP) and that the website now included more interactive resources.

11.76 Placement Employer of Year Planning Group (Item 6)

The Committee noted the influence and high regard of the University's Placement Employer of the Year Awards. The Sub-Committee recommended that the awards be supported by Teaching and Learning for a further three year period.

The Chair considered the Awards to be very valuable and, subject to budget constraints, hoped to support their continuation.

11.77 Monitoring Placement (Item 7)

The Teaching and Learning Committee has asked the Sub-Committee to monitor exceptional cases of students progressing to final year in the current economic

downturn. It was noted that in 2009/10 480 students had omitted an intended placement year and that this had increased to 579 in 2010/11, with 1135 students on placement compared to 1068 in 2009/10. This information would be a baseline for monitoring in future years.

Given the need to meet MaSN targets in 2011/12, the Vice-Chancellor stressed that Faculties should ensure that students due to go on placement in the next academic year must either register for a placement or seek leave of absence. Unplanned progression directly to final year would have serious funding implications for the University.

11.78 HEAR IMPLEMENTATION STEERING GROUP (HISG) – UPDATE REPORT

The Committee had received a paper on the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) from the Implementation Steering Group in June 2010 and had agreed, *inter alia*, that in 2010/11 the concept of an Ulster Graduate Award be developed and that the University's statement on Graduate Qualities be reviewed (min 10.108 refers).

Professor Greenan presented Paper No TLC/11/22 and reported on key activities progressed by the HISG during 2010/11.

The Committee noted that the Ulster Edge Award had been incorporated into the 'Additional Information' section. A review of the University's Statement of Graduate Qualities (first approved in 1998) had been undertaken to align it more closely with University initiatives and the Steering Group recommended approval of the revised statement. The Committee considered that staff would need guidance on interpretation.

It was noted that successful implementation of the HEAR would depend on a robust, significantly automated system to capture the expected data set. Certain information, eg programme learning outcomes, professional status of courses, prizes, and titles of dissertation, might currently not be held electronically or collated. Some of the information expectations aligned with the requirements of the Key Information Set (KIS). A technical working group had scoped requirements but further development would have to be resourced through the Finance and Planning Information Directorate. The HISG therefore recommended that this development work be prioritised to ensure that the HEAR would be available for formative use with students in 2011/12, in line with University plans and national developments.

Faculties would be primarily responsible for the collating, approval and input of much of the additional information not currently held in the Student Records Information System, and Faculties would need to identify the person(s) to be responsible for these tasks.

Faculties were also encouraged to review their processes for recording exemptions to ensure that University procedures were being followed (see also min 11.81) and to consider proposing 'Additional Recognised Activities' in accordance with the protocols set out in Appendix 1 to the paper.

In order to take full advantage of the HEAR as a formative tool for undergraduate students, Faculties were asked to require undergraduate programme teams to develop implementation plans to embed the HEAR and Graduate Qualities in curriculum design and delivery (eg induction, Studies Advice, Personal Development Planning).

AGREED that:

- i) the revised Statement of Graduate Qualities be endorsed with effect from 2011/12 (Appendix 3) and that the Steering Group be asked to consider providing a commentary to guide staff on what the University intended for each quality;
- ii) each programme demonstrate at validation how the Graduate Qualities were to be achieved;
- iii) the technical developments for the HEAR be prioritised in the work plans of the Finance and Planning Information Directorate, linked to the development of the KIS (already required by Senate);
- iv) Faculties include activities in support of the HEAR, as set out in the report, in their Teaching and Learning Strategy Action Plans for 2011/12.

11.79 VIEWPOINTS PROJECT

Dr A Masson presented an information paper on the Viewpoints project and its interim report to JISC (Paper No TLC/11/23).

The Committee noted that the project had developed a range of workshop-based resources to aid course teams to reflect on course design and plan curricula in creative ways. The project was aligned with the University's validation processes and a PgCHEP module (student-centred learning). The project had also assisted CHEP working groups, the Students' Union in developing its class representation module, and a range of other initiatives.

As the project was entering its final phase in 2011/12, the team would be developing a strategy to ensure that its benefits were maintained in the University. The Chair commented that there had been considerable interest in the project nationally and it would be important to embed this activity within the University and as far as possible integrate leadership in its use within existing roles.

AGREED that:

- i) Dr Masson bring forward a dissemination plan for consideration by the Committee at its October meeting;
- ii) Faculties include the use of Viewpoints resources as an activity in their Teaching and Learning Strategy Action Plans for 2011/12.

11.80 TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY

The Committee considered Paper No TLC/11/24 which provided summary progress reports from lead agents and Faculties on the achievement of planned activities in 2010/11 and also on overall progress under each Strategic Aim, together with an additional report on activities identified by the Committee in December 2010 (min 10.195 refers). As part of the process agreed in June 2010 for evaluating the success of the Strategy the reports assessed progress using 'traffic light' coding (min 10.121 refers).

The Committee noted that the provisional sources of evidence were to have been updated, so that the evidence cited was readily available, preferably electronically, should the external critical friend seek to view it. Many reports had not, however, referenced sources and the Academic Office had identified reports and minutes for central activities where available through records of Senate and its Committees.

The finalised report would be forwarded to the critical friend and his report on progress would be considered by the Committee at its October meeting.

The Chair commended the work of Faculties and central departments in the various activities.

AGREED that:

- i) the 2010/11 reports and assessments of progress be endorsed;
- ii) Faculties and lead agents notify the Academic Office immediately of sources of evidence not referenced in the paper;
- iii) lead agents for any activities due for completion in 2010/11, and for which interim reports had been provided, forward a final report for consideration by the Committee at its October meeting;
- iv) 'further actions' be carried over into the 2011/12 Action Plan;
- v) the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) identify in mid-August 2011 new actions for the 2011/12 plan (to include those agreed at this meeting - HEAR, KIS, Principles of Assessment and Feedback for Learning, Viewpoints) and that a draft plan be circulated to Faculties and central departments for the inclusion of other activities;
- vi) the draft final action plan for 2011/12 be considered by the Committee at its October meeting.

11.81 ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

The Committee, at its meeting on 16 June 2010, had agreed that the APL Working Group review policy and practice in this area (min 10.78). Professor Curran, Chair of the Working Group, presented the Working Group's report (Paper No TLC/11/25).

While the policy and procedures were considered to remain broadly fit for purpose, the Committee noted that the main issue identified was inconsistency in application of the process by Faculties and sometimes within Faculties. The level of guidance and provision of guidance materials to students as well as criteria used in consideration of claims varied. Reporting to Faculty level was uneven.

It was noted that formally constituted APL Boards were seldom, if ever, employed to consider APL claims. The preferred option was for this role to be carried out by course committees. APEL versions of modules had not been developed.

The Working Group proposed a revised University policy document and overarching guidance which incorporated changes made in the light of experience. In addition, in order to achieve greater consistency, a set of Guidelines for Staff and Applicants had been drafted. These included standardised pro formas, which would not, however, be prescriptive.

The Committee was asked to consider the following modifications to the University's APL policy, that:

- a) policy and procedures be subject to regular monitoring and review every five years;
- b) guidance be given on the constitution of an alternative body to a formally constituted APL Board which would be authorised to make decisions at programme level, as follows: 'Such bodies shall include as 'Selectors' at least two members of staff and should normally include the Course/Subject Director, the APL Adviser [normally the Course/Subject Director] and a subject expert';
- c) in all APEL applications, a portfolio, in the standard format proposed, be used for the presentation of evidence of experiential learning, and that the 'APEL module' route no longer be provided;
- d) Faculties adapt, as appropriate, the proposed Guidelines for Staff and Applicants in the operation of the Faculty APL process.

Faculties were also to ensure that their procedures to oversee the operation of the APL process and the equitable and consistent treatment of claims were operationalised at Faculty level.

The current Policy provided that no fee be charged for assessing claims for admission to undergraduate programmes, and the Working Group proposed an extension of this policy to reflect its de facto application in articulations within linked postgraduate programmes and articulation from courses in collaborative provision.

The Committee noted that there had been no consensus within the Working Group in regard to fees for assessing claims for exemption or advanced standing based on certificated and/or experiential evidence. Currently it appeared that only one school charged the approved fee (£155). Professor Curran was of the

opinion that the same flat fee as set out in the University's fees schedule should be charged for the consideration of all such APL claims.

The Working Group had endorsed the continuation of the 2006 recommendation that monies generated from the APL process should be deployed back to Faculties to set against the cost of the administration of the process.

AGREED that:

- i) Professor Curran, Mr B McArthur and members of the Working Group be thanked for their work;
- ii) the recommendations of the Working Group be endorsed and the revised Guiding Principles, and Policy (Appendix 4) and Guidelines for the Operation of the APL process be applied by Faculties from 2011/12;
- iii) it be recommended to the Chief Finance and Information Officer that the waiving of the APL fee be extended to exemptions or advanced standing arising from articulations in linked postgraduate courses and agreed articulation arrangements from collaborative courses in line with current practice, and that the fee be applied for all other APL applications;
- iv) the operation of the Policy and Procedures be reviewed again in 2016/17.

11.82 REPORT ON REVIEW OF EXTERNAL EXAMINING ARRANGEMENTS IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES IN THE UK

The Committee noted that Universities UK and GuildHE had recently published the outcome of the national review of external examining arrangements and that 14 recommendations had been made by the Review Group. The Academic Infrastructure, which included the section of the Code of Practice on external examining, was currently being reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and it was anticipated that the QAA would include the recommendations and develop a set of minimum expectations for the role. The revised institutional audit/review process would assess how far each university had successfully adopted the recommendations. The Review Group had encouraged institutions to implement its recommendations by the start of academic year 2012/13 and without variation in order to ensure consistency across the sector.

The Chair presented Paper No TLC/11/26a) which set out the status of each recommendation in terms of the University's own code of practice together with an indication of where changes would be required. A commentary had also been provided in regard to each of those recommendations requiring more detailed consideration or substantive adjustment. The Committee noted that the University's external examining procedures already incorporated many of the Review's recommendations and that some others might be considered implicit in them.

11.83 Appointment

The criteria for appointment were explicit in specifying that external examiners should hold no more than two external examiner appointments at any one time, and that anyone who had been directly involved as an external member of a validation panel for the course should be excluded. The duration of an external examiner's appointment was set at four years, with a possible, but exceptional extension of one year.

The Committee noted that currently the University permitted extension for up to two years in the case of a discontinued course or to provide continuity between successive groups of external examiners or for a discontinued course. The University's revised code would no longer cite these instances and Faculties would need to present strong, genuinely exceptional cases.

The University's Code would also be tightened to preclude appointment to a cognate course at the same time or during a five year period after the end of an appointment. Reappointment after a five year period would only be made exceptionally.

11.84 Recognition of the Role

The report recommended that all universities and higher education colleges should recognise the importance of the external examiner role in promotion procedures and demonstrate commitment and support for their own staff acting as external examiners for other institutions. It was noted that no specific reference to this role was included in the University's current promotion documentation.

11.85 External Examiner Report

Some minor adjustments would be made to the wording of the report form and a checklist would be added to assist external examiners in confirming the information provided to them.

The report recommended that all external examiner reports should be made available, in full, to all students of the course, with the sole exception of any confidential report made to the Vice-Chancellor. The University's current process expected reports, or a summary thereof, and the response to the report, to be discussed with student representatives. While this should continue, students should now have access to the full report as well. The Committee considered that the Department of Student Administration and the Information Services Department should develop secure electronic processes to provide access to these reports through the staff and student portal.

The name, position and institution of all external examiners were to be included in course details provided to students, although institutions might indicate that it was inappropriate for students to contact external examiners directly. It was noted that currently external examiners were not routinely identified to students, and Faculties would be expected to ensure that this information was provided through the course handbook.

AGREED that:

- i) the adjustments to the University's Code of Practice in respect of the appointment of external examiners and their reporting arrangements be approved and given effect as far as possible from 2011/12, and fully by 2012/13;
- ii) Faculties ensure that appropriate opportunities were used to advise current external examiners that their identities and full reports would be made available to all students and that there would be slight changes in the report form from 2011/12;
- iii) the Department of Human Resources be asked to include recognition of the external examiner role in the University's criteria for promotion;
- iv) the Library, Information and Student Administrative Services Committee be asked to ensure that secure electronic processes for access to external examiner reports and the course/subject team responses were developed.

11.86 EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT FORM FOR SUBJECT NETWORKS

The Committee noted that the Academic Development and Enhancement Committee in February 2011 had endorsed a recommendation from the Annual Course Review Sub-Group, which monitored the quality of courses in partner institutions, that the Academic Office consider developing a specific External Examiner Report Form for networks of courses (ADEC min 11.14 refers). Investigation of the matter had revealed a concern that external examiners were not using the current form to report fully on each college in a network.

The Committee received Paper No TLC/11/26b, a proposed two-part form to cover generic topics and college-specific matters. The Faculty Heads of Collaborative Courses had been consulted on its development.

AGREED: that the new report form be approved for use in subject networks from 2011/12.

VARIATIONS AND DEPARTURES FROM THE UNIVERSITY'S REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

11.87 BEng Hons/MEng Civil Engineering, BSc Hons Civil Engineering (Geoinformatics)

The Committee considered a report from the Faculty of Art, Design and the Built Environment on transfer arrangements between the BEng and MEng, and in respect of a departure from the normal regulation governing classification (Paper No TLC/11/27a).

As part of the revalidation of Subject Unit 4A4b in January 2011 the Panel had challenged the proposed transfer policy from BEng Hons to MEng. BEng students were to be required to achieve 60% average, while MEng students would be permitted to continue on their course at 40% average, although Levels 4 and 5 of both courses were identical. The Committee noted that the Joint Board of

Moderators' accreditation report (to be ratified in July) would make the 60% threshold a 'Requirement', and that this practice was common in other institutions.

In order to achieve equity and to meet JBM requirements, the Faculty now proposed that there should be common entry to the BEng Hons and MEng (as in other institutions) with a minimum of 270 UCAS points. Those wishing to transfer to Level 6 of the MEng would be expected to achieve an overall average of 60% at Level 5. This would apply to full-time and part-time students.

Currently, classification of the BSc and BEng Hons was based on 20% from Level 5 and 80% from Level 6. This did not accord with the University's principle of Level 6 only and a preference for 25% at Level 5 where Level 5 was accepted. The Faculty proposed to retain the 20% contribution and it was noted that the JBM accreditation report would make the 20% contribution a 'Requirement'.

It was noted that the classification of the MEng would meet University policy, being based entirely on Level 7, with 120 credits taken in final year and 30 credits from a dissertation module in the penultimate year. The MEng included a BEng Hons exit award for students who did not complete Level 7 successfully. The Faculty made the following proposal for determining the final overall mark and the award's classification:

20% Level 7 (Dissertation module – 30 credits);
60% Level 6 (90 credits);
20% Level 5 (120 credits).

AGREED:

- i) the proposal for common entry to BEng Hons and MEng Civil Engineering and an MEng transfer threshold of an overall average of 60% at the end of Level 5 be approved;
- ii) the proposed basis for classification of the BEng Hons, BEng Hons (exit award) and the BSc Hons degrees be approved.

11.88 BEng Hons/MEng in the Faculty of Computing and Engineering

The Committee considered a paper from the Faculty of Computing and Engineering in relation to proposed transfer arrangements for a number of BEng and MEng Hons courses (Paper No TLC/11/27b).

The Committee noted that the Revalidation Panel for Subject Unit 10A1 had identified the same issue as in Civil Engineering as Levels 4 and 5 were common (min 11.84 refers).

The Faculty intended to retain separate entry to BEng and MEng but proposed to adopt a threshold of an overall 60% average for promotion to MEng for BEng students at the end of Level 5. MEng candidates who did not reach this threshold would transfer to the BEng. A higher than pass standard was common practice elsewhere and accorded with professional body expectations. While the Faculty

would have been content with a lower standard, the 60% level would be adopted to ensure University consistency.

AGREED: that the proposed transfer arrangements be approved.

11.89 NEW, APPROVED AND AMENDED PRIZES

The Committee received Paper No TLC/11/28 which proposed one new prize in the Ulster Business School. It was noted that Chair's action had been taken to approve nine new prizes and amendments to eight existing prizes, so that the prizes might be awarded at the June Boards of Examiners.

AGREED: that it be recommended to Council through Communications and External Affairs Committee that the Stakeholder Group Award for Excellence (BSc Hons Marketing) and the nine other new prizes and amendments to prizes be approved.

11.90 DATES OF SEMESTERS 2011/12 – 2016/17

The Committee received Paper No TLC/11/29, Dates of Semesters 2011/12 – 2016/17 and considered proposed dates for 2016/17.

AGREED: that the proposed dates of semesters for 2016/17 be approved as follows:

Introductory period	Monday 19 September 2016 - Friday 23 September 2016	
<u>Autumn Semester</u>	Monday 26 September 2016 – Friday 27 January 2017	(15 weeks) 12+(3)+3
(Christmas vacation	Monday 19 December 2016 – Friday 6 January 2017)	
Examinations begin	Monday 9 January 2017	
<u>Spring Semester</u>	Monday 30 January 2017 – Friday 2 June 2017	(16 weeks) 10+(2)+2+1+3
(Easter vacation	Monday 10 April 2017 – Friday 21 April 2017)	Easter Sunday 16 April
(Revision week	Monday 8 May 2017 – Friday 12 May 2017)	
Examinations begin	Monday 15 May 2017	
<u>Summer Semester</u> (intensive)	Monday 24 July 2017 – Friday 15 September 2017	(8 weeks) 6+2
Examinations begin	Monday 4 September 2017	
<u>Supplementary Examinations</u>	Wednesday 16 August 2017 – Thursday 24 August 2017	

11.91 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Committee reviewed its terms of reference (Paper No TLC/11/30) and considered them fit for purpose. Any adjustment arising from the revised Pro-Vice-Chancellor portfolios would be considered at the next meeting.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Professor Cook for his considered and significant contribution to the work of the University, particularly in relation to teaching and learning. It was noted that the title of Emeritus Professor would be conferred. Professor Cook was wished a very happy, long and productive retirement.

11.92 DATES OF MEETINGS 2011/12

The Committee noted its schedule of meetings for 2011/12 as follows:

Wednesday 19 October 2011	1.30 pm	J611, Coleraine
Tuesday 13 December 2011	1.30 pm	Boardroom, Jordanstown
Wednesday 28 March 2012	10.15 am	MD008, Magee
Wednesday 20 June 2012	1.30 pm	Boardroom, Jordanstown

One meeting had been removed but the number of meetings would be kept under review in the light of the volume of business.

Duration 4 hours 15 mins

5 July 2011

AGF/CA/lh

ULSTER PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK FOR LEARNING

Please read assessment to include all assessment (formative and summative, coursework and examinations)

Assessment and Feedback for Learning should:

- 1 Help to clarify, from the early stages of a programme, what good performance means (goals, criteria, standards);
- 2 Encourage 'time and effort' on challenging learning tasks which recognise the importance of learning from the tasks, not just demonstrating learning through the tasks;
- 3 Deliver timely learner-related feedback information that helps students to self-correct and communicate clear, high expectations and professionalism;
- 4 Provide opportunities for students to act on feedback and close any gap between current and desired performance through complementary and integrated curriculum design and pedagogic practice;
- 5 Ensure that all assessment has a beneficial, constructive impact on student learning, encouraging positive motivational beliefs, confidence and self-esteem;
- 6 Facilitate the development of self- and peer-assessment skills and reflection on learning, to enable students to progressively take more responsibility for their own learning, and to inspire a lifelong capacity to learn;
- 7 Encourage interaction and dialogue around learning and professional practice (student-student, lecturer-student and lecturer-lecturer) including supporting the development of student learning groups and peer learning communities.

The implementation of these principles will influence curriculum design, delivery and educational practice, such that students and staff become co-creators and collaborators in learning.

COURSE APPROVAL

FACULTY	COURSE TITLE	MODE		INTAKES	CAMPUS	MAX COHORT SIZE (Partner)	
		FT	PT			FT	PT
Art, Design and the Built Environment	FdSc Property, Planning and Housing	√	√	2011 - 2015	BMC (Gerald Moag campus)	20	15
Life and Health Sciences	FdSc Agriculture and Rural Studies (with CertHE exit award)	√	√	2011 – 2015	CAFRE (Greenmount)	30	10
	PgDip/MSc Sport and Exercise Nutrition (with CertHE exit award)	√	√	2011 - 2015	CE/JN		
Social Sciences	PgCert Digital Media Communication		√	2011 - 2013	JN		

COURSE RE-APPROVAL

FACULTY	REVAL UNIT	COURSE TITLE	MODE		INTAKES	CAMPUS	MAX COHORT SIZE (Partner)	
			FT	PT			FT	PT
Art, Design and the Built Environment	4A1	BSc Hons Housing Management with/without DPP (with AB exit award) [formerly BSc Hons Housing]	√		2011 - 2015	JN		
		PgDip/MSc Housing Studies		√	2011 - 2015	JN		
		MSci Urban Planning and Property Development with/without DPP (with BSc Hons exit award)	√	√	2011 - 2015	JN		
		BSc Hons Property Investment Appraisal and Development with/without DPP (with AB exit award) [formerly BSc Hons Property Investment and Development]	√	√	2011 - 2015	JN		
		PgDip/MSc Real Estate	√	√	2011 - 2015	JN		

FACULTY	REVAL UNIT	COURSE TITLE	MODE		INTAKES	CAMPUS	MAX COHORT SIZE (Partner)	
			FT	PT			FT	PT
Art, Design and the Built Environment (Cont'd)	4A4b	BEng Hons Civil Engineering with DPP (with AB exit award)	√		2011 - 2015	JN		
		BEng Hons Civil Engineering (with AB exit award)		√	2011 - 2015	JN		
		MEng Civil Engineering with DPP (with BEng and AB exit awards)	√		2011 - 2015	JN		
		MEng Civil Engineering (with BEng and AB exit awards)		√	2011 - 2015	JN		
		BSc Hons Civil Engineering (Geoinformatics) with DPP (with AB exit award) [formerly Technologies and Operations]	√		2011 - 2015	JN		
		PgDip/MSc Infrastructure Engineering	√	√	2011 - 2015	JN		
	4B	FdSc Architectural Technology with Sustainable Design (with CertHE exit award) [formerly FdSc Architectural Technology]	√	√	2011 - 2015	BMC (Gerald Moag campus)	18*	16
						SRC (Newry & P'Down campuses)	12 (Newry) 14* (P'Down)	8* (Newry) 8* (P'Down)
				SWC (Omagh campus)	16*	14*		
		FdSc Sustainable Construction (with CertHE exit award) [formerly FdSc Construction Engineering]	√	√	2011 - 2015	BMC (Gerald Moag campus)	18*	16
				SRC (Newry & P'Down campuses)	16* (Newry) 14* (P'Down)	12* (Newry) 8* (P'Down)		
				SWC (Omagh, D'gannon & E'killen campuses)	14* (Omagh) 12* (D'gannon) 12* (E'killen)	10 (Omagh) 10* (D'gannon) 10* (E'killen)		

FACULTY	REVAL UNIT	COURSE TITLE	MODE		INTAKES	CAMPUS	MAX COHORT SIZE (Partner)	
			FT	PT			FT	PT
Art, Design and the Built Environment (Cont'd)	4B (Cont'd)	FdSc Building Technology and Management (with CertHE exit award)	✓	✓	2011 - 2015	NRC (Coleraine campus)	14*	18*
Life and Health Sciences	25A2	PgDip/MSc Applied Psychology (Mental Health and Psychological Therapies)	✓	✓	2011 - 2015	ME		
		MSc Applied Behaviour Analysis (with PgDip exit award)		✓	2011 - 2015	CE		
		MSc Health Psychology (with PgCert and PgDip exit awards)	✓	✓	2011 - 2015	DL		
Social Sciences	8A	UG Hons Subject: Economics (Single Hons/Major; with or without DPP)	✓			JN		
		BSc Hons Business Economics (with or without DPP)	✓			JN		
Ulster Business School	5B3	Certificate in Management Practice		✓	2011 - 2015	BT, CE, JN, ME Outcentre: City Banking College, London		
		CertHE in Management Practice (with Cert exit award)		✓	2011 - 2015	BT, CE, JN, ME & Outcentres		
		AdvCert in Management Practice		✓	2011 - 2015	BT, CE, JN, ME & Outcentres		
		AdvDip in Management Practice (with AdvCert exit award)		✓	2011 - 2015	BT, CE, JN, ME Outcentres: Irish Times Training Dublin; Cavan IT Centre; City Banking College, London; Office of Police Ombudsman; PRRT, Parity Solutions; Stafford Associates, Dubai		

FACULTY	REVAL UNIT	COURSE TITLE	MODE		INTAKES	CAMPUS	MAX COHORT SIZE (Partner)	
			FT	PT			FT	PT
Ulster Business School (Cont'd)	5B3 (Cont'd)	AdvCert in Contact Centre Management		✓	2011 - 2015	BT, CE, JN, ME & Outcentres		
		AdvDip in Contact Centre Management (with AdvCert exit award)		✓	2011 - 2015	BT, CE, JN, ME & Outcentres		
	5A1	UG Hons Subject: Business (Major/Minor)	✓		2011 - 2015	CE		
		UG Hons Subjects: Accounting; Marketing; Retails Studies (Minor)	✓		2011 - 2015	CE		
		BSc Hons Business (with CertHE and AB exit awards)		✓	2011 - 2015	CE		
15G	BSc Hons Business Management (with CertHE and AB exit awards) (formerly BSc Hons Business)	✓		2011 - 2015	CE			
	BSc Hons International Hotel and Tourism Management (Level 6)	✓		2011 - 2015	HTMi, Switzerland	Two cohorts per annum (50 per cohort)		

COURSE WITHDRAWALS

FACULTY	COURSE	LOCATION
Art, Design and the Built Environment	PgDip/MA Visual Culture	BT
	MSci Property Investment and Development	JN
Computing and Engineering	PgDip/MSc Web Information systems	JN
	PgDip/MSc Informatics	JN
Life and Health Sciences	MSc Food Biotechnology	CE/Greece (Universities of Patras and Ionnina)
Social Sciences	BSc Hons Community Youth Work – part-time (Top-Up route)	JN

University of Ulster

Statement of Graduate Qualities

The following statement of the expected qualities of graduates reflects Ulster's vision of leading in the provision of professional education for professional life.

University of Ulster graduates will demonstrate:

- subject-specific knowledge and skills informed by current research and professional/vocational practice
- flexibility, creativity and an entrepreneurial approach to problem solving
- self-confidence, global citizenship, ethical leadership, and a commitment to life-wide learning, professionalism and employability
- effective collaborative working, communication skills and the capacity for reflective practice, including the ability to give and receive feedback

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND POLICY FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR
LEARNING

2006 (Revised 2011)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL) POLICY

The following principles are fundamental to the achievement of awards that meet nationally recognised standards of achievement.

- 1 Learning shall be recognised irrespective of the context in which it is achieved.
- 2 It is the achievement of learning, or the outcomes of that learning, and not just the experience of the activities alone that shall be accredited.
- 3 Learning must be evidenced in writing and authenticated at the appropriate level.
- 4 All claims for APL shall be considered with the same degree of rigour and shall be comparable in terms of evidence and effort.
- 5 Decisions regarding the accreditation of prior learning are a matter of academic judgement, informed by professional bodies and other stakeholders.
- 6 The entire APL process shall be transparent to all stakeholders and demonstrably rigorous and fair.
- 7 All staff associated with the accreditation of prior learning shall have their roles clearly and explicitly defined, and underpinned by appropriate staff induction/development.
- 8 Limitations to APL shall be clearly defined.
- 9 Policy and procedures for the accreditation of prior learning shall be subject to regular monitoring and review every five years.

POLICY FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING

1 General Policy

- i) Exemptions shall be granted for whole modules only, save in the exception where a module is clearly defined into theoretical and practical elements. In this case, claims may be considered for either the theoretical or practical components.
- ii) For programmes of 180 or more credit points, students must register for modules amounting to at least the final third of the credit value of the award at the highest level. For programmes of up to and including 120 credit points, students must register for modules amounting to at least the final half of the credit value of the award at the highest level. Exemptions shall not be permitted for these modules. This restriction shall not apply to the Certificate of Personal and Professional Development.
- iii) Duly constituted APL Boards at the level of the School or Faculty shall take decisions on claims for APL.

- iv) Faculties may employ an alternative decision-making body to that of a formally constituted APL Board at programme level. Such bodies shall include as 'Selectors' at least two members of staff and should normally include the Course/Subject Director, the APL Adviser and a subject expert. The alternative body must be able to demonstrate the same degree of rigour and status as that provided by a formal APL Board. References below to the APL Board shall be taken to include an alternative decision-making body.
- v) The duly constituted APL Board shall have due regard for the authenticity, currency, validity, reliability and sufficiency of the evidence provided (see Glossary of Terms).
- vi) Subject/Course Teams shall make explicit any modules where an APL claim cannot be considered and also make explicit the rationale and justification.
- vii) Claims must be evidenced by certification or in writing (for experiential claims).
- viii) Faculties/Schools shall have due regard for core elements of the programme to ensure that applicants have met the requisite learning outcomes within APL claims.
- ix) The process for considering APL claims shall be transparent to all stakeholders and demonstrably rigorous and fair.
- x) Faculties/Schools shall appoint an APL Adviser(s) to provide advice and guidance to applicants on claims for APEL (see Glossary of Terms).

2 APCL for Advanced Standing

- i) Regard shall be taken in relation to the currency of the certificated evidence.
- ii) The APL Board shall determine whether the certificated evidence is commensurate with the learning outcomes of that part of the programme for which exemption is sought.
- iii) It shall be the responsibility of the student to furnish the APL Board with the requisite information of the learning achieved within a certified claim.

3 APCL for Exemptions for individual modules

- i) Regard shall be taken in relation to the currency of the certificated evidence.
- ii) The APL Board shall determine whether the certificated evidence is commensurate with the learning outcomes within the module(s) for which exemption is sought.
- iii) It shall be the responsibility of the student to furnish the APL Board with the requisite information of the learning achieved within a certified claim.

4 APEL for Admission

i) The APL Adviser shall, in consultation with the applicant, determine whether the evidence presented is likely to meet the criteria of being authentic, current, valid, reliable and sufficient.

ii) Undergraduate Admissions

Admission to undergraduate programmes is based upon prospective students, with considerable life and work experience, demonstrating evidence of their ability to undertake the programme. A portfolio of evidence shall be presented for consideration. Subject/Course Committees shall specify the minimum outcomes to be demonstrated for admission to the programme.

iii) Postgraduate Admissions

The principle of admission to postgraduate programmes is based on the premise that students shall hold a degree or equivalent qualification. In exceptional circumstances, where an individual has substantial and significant experiential learning, a portfolio of written evidence demonstrating the meeting of graduate qualities (including subject specific outcomes, specified by Subject/Course Committees) may be considered as an alternative entrance route. Evidence used to demonstrate graduate qualities may not be used for exemption against modules within the programme.

5 APEL for Advanced Standing

i) The APL Adviser shall, in consultation with the applicant, determine whether the proposed evidence is likely to meet the criteria of being authentic, current, valid, reliable and sufficient. Notwithstanding the responsibility for advice, the responsibility for the claim lies with the applicant.

ii) The portfolio of evidence presented to demonstrate the meeting of learning outcomes in an experiential learning claim for advanced standing shall be available to the external examiner(s). The level and nature of involvement of the external examiner(s) shall be agreed between the Subject/Course Committee and the examiner(s).

6 APEL for exemptions from individual modules

i) The APL Adviser shall advise applicants on whether an APEL claim is appropriate and against which module(s) exemption may be sought.

ii) The APL Adviser shall, in consultation with the applicant, determine whether the evidence presented is likely to meet the criteria of being authentic, current, valid, reliable and sufficient.

GUIDANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF THE APL PROCESS

1 The APL Adviser shall be the first point of contact for all APL applicants and shall, in consultation with the applicant, determine whether the application would be appropriate and whether the evidence to be presented is likely to meet the criteria for exemption of being authentic, current, valid, reliable and sufficient.

2 Faculties/Schools shall have in place a duly constituted APL Board or alternative body to take decisions. The Board shall receive recommendations from the relevant Subject/Course Director on behalf of the Subject/Course Committee.

3 Constitution of the APL Board /Alternative Body:

The membership of the Board /Alternative Body shall be determined by Faculties, with due regard to its status. Membership shall include at least two members of staff and should normally be drawn from:

- Subject Partnership Managers
- Co-ordinator for Teaching and Learning
- Associate/Head of School
- APL Adviser(s)
- APL Co-ordinator
- Subject/Course Directors
- Subject Expert
- PSRB – invited members, where appropriate.

Any alternative body shall include as ‘Selectors’ at least two members of staff and should normally include the Course/Subject Director, APL Adviser (normally Course/Subject Director) and subject expert.

4 Appropriate training and support shall be available to all staff associated with the guidance and assessment of claims for the accreditation of prior learning.

5 Faculties shall ensure that procedures are in place at Faculty level to oversee the operation of the APL process and to ensure equitable and consistent treatment of claims.

6 Faculties/Schools shall determine a process to record activity for the individual and to assimilate a dataset to ensure fairness and consistency of decisions.

7 Outcomes of claims:

- Approved
- Insufficient evidence
- Not approved

Where the decision is of insufficient evidence, there shall be one opportunity for the student to provide additional evidence to the Board if this is considered necessary and appropriate, within a timeframe determined by the Board.

The decision of the Board shall be final (no right of appeal except on grounds of procedural irregularity).

Students shall be informed of the outcome following the Board's decision on a timely basis.

- 8 Where opportunity to undertake a module is limited, decisions on advanced standing and exemption shall be taken before the student is required to commence the module so that the student is not disadvantaged.
- 9 Faculties/Schools shall have prepared materials to inform students and prospective students how to make a claim for APL.
- 10 Evidence of prior experiential learning shall be presented in the form of a portfolio of evidence. The portfolio shall contain written material which clearly demonstrates how the student's prior experience is evidence of his/her achievement of the requisite learning outcomes:

A typical portfolio should normally contain:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Curriculum Vitae
- Employment History
- Education and Training History
- Training and Professional Qualifications

And include the following sections

Introduction	Setting the context of the claim in the overall academic and career plans of the student
Experience	An expansion on a curriculum vitae or other significant life events including a description of experiences including informal learning activities eg conferences/workshops.
Learning Account	An account of the learning that has resulted and reflections on what has been learned from the experience
Learning Outcomes	Clear statements of demonstrable behavioural change/performance resulting from the learning together with a list of demonstrable learning outcomes
Evidence	Evidence of the achievement of each learning outcome
Authenticity	Evidence demonstrating that the prior learning claimed was completed by the applicant

- 11 Faculties/Schools shall determine the minimum and maximum levels of support that should be provided to students to enable students to complete their APEL claim.
- 12 Faculties/Schools may consider appointing an APL co-ordinator.
- 13 There shall be no fee applied to APEL claims for undergraduate admission in keeping with the University's commitment to Widening Access or to articulation arrangements within linked postgraduate programmes or agreed articulation arrangements involving collaborative provision. A flat fee as set out in the University's schedule of fees shall be charged for all other claims for the accreditation of prior learning.
- 14 Subject/Course Committees shall give consideration to the currency of the evidence submitted in relation to subject specific requirements.
- 15 All successful claims for admission to a programme or exemption from a module(s) or part of a programme shall be reported to Subject/Course Committees and subsequently noted at Faculty Boards. Where appropriate, decisions shall be reported to Academic Registry for amendments to be made to individual student records. In the case of decisions on admission, the outcome shall be reported to the Head of Faculty Administration for communication to the applicant. In all other cases the duty of informing applicants of decisions shall lie with the Chair of the APL Board/Alternative Body.
- 16 Approved exemptions shall be recorded on the student's record. Where required, in accordance with programme regulations, marks achieved in prior studies or awarded for experiential learning through assessment of a portfolio of evidence, shall be used to calculate the student's overall result.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accreditation: the process of identification, assessment and formal acknowledgement of prior learning and achievement.

Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL): a process for assessing and, as appropriate, recognising prior experiential learning or prior certificated learning for academic purposes. This recognition may give the learning a credit value in a credit-based structure and allow it to be counted towards the completion of a programme of study and the award of qualifications associated with it.

The term 'accreditation of prior learning' is used here to encapsulate the range of activity and approaches used formally to acknowledge and establish publicly that some reasonably substantial and significant element of learning has taken place. Such learning may have been recognised previously by an education provider described as 'prior certificated learning'; or it may have been achieved by reflecting upon experiences outside the formal education and training systems, described as 'prior experiential learning'.

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL): a process through which previously assessed and certificated learning is considered and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL): a process, through which learning achieved outside education or training systems is assessed and, as appropriate, recognised for academic purposes.

APL Board/Alternative Body: a duly constituted body to consider all claims for the accreditation of prior learning. Faculties/Schools may employ an alternative decision-making body to that of a formally constituted APL Board so long as it demonstrates the same rigour and status as that provided by a formal APL Board.

Advanced Standing: is a broad term associated with admission where applicants are deemed to have met the requisite outcomes to enable them to commence the programme at an advanced stage.

APL Adviser: person with subject expertise to provide advice and guidance to applicants. Normally this role would be performed by a Course/Subject Director.

APL Co-ordinator: person appointed with responsibility for the overview of APL activity in the School/Faculty and who may chair the APL Board.

Authenticity: the evidence should clearly relate to the applicant's own effort and achievements.

Credit: is an educational currency which provides a measure of learning achieved at a given level.

Currency: the evidence should relate to current learning. Where the subject/course teams and/or professional, statutory or regulatory bodies have specific requirements and/or time limits for the currency of evidence, certification or demonstration of learning, these shall be made clear and transparent.

Exemptions: is the awarding of academic credit against specific outcomes on a modular basis.

Level: the standard of achievement reached on completion of the specified outcomes for which accreditation is being claimed.

Module: a module is a component of a programme with its own approved aims, objectives, learning outcomes and assessment methods.

Reliability: the extent to which there is inter-assessor agreement or consistency in the assessment of claims.

Sufficiency: there should be sufficient written evidence to demonstrate fully the achievement of the learning being claimed.

Validity: there should be a clear and transparent link between the learning being evidenced and the outcomes against which recognition is being sought.